THE IMPORTANCE OF LAND AND WATER TO THE CULTURE OF THE XENI GWET'IN FIRST NATION: AN ANALYSIS OF STATEMENTS PRESENTED AT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT HEARINGS

by

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Lists of Abbreviations

AANDC	Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
AFN	Assembly of First Nation
BC	British Columbia
CEAA	Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
CESD	Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainable Development
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
NRCan	Natural Resources Canada
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
TML	Taseko Mine Limited
TNC	*Tsilhqot'in* National Congress
TNG	*Tsilhqot'in* National Government
XGCA	*Xeni Gwet'in* Caretaker Area
XGFN	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation

List of Traditional First Nations Names

First Nation Band Name	First Nation Traditional Name
Alexandria Band	*Esdilagh* First Nation
Anaham Band	*Tl'etinqox* First Nation
Nemiah Band	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation
Redstone Band	*Tsi Del Del* First Nation
Stone Band	*Yunesit'in* First Nation
Toosey Band	*Tl'esqox* First Nation

List of Traditional Place Names

Name of the Place	Traditional Name of the Place
Big Onion Lake	*Jidizay Biny*
Chilcotin River	*Tsilhqox*
Fish Lake	*Teztan Biny*
Little Fish Lake	*Y'anah Biny*
Lower Taseko Lake	*Dasiqox Biny*
Taseko River	*Dasiqox*

Abstract

An application for a new open-pit gold/copper mine in *Tsilhqot'in* territory raised concerns among the local *Xeni Gwet'in* people about potential impacts. This study examines statements about these concerns and potential impacts made by *Xeni Gwet'in* people during environmental assessment hearings. The research adopts a single case study approach, and the analysis uses a western social science method as well as a more holistic Indigenous approach to decolonizing research by placing Indigenous voices in the center of the research process. The results suggest that land and water are inseparable, as are their connections to the *Xeni Gwet'in* people, culture, and territory. Key findings include that land and water are central to *Xeni Gwet'in* identity and future, that they are used to demonstrate 'control' and 'ownership' of their traditional territory, and that they are crucial to *Xeni Gwet'in* intergenerational transfer of knowledge, culture, and sacred spiritual connections to their traditional territory.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Topic

The development of major mining projects in the Canadian North began in the late 1920s. The growth in the mining industry accelerated with the support of the state in the 1950s and 1960s (Boutet, Keeling & Sandlos, 2015; Keeling & Sandlos, 2009). This capital-intensive development occurs within many Indigenous sacred traditional territories. Since the 1950s, large scale industrial resource development projects have threatened the cultures of Indigenous peoples in Canada by posing risks to the land and water that is so intimately linked to Indigenous culture (Angell & Parkins, 2011; Garvin, Nelson, Ellehoj & Redmond, 2001; Lutz, 2009; Xavier, Meech & Veiga, 2015). However, the attention given to this topic has been limited.

This study looks at statements made by the *Xeni Gwet'in* people of the *Tsilhqot'in* Nation with regard to their concerns about a proposed mine and how it might affect connections between land, water and culture. The Prosperity Mine Project is located in the traditional territory of the *Tsilhqot'in* people but *Xeni Gwet'in* is the closest community to the mine site. The main documents used in this study are the Hearing transcripts of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) environmental review panel regarding the Prosperity Mining Project proposals of 2009 and 2010 respectively. The statements show the *Xeni Gwet'in* concern about industrial development and the exploitation of land and water resources within their traditional *Tsilhqot'in* territory. The *Xeni Gwet'in* people have occupied this land since time immemorial (Turner, Ignace & Ignace, 2000). The case of the *Xeni Gwet'in* provides an opportunity to look at the complex social, economic, and interpersonal relationships

between Indigenous people, industry, and government resulting from debates over resource development issues.

Land and Water and its Connection to Indigenous Culture

Land is often categorized as rural, urban, agricultural or industrial according to the dominant existing or proposed activities occurring in spaces. Such uses have different associated economic, political, and social practices (Ingold, 2002; Lefebvre, 1991; Masuda & Garvin, 2006; Taylor, 1999). Lefebvre states that space is not just a passive container for activities. Rather, it acts as a means to involve and engage in a number of social activities connected to culture, such as performing rites, rituals, and ceremonies. Sometimes these acts are sacred in nature and/or help to maintain social relations and culture. The literature on the value of land and water to the culture of Indigenous people shows that Indigenous people have very close economic, social, cultural, as well as spiritual relationships to their traditional lands and environment (Andrews & Buggey, 2008; McCreary & Milligan, 2014; Picketts, Curry, Dery & Cohen, 2013; Xavier et al., 2015; Yates, 2004). The cultural, spiritual, and personal importance of land is a common aspect of Indigenous worldviews that are used to establish and organize their human and human-nature relationships within Indigenous communities.

Therefore, examining Indigenous people's concept of land is a way to understand the world they live in. Land is a site interacted with via various social, economic, cultural, spiritual beliefs, and practices. According to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996, p.2), "Land is absolutely fundamental to Indigenous identity … land is reflected in the language, culture and spiritual values of all Indigenous peoples."

Moreover, an Indigenous worldview, however, typically does not separate land and water – as both are important and scared resources in their traditional territory (Anderson & Bone, 2003; McCreary & Milligan, 2014). It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that Indigenous people value the respectful treatment of lands (Beckford, Jacobs, Williams & Nahdee 2010; Lutz 2009). Nevertheless, each Indigenous community is heterogeneous in nature and character, since each Indigenous community has its own identity defined by its own unique landscape, language, traditions, customs, and culture (Garvin et al., 2001). Various scholars define culture as the collection of knowledge, traditions, customs, and value systems expressed by individuals, communities, and organizations (Battiste & Youngblood, 2000; Norton, 2000; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012; Swidler, 1986; Tyler, 1871). The literature suggests that Indigenous culture is created using Indigenous traditional knowledge on the land. These traditions and customs are passed down experientially and orally through experiences from one generation to the next (Agrawal, 2014; Garvin et al., 2001).

According to the definition given by Cuerrier, Turner, Gomes, Garibaldi & Downing (2015), Fish Lake or *Teztan Biny* in the *Tsilhqot'in* language, is a keystone cultural place for the *Xeni Gwet'in* people. They define a cultural keystone place as "a given site or location with high cultural salience for one or more groups of people and which plays, or has played in the past, an exceptional role in a people's cultural identity, as reflected in their day to day living, food production and other resources based activities, land and resource management, language, stories, history, and social and ceremonial practices" (Cuerrier et al., 2015, p. 431). The *Tsilhqot'in* National Government states that the "*Tsilhqot'in* culture was, and to an extent remains, centered on a seasonally nomadic lifestyle that makes key harvesting areas as critical to culture and survival as settled sites …. the *Tsilqot'in* region is described by the Court in the

Tsilhqot'in Nation as a cultural hub because the *Tsilhqot'in* people moved into the mountainous areas to the South and East of *Dasiqox Biny* in the summer and fall to harvest resources and prepare for the winter using the ancestral trail network which is still used today" (TNG legal brief, 2010, p.4). Such statements reflect how their traditional territory connects the *Xeni Gwet'in* people with their family, community, and to the practice of their culture.

Indigenous people occupy the largest portion of lands in the *Tsilhqot'in* region of British Columbia (Kunkel, 2008). For *Tsilhqot'in* people, the *Teztan Biny* or Fish Lake area is special because it supports hunting, trapping, fishing, and the gathering of plants and medicines, all in one small valley (Lutz, 2009). It is close enough to *Xeni Gwet'in* for ready access, especially for Elders, but is viewed as still relatively intact and remote from industrial development. It also provides a place to pass on traditions to younger generations. Therefore, it can be considered a cultural keystone place.

For centuries, Indigenous communities have depended on hunting, fishing, and gathering to sustain themselves (Keeling & Sandlos, 2009; Lutz, 2009; Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (United Nations) & United Nations Statistical Division, 2009). There is widespread knowledge of such Indigenous activities, but we have more to learn about the community values connected with these activities and how they influence community decisions and their sense of well-being (Kunkel, 2008; Garvin et al., 2001).

Much of Canada's extractive economy relies on natural resource extraction within the traditional territories of First Nations people (Ensign, Giles & Oncescu, 2014). Various literatures suggest that traditional territories are used by industries for energy, mineral resources, and hydropower development projects among others (Boutet et al., 2015; CSTC, 2011; Garvin et al., 2001; Keeling & Sandlos, 2009; O'Faircheallaigh, 1998). From these industrial

developments, land degradation, ecosystem disruption, acid mine drainage, chemical leakage, slope failure, contamination of lakes with mine tailings, deforestation and resulting impacts, noise pollution, disturbance of wildlife, and damage to sacred sites with spiritual and cultural significance to First Nations have been noted (Ali, 2009; Gibson & Klinck, 2005; Turkel, 2011). Such capitalist development is harmful to marginalized groups, such as First Nations in Canada (Mascarenhas, 2007, p. 575)

Keeling & Sandlos (2009, p.118) identify that many abandoned mines are located in close proximity to Indigenous communities or important hunting and fishing territories, often further diminishing Indigenous hunting and trapping opportunities. Industrial development has caused social, environmental, ecological, spiritual, and cultural impacts in and on Indigenous territory (Hipwell, Mamen, Weitzer & Whiteman, 2002). There is a rich body of literature about the impacts of mining on Indigenous communities (Angell & Parkins, 2011; Basdeo & Bhardwaj, 2013; Beckford, et. al., 2010; Booth & Skelton, 2011; Cheshire, Everingham & Lawrence, 2014; Gibson & Klinck, 2005; O'Faircheallaigh, 1998). However, there has been comparatively little published work on mining and its impacts from the Indigenous perspective. Mining projects in or upstream of traditional territories cause real concerns for Indigenous people such as the *Xeni Gwet'in* regarding the potential to cause immeasurable environmental, ecological, spiritual, and cultural losses. Indigenous communities around the world are seeking to enact limits on the physical, ecological, environmental, cultural, and spiritual impacts of extractive development. It can bring real threats to Indigenous identity (Yates, 2004). All of this has motivated me to research such topics for my thesis. I add to the work by Muir and Booth (2012), Booth and Skelton (2011), and Kunkel (2008 & 2014) who have previously considered some of these issues in their work, in a Canadian context.

Taseko Mines Limited's (TML) first proposal in the Fish Lake area was the Prosperity Gold-Copper Mine Project. That proposal did not receive federal environmental assessment approval and so Taseko Mines submitted a second proposal called the New Prosperity Gold-Copper Mine Project. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) announced that a new federal review panel would evaluate that proposal (Haddock, Tollefson & Krindle, 2012; Turkel, 2011). On February 26, 2014, The Government of Canada announced it would not issue the federal authorization necessary for the New Prosperity Project to proceed.

However, in March of 2019, Taseko Mines was granted permission by the BC provincial government to do 122 exploratory drill holes and clear 76 kilometers of new or modified road and trail (Bennett, 2019). Taseko eventually got a provincial permit to start drilling in the Fish Lake area, but the federal government did not give their approval for the project. That the federal government rejected the project and the provincial government allowed related activities is part of this unique case. Thus, Fish Lake serves as a major resource extraction controversy in British Columbia. It is also an appropriate case for examining issues surrounding resource development, Aboriginal Rights and title, culture, and the environment (Hanna, 2019).

Research Goals and Objectives

Despite much 'development' on and near their territories, various literatures suggest that Indigenous people are economically disadvantaged due to colonial exploitation, discrimination, forced assimilation, and all the related impacts. Indigenous peoples have been dispossessed and displaced by Canadian settlers in various severe, systematic, and long lasting ways (Cooke, Beavon & McHardy, 2004; Harris, 2011). Statistically, socio-economic indicators show that the Indigenous people rank more poorly than non-Indigenous people in terms of life expectancy,

education levels, employment, income, and housing (Cooke et al., 2004). Indigenous people also record higher child mortality and suicide rates (Cooke et al., 2004).

The *Xeni Gwet'in*, like many First Nations, have seen their share of changes to their way of life over the last century, to say the least. They have experienced colonization, the spread of new diseases, the imposition of the reserve system and the residential school system, continued encroachment by outside interest groups intent on carving up the territory for industrial forestry and mining as well as resort and real estate development (Lerner, Rossing, Delong, McCrory, Holmes, Mylnowski & Opperman, 2010). All of these systemic factors effect Indigenous interactions with land, water, culture, and community. With such contexts and changes in mind, this study was carried out to better understand the importance of land and water to the *Xeni Gwet'in* in the context of rapid industrial development. To explore these relationships, I analyzed their statements given to the CEAA Hearing about the Prosperity project.

Research Questions

I explore the following two research questions in this thesis:

1. How are the connections between land, water, and culture described in *Xeni Gwet'in* statements made to the CEAA Hearings on the Prosperity mine proposals, dated September 2009 to May 2010?
2. What do these texts suggest about how industrial development affect the *Xeni Gwet'in* use of, and values associated with, land and water resources within their traditional territory, which includes Fish Lake?

My aim in conducting this study is to improve our understanding of Indigenous values as related to land and water, using this case study of *Xeni Gwet'in*.

Self-Reflexivity as a Researcher

My own indigenous identity, as well as my interest in the topics at hand influenced my research design and the ways in which I thought about this project along the way. I am an Indigenous 'Sherpa' woman from Southeast Asia, Nepal. I did my masters and bachelor's degree in rural development studies in Nepal. My academic knowledge and my identity as an Indigenous person motivated me to do work about Indigenous communities. I have a strong academic background, as well as experience working in community development in rural Nepal. These are some of the reasons that I wanted to write my thesis on Indigenous communities in Canada. Therefore, I decided to study the perceptions of the *Xeni Gwet'in* about on-going and potential development in their traditional territory such as the Prosperity mine project.

I also thought that there was something interesting about my conducting research about an Indigenous community elsewhere, given my own Indigenous identity. According to Russell-Mundine (2012, p. 86), "an Indigenous research paradigm is a movement towards a more inclusive and culturally acceptable way of doing research for Indigenous peoples." I conducted this research with the end goal of increasing our understanding of Indigenous valuations of land and water in this case study of the *Xeni Gwet'in*. This study also examines the roles that land and water play in Indigenous lives in terms of individual and group abilities to practice culture, as well as to engage with "development" such as mining, and to experience related impacts, in traditional territory. I used publicly available CEAA Hearing transcripts as the main source of data for this study; I analyzed them as texts with value for understanding *Xeni Gwet'in* understandings of and attachments to land and water.

For the purpose of this study, I looked to the literature to understand Indigenous views about land and water. I struggled with my own understandings of land, water, and culture while reading the CEAA Hearing transcripts. It is important to note that I did not participate in the hearings. I used the CEAA Hearing transcripts focusing on the statements contributed by the *Xeni Gwet'in*. Official transcripts such as these are likely to be partial or superficial government transcripts and thus the research is also likely to be partial or superficial (Krippendorff, 2018). Analysis thus may also tend to be positivist in philosophy, taking at face value the 'apparent' meaning of texts. However, I do think there is something in the themes and connections that became apparent during my analysis.

Since the core topic of my research is about exploring Indigenous views about land and water it must be said that the texts I read are quite limited in scope and form. The CEAA Hearing transcripts do not really allow for proper expressions of Indigenous holistic representations of land and water via an intimate cultural portrayal. They are texts originating in the legal system of the colonial empire. Along my research journey I have learned that truly gaining insights into Indigenous views and community understandings would take more time and depth than this data set or my Master's degree allowed. I learned that decolonization of research methods and theoretical frameworks is needed to ensure that research with Indigenous people can be more respectful, ethical, sympathetic, and useful (Smith, 1999). And ideally, the data set would be more representative and comprehensive as well.

I did try to remain aware of the limitations of the texts and my ability to analyze them as I worked, via reflecting on the process and noting my thoughts. Reflexivity is a tool that can examine biases and assumptions, raising self-awareness affecting viewpoints and actively exploring alternate perspectives (Nilson, 2017). According to Russell-Mundine (2012, p. 85),

"reflexivity can be a critical methodology in Indigenous research" as it explores development of self-awareness and self-identity in the context of an Indigenous research paradigm. It helps to understand that all learning must be shared equally between all involved (Nilson, 2017). Therefore, my thesis was not only a research journey but also a personal journey as an Indigenous researcher from a different country. I saw so much of myself and my home in the transcripts but I also realized how ill equipped I was to try and analyze the texts in many ways—the limits of the dataset, and my Western-style education acted as constraints on gaining insight into the *Xeni Gwet'in*.

Finding a theoretical grounding for results of this study has been a challenge. Some qualitative researchers prefer to treat theory as something that emerges out of the collection and analysis of data (Bryman & Teevan, 2005; Patton, 2005). In this study too, ideas emerged during the analysis process. Coding for themes often felt uncomfortable since I was not sure about whether or not I was doing things the "right way". I was uncomfortable with coding the texts into themes and categories, which is typical practice, because of my Indigenous identity and related literature suggesting to me that such separations do not exist in Indigenous worldviews. This Western process of artificially separating 'land', 'water', and 'culture' via coding does not fit with an Indigenous worldview (Simonds & Christopher, 2013). Further, a text collected via a colonial legal system was not, one could argue, the best way to get an authentic Indigenous voice or story. Voices of Indigenous people are heard in stories, dreams, and transmitted orally from one generation to the next (Wilson, 2008). The CEAA Hearing transcripts, on the other hand, are outcomes of a western judicial process. As I continued my work, I began to realize that my thesis process was not an Indigenous process and might actually be quite incompatible with the ways that I and other Indigenous people conceive of land and water, and our relations with them. I was

conducting a conventional qualitative data analysis, something quite different from Indigenous ways of knowing and telling stories. I was accessing limited aspects of Indigenous voices, but via methods and contexts distant from Indigenous ways (Whyte, 2013).

I also realized that despite as an Indigenous researcher, I could develop my own methodology as long as I could define and justify my actions and explain the research processes academically. Therefore, I came to realize that the framework of this study is about embracing an Indigenous view with a focus on culture, place, and identity formation. In the end, I used an adapted grounded theory to explore the publicly available CEAA Hearing transcript statements made by *Xeni Gwet'in* people. Grounded theory is an interpretive research methodology that is used to generate research-based knowledge about the behavioural patterns that shape social processes as people interact (McCallin, 2003). Grounded theory provides a set of steps and procedures that researchers can follow in the construction of a theory fitted to a particular problem (Denzin, Bryant, and Charmaz, 2007, p. 455). I let ideas and themes emerge from the texts, but I also reflected on the process and my own perspectives, as well as those from the literature.

One of the concepts in recent times to better understand and appreciate Indigenous ways of knowing and doing is Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). I consider various aspects of TEK in this project since this research is based on Indigenous statements about land, water, and culture, and TEK connects people with place and elements of it. TEK is more widely recognized as having the potential to contribute to environment impact assessment processes, land claim processes, and resource development and management debates (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018). TEK is owned and controlled by Indigenous people (McGregor, 2004; Cajete, 1994; Jacob, Hartelrode, O'Neal, Underriner, Jansen & La Chance, 2018). TEK is also recognized as an important tool for

gaining insights with respect as how to best move towards environmental sustainability. Considering TEK and how it relates to land and water is helpful for beginning to understand *Xeni Gwet'ins* stated views about their traditional land, and impacts to their culture. TEK is also useful for providing insights to the concept of an Indigenous land ethic.

This study views land and water in the culture of the *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation as linked to cultural landscape, cultural process, and cultural identity (Norton, 2000). As I struggled to place themes into separate boxes, I realized that there is something distinct when these *Xeni Gwet'in* statements speak about land and water. Land, water, and culture are inseparable. Within the land as resources, there is water, there are trees, there are fish, and there is medicine, etc. TEK is useful here in that it often emphasizes the relatedness and connectedness of land and water of a people's traditional territory and culture (Pierotti & Wildcat, 2000). Therefore, inseparability is the key linking land, water, and the culture of the *Xeni Gwet'in* people. Inseparability of land and water to the Indigenous culture is valuable to appreciate as this means that everything is connected in Indigenous worldviews. As a result, my thesis ends with two analytic discussions. The first follows a western science analysis of the colonial CEAA Hearing data. The second follows a more holistic discussion of the inseparability of land, water, and culture that is more respectful to *Xeni Gwet'in* peoples, their tradition, culture, and beliefs.

Positionality plays as important role in any research (Bourke, 2014). My position as a researcher from a different culture, society, and country to that of my research topic placed me as an outsider because I do not represent nor am I a member of the *Xeni Gwet'in* people of the *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation. However, I feel a little like an insider in the sense that I belong to the Indigenous Sherpa community in Nepal. As mentioned by Nast (1994, p.60), "'betweenness' thus implies that we are never 'outsiders' or 'insiders' in any absolute sense." She feels the sense

of 'betweenness' that exists where we admit our dilemmas. Moreover, I think as a researcher, we should be able to see betweenness as an opportunity rather than a barrier to conduct our research. As a researcher, I made sure to be mindful about the influence of my positionality. I believe that this study is valuable in that it presents a focused summary of what *Xeni Gwet'in* people have to say about the proposed mining development in their traditional territory from the perspective of a Nepalese Indigenous woman.

Since using western ideology and theories would add another layer of limitations for validity and reliability, self- reflexivity is suitable to examine the biases and assumption of my worldview to that of the topic of the study. I explored the development of my self-identity and self-awareness through a reflective evaluation of my worldview (Nilson, 2017). As Russell-Mundine (2012, p.88) states, "There is a need of collaborative work between researchers from various backgrounds to critique and expand our knowledge to effectively engage in Indigenous research." According to Todd (2016), 'reciprocity of thinking' requires us to pay attention to who else is speaking, and how we are all embedded in various kinds of systems that influence the ways in which we think. I tried to reflect on systems at works in Canada, particularly with respect to colonialism. Todd (2016) emphasizes that there is a need to address ongoing structural colonialism within the academy in order to ensure that marginalized voices such as the *Xeni Gwet'in* are heard. I agree with the idea that the academy must re-consider how Indigenous ways of knowing are explored beyond the contemporary western knowledge system. As noted by Tuhiwai Smith (1999, p.39), "Decolonization, however, does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western Knowledge. Rather, it is about focusing on Indigenous concerns about worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory and research from Indigenous perspective and for their own purposes."

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters. Chapter 1 sets up a brief introduction to the research topic. Chapter 2 examines the conceptual framework and presents a literature review that includes three sections: the theoretical framework of the study; resource development and its relationship with Indigenous culture; and an overview of land and water and its value to First Nations culture in Canada. Chapter 3 presents the context of the study, describing: the *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation and their traditional territory; the *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation; the history of resource development and its relations with the *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation; the *Xeni Gwet'in* Court Case of 2014; and the Fish Lake case and the Taseko mine proposal.

Chapter 4 explains the methodology I used. Its describes: the rationale for the use of a qualitative methodology; the single case study approach; the documentary analysis; the data sampling method; the categorization and use of data; manifest and latent content analysis; the use of the content analysis NVivo software; validity and reliability; and saturated data analysis.

Chapter 5 presents the result of the analysis, organized into five sections: coding of data and organization of themes; organization of themes and sub-themes; analysis of data; land as one main theme with sub- themes; and water as the second main theme with sub-themes. Chapter 6 presents a decolonized analysis through five sections: approaching this study; inseparability of land and water; traditional knowledge as a part of Indigenous culture; the concept of cultural and spiritual aspects; reflection on limitations. Chapter 7 is a discussion and conclusion that consists of six sections: themes of the study; addressing the objectives of the research; the *Xeni Gwet'in* and resource development; my journey and self-reflection; recommendations and future research questions; conclusion with my final thoughts as the researcher.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

This chapter contains a review of the current literature related to my research questions. I begin with a brief description of the theoretical framework applied in this study. In the second section, a discussion of literature related to resource development and its relationship with Indigenous culture is presented. The third section presents an overview of land and water and its value to First Nations' culture in Canada.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

As an Indigenous person from Nepal, I have researched and written this thesis from a vantage point that recognizes and embraces the existence of Indigenous viewpoints. Indigenous people have their own ways of looking at and relating to the world, the universe, and each other (Ascher, 2018; Eglash, 2002; Barnhardt, 2002; Barnhardt & Oscar Kawagley, 2005; Battiste, 2005; Smith, 1999). Within the last couple of decades, various literatures began to explore Indigenous knowledge (Agrawal, 1995; Berkes and Turner, 2006; Daes, 1993; Doubleday, 1993; Freeman & Carbyn, 1988; Gadgil, Berkes & Folke, 1993; Inglis, 1993; Johnson, 1992; Loppie, 2007; Simonds & Christopher, 2013; Turner et al., 2000; Usher, 2004; Williams & Baines, 1993). The Indigenous worldview is valued in a number of fields including human geography. However, Indigenous people often share their perspective through a Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) lens. TEK "represents experience acquired over thousands of years of direct human contact with the environment" (Berkes, 1993, p.1). It is knowledge about the environment, its use, values and the knowledge system itself (Usher, 2000, p.103).

For the last decade, TEK has emerged as a field of study, complete with theory, research approaches, models, and potential applications (McGregor, 2004). TEK has received recognition as being complementary to, equivalent with, and applicable to scientific knowledge (Colorado, 1998; Colorado & Collins, 1987; Corsiglia & Snively, 1995; Kakoty, 2018; Posey, 1990; Richards, 1997; Rist, Shackelton, Gadamus, Chapin, Gowda, Setty & Shanker, 2016; Salmon, 1996; Schultes, 1988). Such an emerging appreciation of TEK is validated in various fields of study. Despite the interest in TEK by policymakers, academics, consultants, environmentalists, and Aboriginal communities, the meaning of TEK remains both elusive and a topic of debate (Usher, 2000; Usher, 2004).

The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) process is one area where TEK is being actively applied. According to Booth & Skelton (2011b, p. 216), "Canadian First Nations' involvement in federal and provincial environmental assessments is mandated by law, by treaty obligations and by a series of court rulings that have determined that First Nations have rights and possibly title to certain lands and that, as these will be impacted by developments, First Nations must be consulted by the responsible government and, moreover, consulted 'meaningfully'." Canadian state policy is required to incorporate Indigenous knowledge, including TEK, in the process of environmental assessment and resource management (Usher, 2000). Literature around respecting and valuing TEK is available through EIA processes, land claim processes, resource development, and management. According to Berkes (1993, p.2), "TEK is a cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with the environment. TEK is an attribute of societies with historical continuity in resource use practices; by and large, these are non- industrial or less technologically advanced

societies, many of them Indigenous or tribal." Berkes explains that TEK is not merely a system of knowledge and practice; it is an integrated system of knowledge, practice, and beliefs.

According to Andrews and Buggey (2008, p.64), "Indigenous cultural landscapes are not sites or relics; they are living landscapes that Indigenous people identify as fundamentally important to their cultural heritage, areas that embody their relationship with the land." The cultural landscape is also dynamic as it evolves according to social, economic, political, cultural, and natural conditions. Battiste (2005) notes that the study of an Indigenous viewpoint is difficult to verify due to its evolving characteristics over time. The concept of cultural geography is also reflected in this study, as it focuses on the culture of the *Xeni Gwet'in* people in their traditional *Tsilhqot'in* territory with reference to their cultural processes, landscapes, and cultural identity (Norton, 2000). The *Xeni Gwet'in* respondents illustrate their opinion on traditional territory and its value by linking it to culture throughout the entire set of CEAA Hearing statements used for this study.

The *Xeni Gwet'in* identify themselves as caretakers of their traditional territory and vow to protect the *Teztan Biny* (Little Fish Lake) area (Parkins & Reed, 2012). The *Xeni Gwet'in* have not given up their Aboriginal rights and title over their traditional land. This study is a summary of what the *Xeni Gwet'in* had to say about land, water, and culture as recorded in the CEAA Hearing transcripts. This is not a definitive story of the *Xeni Gwet'in,* but an interpretation of their comments. There may be voices that are not heard, and there are opportunities for other people to take the challenge of sharing the use, and value of land and water on Indigenous territory.

Resource Development and its Relationship with Indigenous Culture

The literature on resource development and its connection with Indigenous people can be found in various academic, government, and industry studies since the 1960s (See Boutet et al., 2015; Hipwell et al., 2002; Kunkel, 2014; Keeling & Sandlts, 2009; Xavier et al., 2015). These sources provide insight into the relationship between land and water and Indigenous culture. All of these scholars put further emphasis on the limited amount of research on the impacts to Indigenous people of industrial development in their traditional land along with its effect on their culture.

Angell and Parkins (2011, p.75) state, "It is a challenging task to understand the relationship between resource development and aboriginal culture." They further identify that indicators of culture will change over time due to its dynamic nature and since Indigenous culture is evolving over time. They further argue that the relationship between resource development and Indigenous culture is difficult to monitor because of the influence and impact of development as well as government and research institutions. These impacts and influences are multifaceted and different explanations are available according to the research area. Variation in available information, however, cannot justify the fact that the most vulnerable people to be affected by such industrial and resource development projects are the Indigenous people like the *Xeni Gwet'in* who are pursuing a traditional lifestyle.

Resource development is taking place in territories of First Nations where Indigenous people perform their traditional activities such as fishing, hunting, trapping, berry picking, and gathering. Such activities play an important role in the traditional lifestyles and contemporary practices of Indigenous people, which are also related to the issue of preserving their culture, lifestyle, and identity. Booth and Skelton (2011a, p.685) note, "The effects of resource development are more severe for the Indigenous people who prefer to live the traditional way of

life." Booth and Skelton also state that the consequences of industrial development upon Indigenous lands that they utilize to maintain their cultures are profound. They argue that some land and resources, therefore, must remain for Indigenous people to continue to practice their traditional culture. The loss of culture threatens their history, the well-being of current generations, and their children's future (Booth & Skelton, 2011a).

TEK also serves as the foundation for the intergenerational transfer of cultural and environmental knowledge and values. Under the Canadian Constitution, Indigenous people possess the right to hunt, fish, and gather subsistence for ceremonial and cultural survival purposes on their traditional land. However, such Indigenous rights are often ignored, abrogated, or require a court challenge to force governments to honor these rights or to protect traditional land and territory (Booth & Skelton, 2011a).

Angell and Parkins (2011) note that mineral resource development is defined as non-renewable resource extraction activities including mining, oil and gas exploration, and associated infrastructure development such as pipelines. Chemical spills, water pollution, loss of habitat, degraded habitats, loss of wildlife, and invasive species are a few examples of the physical impact of such resource development projects (Beckford et. al., 2010 ; Mascarenhas, 2007). Mining project activities also have long-term environmental impacts on the Indigenous lands and local community as a whole (Parlee & O'Neil, 2007; Stedman, Parkins & Beckley, 2004; Xavier et al. 2015).

Mining projects can contaminate not only the environment, but can also have social, cultural, and spiritual impacts on the Indigenous people residing in and around the mining area (Keeling & Sandlos, 2009). It is, however, a considerable challenge to measure and identify the impacts of mining projects beyond physical environmental aspects (Turner, Gregory, Brooks,

Failing, & Satterfield, 2008). Basedo and Bhardwaj (2013, p.3) note that these "impacts refer to those immeasurable losses to cultural identity, knowledge, and tradition as well as the loss of engagement in First Nations ways of life."

Davis and Todd (2017) argue that continued industrial and political investment in traditional lands shows a continuing practice of dispossession of marginalized Indigenous communities. This study is thus useful as it shares how some *Xeni Gwet'in* people feel about protecting their land and water from the potential of a proposed mining project. Maintaining the integrity of the environment is an important aspect of their Indigenous culture.

Overview of Land and Water and its Value to the First Nations Culture in Canada

The concept of 'land' is a broad category that is difficult to define. Different scholars provide various definitions of land. Morris and Fondahl (2002, p.109) argue that "Variations among societies in cultural, political and economic practices will result in the production of different space." Some scholars have been examining the relationship between land, water, and people as an active site of engagement (Todd, 2014). This study is an opportunity to build on Todd's case study work and to see which issues are pertinent to that previous research and which issues demonstrate broader appeal or generalizability.

For Lefebvre (1991, p.26), "land is defined as 'the production of space,' and it is argued that space is not a given static field in which human relationships and actions take place, rather it is always produced by social relations, actions, ideas, and imaginaries." In human geography, "political geographers use territories, economic geographers study locations, cultural geographers seem to like landscapes and social geographers have concern for areas" (Taylor,

1999, p.9). According to Norton (2000, p.3), "Cultural geography focuses on people and places with particular reference to cultural processes, cultural landscapes, and cultural identities."

Cultural geography's perspectives allow for the appreciation of how places are created by the intersections of culture and space (Anderson, 2015). This fits with Wildcat's (1994, p.v) statement, "the Indian sense of thinking in space" is related to "sacred sites, sovereignty issues, land issues, water rights, [and] a whole host of natural resources issues … [which] are tied to our native sense of place." West (2005) critically writes that First Nations know space through hunting, gathering, and fishing; such activities are connected to issues of value including natural resources such as water, land, forest, plants, and animals. Wilson and Graham (2005) and Barry (2012) stress that many Indigenous values are closely connected to the lands of their traditional territory. The *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation, like other First Nations, also do not separate themselves from their environment (Baptise, 2010a; Baptise, 2010b; Battiste, 2005; Battiste and Youndblood, 2000; Bhattacharyya, Baptiste, Setah, and William, 2012; Mascarenhas, 2007).

The concept of place is a way to know and understand the world people live in (Cresswell, 2005). Ideas of place and self have interesting connections with ways of Indigenous knowing and understanding. Indigenous people also have spiritual ties to their environment that are reflected in their traditions, ceremonies, and customs that are shaped by the spiritual, emotional, and physical relationship to their land (Xavier et al., 2015). Wilson (2003, p. 88) states that, "It speaks to them; it gives them their responsibility for stewardship." According to Beckford et al. (2010, p.244), "Preservation, conservation, and stewardship of the land and its resources are major sources of pride, identity, and dignity to the Indigenous people." Such a stewardship approach is embedded in the mindset of the Indigenous people. For Indigenous

people the land is, therefore, a gift from Mother Earth and they take it as a responsibility to protect the water, plants, animals, and all the living beings associated with it (Banks, 2018).

'Stewardship' does not mean 'owning' the land, it is about taking care of the land. *Xeni Gwet'in* believe that they are not here to own their part of the *Tsilhqot'in* territory or the Fish Lake area, rather it is their responsibility to take care of the land - as such the *Xeni Gwet'in* call themselves the caretakers of the Fish Lake area. Discussions about environmental ecological values, which tend to focus basically on the physical aspect of land (such as environment pollution, or environmental hazards) cannot connect with the *Xeni Gwet'in* feeling of being stewards of their land. Environmental assessment processes too often consider and study the impacts of developments such as mining 'on' the environment and do not talk about the deeper and interwoven meanings of land, water, and culture to people such as the *Xeni Gwet'in*. The concept of stewardship does.

Land and water also contribute to cultural and community well-being, survival, and resilience (Loxley, 2010). For example, "traditional knowledge related to medicinal plants has been instrumental in the survival and well-being of aboriginal people for thousands of years" (Uprety, Asselin, Dhakal & Julien, 2012, p.26). Such traditional knowledge about plants has its medicinal value that Indigenous people use for healing purposes. For Indigenous people, "the environment is seen as a whole; all the parts are interconnected in a seamless web of causes and effects, actions and outcomes, behaviors and consequences" (Turner et al., 2000, p.1279). Turner et al. (2000, p.1270) further state that all of the components of the environment, the people living in it, as well as supernatural entities, have a deep connection and mutual relationship to each other: "because of the integration of the secular with the spiritual, of the past with the present, and of all parts of the living universe, people have a sense of spiritual and practical respect for

their lands, waters, and all the environmental components that they recognize." For instance, "various myths and legends use caribou as a means to convey values, norms, history, and knowledge about the people, land, and spirituality (Goddard, 1916). Muir and Booth (2012, p.462) further explain that "these are used to teach each generation the cultural practices, customs, and traditional ecological knowledge, while also guiding the decision making processes of current leaders and land users." Thus, the Indigenous concept of space states that humans and the environment have a close and connected relationship; and that this relationship is scared. Like space, ceremonies are important events that act as a mediator to narrow the distance between people and the environment.

Indigenous views of land/water can differ substantially from those associated with European worldviews. They vary by community, location, context, and situation. Capitalism by its very nature expands, seeking new markets and labour forces in order to keep generating profit and new capital. Egan and Place (2013, p.136) describe how the, "Western view of land states land can be understood as a property, a commodity designed for human occupation and consumption that can be exchanged in the market, with one piece of land being largely interchangeable with any other." The western worldview includes that 'land' is 'property' that can be owned, bought, and sold. According to Egan and Place (2013, p.136), "Indigenous conceptions of property and land are shaped by a relational ontology that sees humans as fundamentally inseparable from the world around them." *Xeni Gwet'in* statements on 'land' are presented in the analysis of transcripts presented in Chapter 5. Ingold (2002) notes how the Indigenous view of land is a lively presence or a ground from which things, including people, develop and grow.

For Indigenous people like the *Xeni Gwet'in,* the land is a resource, the land is space, the land is identity, the land is their ancestral home, and the land has spiritual value. However, there are conflicting Indigenous worldviews as well. For instance, the trap lines organized under *Tsilhqot'in* law are an exception as an individual owns the land and has the right to trap the land (Brody, 1981; *Tsilhqot'in* Nation, 2007). Areas with trap line organizations are known as trap line territory (Lerner et al., 2010). *Xeni Gwet'in* people recognize themselves as 'caretakers' of their land and maintain the right to use their responsibility as a caretaker (Bhattacharyya, 2013; Lerner et al., 2010). However, the resources are used and shared communally by all *Tsilhqot'in* people.

Jackson (2005, p.141) identifies that "land, water plays a central role in Indigenous societies; their lives and various legal, social and economic beliefs and practices." Barber and Rumley (2003, p.3) also state, "Water bodies have a clear historical significance to aboriginal groups and their sense of identity." For instance, Jackson (2005, p.141) writes, "the qualities of water that have a sense of the sacred, embody life and generate feelings of belonging and identity were all given as important in consultations with Indigenous groups over land use, water abstraction, and socio-ecological impacts." McGregor (2008) notes that water is considered to be the essence of Mother Earth as a sacred gift to all living beings that binds us together and it is the responsibility of people to save, protect, respect, and honor through ceremonies and rituals.

Generally, culture refers to the way of life of a group of people, their learned behaviors and traditions, attitudes, feelings, beliefs, morals, and symbols (Swidler, 1986). Culture is adaptive, integrated, and transmitted through language, material objects, rituals, ceremonies, arts, and institutions by communication and imitation across generations (Swidler, 1986). Indigenous people share their own unique culture, which acts as a system of meaning and symbols for the

purpose of social interaction and it binds them together as a group (Aikenhead, 1997). They have a rich culture involving customs, folklore, and value systems based on the sustainability of their spiritual connection to the land to which they belong (Aikenhead, 1997). Therefore, culture refers to the practice of different elements such as languages, arts, architecture, traditions, hunting and gathering, dance, music, and rituals in everyday lives. Thus, the identity, culture, and spirituality of Indigenous people are connected to the natural world (Windsor & McVey, 2005). As described by Andrews and Buggey (2008, p.63), "Aboriginal cultural landscapes are expressions of a worldview that sees land in essentially spiritual rather than material terms and regards humans as an integral part of the land, inseparable from its animals, plants, and spirits." For *Tsilhqot'in* people, land does not just represent a physical space; it signifies the interrelated physical, symbolic, spiritual, and social aspects of every First Nation (Wilson, 2008).

Indigenous people have a fundamental association with land and water (Picketts et al., 2013). Natural resource extraction from the traditional territory of First Nation communities is a major source of economic growth in Canada (Kunkel, 2014). The large *Tsilhqot'in* region represents a prime landscape for the forest industry. Within this region, forestry directly or indirectly provides jobs and acts as the major source of income, including for Aboriginal community members (*Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 2009). Besides forestry, the economy of the region is based on mining, agriculture, and tourism (Kunkel 2014; *Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 2009). However, in spite of resource development in their traditional territory, there is a wide socio-economic gap within the people of these communities, as there are low employments rates and many people living with low incomes (Wilson & Macdonald, 2010).

In this study, I use such understandings of land and water as they relate to culture to inform my analysis. I kept them in mind when reviewing *Xeni Gwet'in* statements about land

and water in the CEAA Hearing transcripts. For countless generations, Indigenous peoples cared for their lands, based on how they valued them and how they are linked to their cultures. I considered this as I tried to extract different valuations of the land/water as represented by the testimony submitted by *Xeni Gwet'in* people opposing the Prosperity project. As this study looks at the views of the *Xeni Gwet'in* people, it might be of help in educating the public about the importance of land and water to Indigenous culture.

Chapter 3: Context of the Study

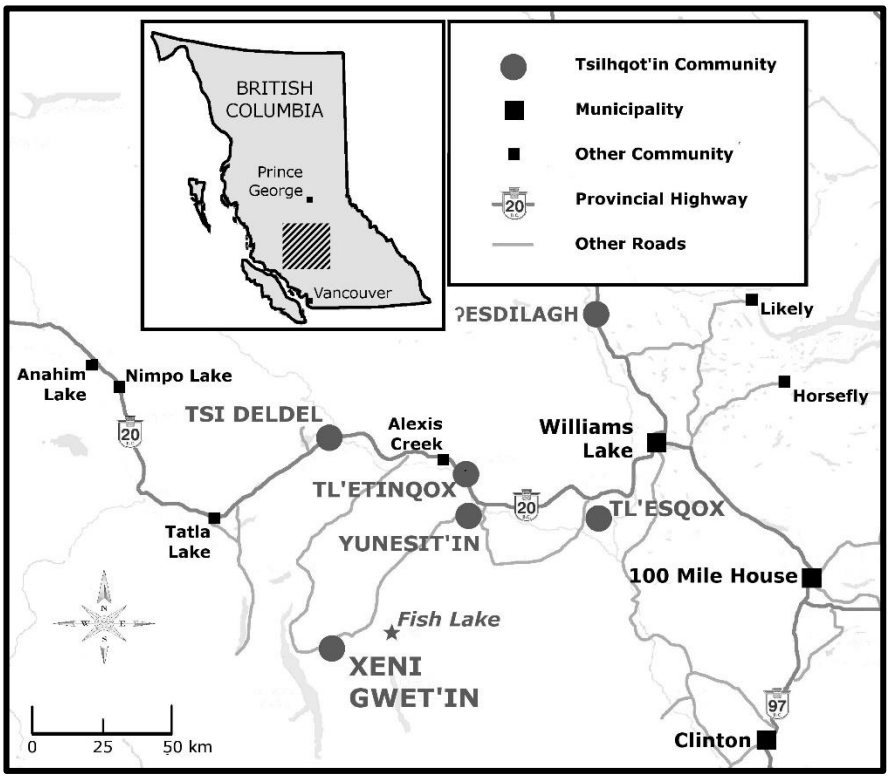
A study for Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) estimates that "there are around 1,200 aboriginal communities in Canada located within a distance of 200km from active mines" (Hipwell et al., 2002. p.8). A study for the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) assessed that more than 36 percent of First Nations communities in Canada are less than 50km from a developed mine (Hipwell et al., 2002). Another report submitted by the Canadian Government's Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development (CESD) identifies 30 abandoned mine sites in Canada's northern territories where the presence of toxins either have required or may require remediation pending further assessment (Keeling & Sandlos, 2009). These reports illustrate that exploration and development activities in the traditional territory of Indigenous people has a noticeable impact on their land and, therefore, on their traditional way of living.

Resource development activities continue to threaten Indigenous people's languages and cultures including the *Xeni Gwet'in*. The *Xeni Gwet'in* represent one of the communities or bands of the *Tsilhqot'in* Nation. The *Xeni Gwet'in* still practice their culture and many still rely upon wild meat, including moose and deer (*Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 2009). Traditional activities of all types performed on their ancestral land are an important aspect of their culture. The primary economic activities for the *Xeni Gwet'in* are ranching and involvement in tourism through local non-native wilderness tourism operators (Lerner et al., 2010). The Taseko mine proposal would impact traditional *Xeni Gwet'in* territory. Therefore, it is essential to understand from the viewpoint of these Indigenous people the impacts such development interventions would have in and on their traditional land and water, and on their culture.

The *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation and their traditional territory

The *Tsilhqot'i*n region is located in the central interior of British Columbia (Figure 3.1). It is surrounded by mountainous high plateaus that start from the Fraser River up into the west of the Coastal Mountain Range (Dinwoodie, 2010; Lutz, 2009; *Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 2009). The *Tsilhqot'in* territory includes most of the drainage of the *Tsilhqot'in* River and the headwaters of the Homathko, Kliniklini, and Dean rivers flowing westward through the Coast range (Dinwoodie, 2010; Lutz, 2009; *Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 2009). The western part of the *Tsihqot'in* plateau is rich with evergreen forests and abundant lakes whereas the eastern part is relatively dry (Dinwoodie, 2002). The *Tsilhqot'in* region is home to the *Tsilhqot'in* people, who are also known as "people of the river" (*Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 2009).

Figure 3.1 Map of the *Tsilhqot'in* Territory



Source: Kyle Kusch, 2015

The *Tsilhqot'in* Nation represents the six First Nations, or bands, of the *Tsilhqot'in* who together formed the tribal council known as the *Tsilhqot'in* National Government in 1989 (*Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 2009). The member bands are *Esdilagh* First Nation (*Alexandria*), *Tsi Del Del* First Nation (*Alexis Creek*), *Tl'etinqox* First Nation (*Anaham*), *Yunesit'in* First Nation (*Stone*), *Tl'esqo*x (*Toose*y)[1], and the *Xeni Gwet'in* First N*ation (Nemiah) (*AANDC*,* 2014*; Tsilhqot'in* National Government*,* 2009) (Table 3.1)*.*

Table 3.1 The *Tsilhqot'in* Communities

Band	**Name of Chief**	**Total population**	**BC (British Columbia) Regional office**	**Reserve land area**
?*Esdilagh* First Nation *Alexandria*	Victor Roy Stump	206	Cariboo (Williams Lake)	1348.20 ha
Alexis Cree/ Tsi del del First Nation (Redstone)	Otis Guichen Sr	697	Cariboo (Williams Lake)	4362.50 ha
Tl'etinqox-t'in Government formerly *Anaham*	Joey Alphonse	1597	Cariboo (Williams Lake)	5655.90 ha
Yunesit'in Government formerly Stone	Russell Myers Ross	470	Cariboo (Williams Lake)	2146.40 ha
Tl'esqox Toosey First Nation	Francis Laceese	344	Cariboo (Williams Lake)	2582.50 ha
Xeni Gwet'in First Nation formerly *Nemiah* Valley	Jimmy Lulua	433	Cariboo (Williams Lake)	1260.50 ha

British Columbia Assembly of First Nation [BCAFN], (2019)

[1] While the Toosey Band is a *Tsilhqot'in* community, it is part of the Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council.

The *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation

The *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation includes about 724 people living in the *Nemiah* Valley between the Fraser River and the Coast Mountains in west-central BC. The natural environment of the *Nemiah* Valley is untouched and pristine (AANDC, 2014; *Tsilhqot'in* Nation, 2007). The *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation is also called the *Nemiah* Valley Indian Community (*Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 2009). The *Nemiah* Valley is a remote rural area located approximately 190 km southwest of Williams Lake (Bhattacharyya et al., 2012). The reserve is in the valley, situated near *Chilko* Lake (to the west) and the Taseko River (to the east) (Dinwoodie, 2010), and is a traditional reserve whose use and benefit in common reserve lands have been set apart according to the Indian Act (*Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 2009). Prior to the Date of Contact, and to the present day, the *Tsilhqot'in* Nation has sustained its people, communities, and distinctive culture from the lands, waters, and resources of its traditional lands (*Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 2009). The *Xeni Gwet'in* represent the most remote *Tsilhqot'in* community with no access to the provincial electrical grid even today. This remoteness supports a strong traditional culture among the *Xeni Gwet'in*. The language is still very strong in the *Xeni Gwet'in* community, with many Elders who only speak *Tsilhqot'in* and many of the younger generation are fluent in the *Tsilhqot'in* language too (Turner et al., 2008).

The *Xeni Gwet'in* people are still involved in their traditional lifestyle such as hunting, gathering berries and herbs for medicine, and fishing along with other income-generating activities such as timber thinning, firewood cutting, constructing houses, and other service type work such as grading of roads (Bhattacharyya et al., 2012; Dinwoodie, 2002). The *Xeni Gwet'in* have been able to manage their natural resources for a long period of time. Single and shared relationships with the land and its resources between the *Xeni Gwet'in* are the strength of their

culture, community, and governance that binds them together (Bhattacharyya, 2013). So, the *Xeni Gwet'in* band is involved in many activities to develop their local economy in order to increase resilience, support their culture, and look after the natural environment. The involvement in various development activities in the community shows that they are very much concerned with their land and water and maintaining its integrity and sacredness (Lutz, 2009).

Tsilhqot'in **Culture**

The *Tsilhqot'in* have far more than 500 years of cultural history along the *Tsilhqot'in* River (Turkel, 2004). The *Tsilhqot'in* traditional culture was similar to that of other Northern Dene people. They moved from one place to another while hunting, fishing, and gathering roots and berries according to the seasons (Dinwoodie, 2002; Lutz, 2009). The economy of the *Tsilhqot'in* and their social structure is closely related to their environment (CEAA 2010b; Turner et al., 2008). However, many *Tsilhqot'in* people "depend for their livelihoods on grazing cattle, logging, mining, or guiding and outfitting foreigners who want to take home a moose" (Turkel, 2011, p. 5). Exchange of goods was part of *Tsilhqot'in* culture long before the arrival of Europeans. The *Tsilhqot'in* were never into accumulating any kind of wealth compared to their other neighbours such as Carriers and Secwepemc (Furniss, 1997), and they had an equal relationship with all the members of the community as there is no class division in *Tsilhqot'in* society (Lutz, 2009).

The *Tsilhqot'in* have a unique culture in the sense they do not participate in public dance stories and ceremonies, rather they have their own private spirituality (Lutz, 2009). The *Tsilhqot'in* believe in spiritual practice that binds them together as individuals and as a strong community by building trust among each to survive in a remote landscape with a sense of

belonging, acceptance, sharing, and appreciating each other (CEAA, 2010b; Dinwoodie, 2002). The *Tsilhqot'in* believe that spiritual growth will help them hunt and heal. They practiced this through language and song (Bhattacharyya, 2013). The *Tsilhqot'in* did not have a potlatch system like their northern neighbors, but always lived in small groups with chiefs and organized territories (Lutz, 2009). There was also no severe distinction in the work between men and women.

The *Tsilhqot'in* traded for the weapons and tools made of iron that they needed from their neighbours and chose to have less contact with Europeans (Lutz, 2009). The resistance of the *Tsilhqot'in* to work with Europeans did not help in their economic status but it did protect their culture in the sense that the *Tsilhqot'in* language and culture came under less pressure from the capitalist economy, settler society, and government (CEAA, 2010b; Furniss, 1997; Lutz, 2009).

History of Resource Development and Relations with the *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation

At the start of the fur trade, the *Tsilhqot'in* were still living a traditional lifestyle. The *Tsilhqot'in* lifestyle began to change after 1600 as they engaged in transactions with nearby communities (Kunkel, 2014). In 1815, a fur trader of the North West Company visited the *Tsilhqot'in* region and established a trading post at the eastern side of the *Tsilhqot'in* region on the Fraser River (Hickerson, 1973). The *Tsilhqot'in* traded beaver fur for iron pots and guns. In 1831, the North West Company built a trading post in the ancient camps of the *Tsilhqot'in* near the Chilco River and the Chilcotin River. The *Tshilhqot'in* did not like the post in their territory and so they shifted to trade with their northern neighbors directly and they were not interested to work with the Europeans (Lutz, 2009). However, the outbreak of diseases between 1862 and 1864 killed more than half of the *Tsilhqot'in* population. These historical events created mistrust between the

Tsilhqot'in people and the Europeans (Anaya, 2015). In the process of resource development and trade, the introduction of alcohol had also damaged many Indigenous lives while the reserve system has practically emptied the former *Tsilhqot'in* territory, with the result that the *Xeni Gwet'in* people chose to stay and live near Chilco Lake (CEAA, 2010a; Kunkel, 2014).

In 1858, the Fraser River gold rush triggered the formation of a British colony in what would become British Columbia. The British were concerned that the territory would become a part of the United States because most of the Gold seekers were Americans. The Cariboo Gold rush of 1860-63 acted as a stimulus for development activities in the *Tshilqot'in* region. Those activities ranged from clearing out the gold, to the construction of roads into the interior. Such development brought conflict because the *Tsilhqot'in* were apprehensive about the exploitation of the resources in their territory (Kunkel, 2014; Lutz, 2009). In 1880, the *Tsilhqot'in* lifestyle incorporated cattle into their economy, and the horse was still used for seasonal mobility (Furniss, 1999). From 1919 to 1925, the government banned fishing for food/trapping furbearers, and this affected the subsistence economy of the *Tsilhqot'in* (Furniss, 1999). The great depression in the 1930s decreased the price of fur and many small *Tsilhqot'in* businesses were closed down (Cassidy & Dale, 1988). The resilience of the *Tsilhqot'in* was observed as they adapted to this change by returning to their traditional lifestyle (Kunkel, 2014; Lutz, 2009).

After the Second World War, the rapid development of sawmills and logging took place in their territory. The *Tsilhqot'in* are involved in logging and sawmills and took advantage of the labour crisis after the war, including setting up their own small family-owned businesses (Cassidy & Dale, 1988). While by 1950, logging and sawmilling gave some of the *Tsilhqot'in* the opportunity to work, the decline in trapping adversely affected the lives of many others. In 1960, the *Tsilhqot'in* labour force was replaced with technical advancements in sawmills. The

change in the economy of that time affected the *Tsilhqot'in* badly when compared to non-Aboriginal people who could relocate wherever they got the opportunity to work. The *Tsilhqot'in* region is their home (CEAA, 2010a).

The *Xeni Gwet'in* Court Case of 2014

The legal discourse on Aboriginal rights and the title has been evolving in Canada for over 30 years. There are various court rulings beginning with the *Calder* case and continuing up to the most recent *Tsilhqot'in* court case. Aboriginal people have taken these cases with respect to their land and their resources, and have set a precedent to fight for their traditional land rights. The *Sparrow* decision of the 1990s focused primarily upon the Post-Constitution Act status of Aboriginal rights, formulating a requirement that post-1982 infringements of "section 35" rights in the Canadian Constitution must be justified (Borrows, 2015, p,709). The court in the *Sparrow* decision introduced the concept of reconciliation; focusing on the development of a new relationship between federal power and federal duty because of the Crown's fiduciary relationship with Aboriginal peoples (The *Tsilhqot'i*n_05_08_09, p.26).

The *Delgamuukw* decision in December 1997 re-focused the Canadian Supreme Court back to a more comprehensive Aboriginal claim, making some retreat from the emphasis upon "Section 35 (1)" and a return to the language of common law (Penikett, 2009). It confers a right to the land itself and entitlement to use it for a variety of purposes, subject only to the limitation that such uses must not be irreconcilable with the nature of the attachment to the land. *Delgamuukw* is the leading decision on the nature of the Aboriginal title. It gives communally-held exclusive rights to the possession of the land, including the right to decide what uses can be made of the land (The *Tsilhqot'in*_05_08_09, p.21).

The *Nisga'a* Treaty provided for a constitutionally protected parallel society in northwestern British Columbia on about 2000 square kilometers of land, about 5% of the original claim. This was accompanied by a cash settlement of about $200 million, plus access to salmon, and wildlife-management powers in a much wider area, plus forestry advantages (Gibson & Klinck, 2005).

In the *Haida* Nation v. British Columbia (Ministry of Forests) decision, the Supreme Court of Canada decided that the failure of the province to recognize and accommodate the claims being advanced for Aboriginal title and rights led to the Province failing in its obligation to consult. For these and the other reasons, the Province was also found to have failed to justify its infringement of *Tsilhqot'in* Aboriginal title (Penikett, 2009; The *Tsilhqot'in* 05-08-09, p.20). That decision was summarized in the *Tsilhqot'in* Nation V. British Columbia (also referred to as the William Court Case). The case focused on the *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation's claim to the Aboriginal title over 440,000 hectares of land to the south and west of Williams Lake in the BC interior (Kunkel, 2008). The case lasted for five years and cost $30 million.

The litigation was provoked by clear-cut forestry started by the province in the early 1980s and 1990s. There was a plan for extensive clear-cut logging through the caretaker area of the *Xeni Gwet'in*. Plans to authorize forestry in the region cumulated in a blockade at Henry's Crossing in 1992 to prevent forestry from proceeding, and ultimately it went to trial.

To the *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation, the land is inseparable from their history and tradition and, as a people, the *Xeni Gwet'in* have "the sacred duty to protect *nen* (land) of *Tachelach'ed* and the surroundings *nen* on behalf of the *Tsilhqot'in* people" (The *Tsilhqot'in* 05- 8 -09, p.20); logging in the area threatens both their rights and their duty to protect the *nen*. The need to

protect the land and to preserve the water of life connected with that land was the motivation behind the *Tsilhqot'in* Nations' decision to enter into a land claim dispute with the Province.

The 2014 *Xeni Gwet'in* court case is a historic ruling that obliged the government, industry, and other responsible stakeholders to consult and obtain consent from the Aboriginal people before commencing any development activities within traditional lands (Hipwell et al, 2002). The principles of *Delgamuukw* were applied in the *Tsilhqot'in* trial decision.

The *Xeni Gwet'in* court case decision is not only a single example of the dynamic relationship between Canadian and First Nations cultures, but one that has changed the way First Nations can protect and maintain their relationship with their traditional territory. Such cases, land claims agreements, and treaties have helped Indigenous people to announce and achieve their goal of control over their traditional lands and resources. However, government efforts to negotiate with First Nations are possibly only to continue exploiting traditional territory for development activities rather than upholding inherent Aboriginal rights (*Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 2014).

The Fish Lake Case

Fish Lake, and the proposed Taseko gold and copper mine, provides a case study for looking at the complex social, economic, and interpersonal relationship between First Nations, the mining industry, and the government. The lake is the site of one of the largest gold and copper deposits in Canada. Taseko Mines Limited's (TML) proposed Prosperity Mine (later called "New Prosperity Mine") was to develop and operate the New Prosperity Gold-Copper Mine (Taseko, 2016).

The proposed project would consist of an open pit mine. The rate of production would be approximately 70,000 tons of material per day with an average annual production of 108 million pounds of copper and 247,000 ounces of gold over the 20-year period of the mine's life (Taseko, 2016). The project also includes an approximately 125 km long power transmission line with the construction of 2.8 km of new roads (Taseko, 2016). This project was promoted to increase the local economy whose forest industry was impacted by the mountain pine beetle (Turkel, 2011).

Fish Lake, called *Teztan Biny* in the *Tsilhqot'in* language, is valued immensely by the *Xeni Gwet'in* as it holds social, cultural, spiritual, and physical significance that must be handed from one generation to the next (Baptise, 2010a). The *Xeni Gwet'in* and Fish Lake are inextricably interrelated. Knowledge from Elders, and the practice of their traditional activities, and the use of their language in order to pass down this knowledge to the younger generation at Fish Lake is important (Berkes & Turner, 2006). According to Baptise (2010b, p.1): "The *Tsilhqot'in* spiritual connection to *Teztan* is reinforced by the time-depth of traditional use, the pristine nature of the area, and the intact ecosystem. We are spiritually dependent on our ancestors, our traditions, and our land and species. We need all aspects of our culture and pristine environment to be physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally healthy."

The *Xeni Gwet'in* were also concerned about the impact of the mine on the drinking water from the Taseko and Chilko rivers, on salmon habitat, and on the deer and moose populations, which would suffer from the increased access allowed by new roads into the area (Turkel, 2011). The *Xeni Gwet'in* were firm in opposing the mining project as "There would be no way to compensate for the loss of the lake or to replaces it once it was gone" (Turkel, 2011, p.45). Therefore, the Fish Lake case provides an example to understand resource development matters related to Aboriginal land rights, culture, and their environment.

The Prosperity mine was proposed on land in the territory of the *Xeni Gwet'in.* Therefore, members of the *Xeni Gwet'in* have been at the forefront in opposing the project, with the support from other *Tsilhqot'in* people and groups (Wellburn, 2012). Each of the *Tshilqot'in* communities is divided into the independent band, but they have always identified first as *Tshilhqot'in* people despite the division created by the Indian Act (Nelson, 2019). The issues of how industrial development such as mining impacts the culture of the *Xeni Gwet'in* are not only about the way Indigenous people use their land and resources, it is also about the need to protect their identity as Indigenous people. Such mining projects in their traditional territory are a threat to their existence as *Xeni Gwet'in*.

Mining Proposal by Taseko Mine Limited, "Prosperity Gold and Copper Mine Project"

The Prosperity Gold-Copper Mine was proposed by Taseko Mine Limited. Taseko is a British Columbia based company which in 1960 secured rights to mineral deposits in the area (Taseko, 2016). Taseko named the proposal as 'Prosperity' and 'New Prosperity' as the project was submitted two times, in 2009 and 2013 respectively, to the federal government. The 2000 Prosperity Mine proposal was subject to both British Columbia's Environmental Assessment Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

In 2010, the Prosperity Project proposal was granted permission to proceed into implementation by the British Columbia government. After review, on November 2, 2010, the federal government announced that Prosperity project would not be allowed to proceed (CEAA, 2010a). Rejection of the project was due to its significant adverse environmental effects. It was a historical event for the *Tsilhqot'in* people. In June 2011, Taseko modified and re-submitted its proposal from 'draining' the lake to make way for an open-pit gold-copper mine to 'saving' the

lake by placing mine tailings upstream of the lake over a 20 to 30 year period (Taseko, 2016). Taseko revised its proposal to address the factors identified by the previous environmental review panel. The 'New Prosperity Gold-Copper Mine Project' was submitted for review by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency in February 2013 (Taseko, 2016). The project was again rejected. Review of the Prosperity project produced questions about Crown sovereignty as well as Aboriginal rights and title. The issue goes beyond the destruction of Fish Lake since it is a development imposed by industry and government on those who would be most affected by the construction and implementation of the project.

In 2013, the CEAA Hearing took place in the communities that would be most affected by the project, namely the six bands of the *Tsilhqot'in* Nation, Williams Lake, and two Secwepemc communities (Taseko, 2016). The same year, the new panel submitted its report to the Minister of Environment. In February 2014, the Government of Canada again did not grant permission to Taseko to proceed. Taseko disagreed with the federal government's decision arguing that the federal decision was based on a flawed panel report. Two reviews by the federal judiciary were then set in process (Taseko, 2016). The first, which commenced November 29, 2013, challenged certain panel findings and the panel's failure to comply with principles of procedural fairness. The second judicial review commenced on March 26, 2014, with Taseko asking the Federal Court to set aside decisions by the CEAA, the Minister of Environment, and the Governor in Council because of "a failure to observe the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness." In February 2019, the provincial government granted permission to Taseko Mines Limited for an exploration drill in the Fish Lake area.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

Rationale

This chapter is organized into five sections. The first begins with an introduction to the rationale behind the use of qualitative research as a tool based on a single case study method. The second describes the data collection process for this study. The third section describes the data sampling method and analysis. The fourth section discusses the validity and reliability of the research along with methodological challenges.

This study adopted a case study approach to explore and understand the impact of the potential or on-going resource development activities in the traditional territory of the *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation (Yin, 2003). This case study method also helped to understand how such development initiatives may impact the use and values of the land and water resources that are central to sustaining *Xeni Gwet'in* culture.

The application of a qualitative research method helped in this study of the perceptions the *Xeni Gwet'in* have regarding past events within their respective environments (Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis & Dillon, 2003). Qualitative research also recognizes the variation and linkages among the different groups of individuals, organizations, and stakeholders. The case study explores multiple ways of knowing and defining such differences among the following groups to understand the context within the human settings of *Xeni Gwet'in* people and give meaning to their lived realities and experiences (Todd, 2014; Wang & Lui, 2008). Therefore, on a broader level, qualitative research can also influence the strategies for studying the topic (Spencer et al., 2003; Patton, 2005). The intent of this study is to analyze the CEAA Hearing transcripts and attempt to highlight land/water related meanings and understandings as described by *Xeni*

Gwet'in respondents. Moreover, the aim of this study is to understand *Xeni Gwet'in* views about the ongoing impacts of industrial development in their traditional territory.

The CEAA Hearing statements made by *Xeni Gwet'in* people included those statements made between September 1, 2009 and May 3, 2010. I also studied CEAA Hearing documents submitted between February 2, 2013 and September 11, 2013 for the 'New Prosperity' mine project. However, the CEAA Hearing statements around the New Prosperity project were excluded in the final analysis of this study since the exploration of CEAA Hearing documents reached a data saturation point where the expressions of *Xeni Gwet'in* people kept repeating. I use the concept of culture as the focus for interpreting the results.

While this thesis does not include an analysis of the 2013 CEAA Hearing statements, I did review these records. Compared to the 2010 records, the differences in the 2013 statements is the expressed frustration around having to submit Hearing statements for a second time. In 2010, the *Xeni Gwet'in* statements are emotional about how what they feel and value the relationship between the land and water of their traditional *Tsilhqot'in* territory and their *Xeni Gwet'in* culture. Those 2010 transcripts show a passion to protect their traditional land, so they participated in the Hearing Panel and submitted their statements.

In 2013, however, they were frustrated by the fact that the *Xeni Gwet'in* were compelled to again submit statements to a CEAA hearing. The *Xeni Gwet'in* live in a remote landscape and they had to travel at their own costs to be present at the New Prosperity Project hearing. The frustration was not only about the travel time and cost, they were also angry about the need to again explain the intrinsic value of their traditional territory and that they continue to be adamant about protecting all aspects of that territory. The statements show that they wanted to protect their land and water at any cost because of its sacred value and ties to their Indigenous identity.

To tie this together, they were running out of their passion and frustrated about the need to share their story and passion a second time. I thought it was quite remarkable to read through the quotes and transcripts how deeply they feel about their traditional *Tsilhqot'in* territory and the Fish Lake area.

Single Case Study Approach

A case study approach can strengthen the research design by allowing the researcher to identify and engage complex situations in order to understand the phenomenon, context, and people of the research (Baxter, 2010; Yin, 2013). Among different case study approaches, this study employed a single case (holistic) study design (Yin, 2003). A case study is defined as "an intensive study of a single unit for understanding a larger class of (similar) units" (Gerring, 2004, p.342). This study is carried out to seek a deeper understanding of the potential and ongoing impact of resource development activities on the culture of the *Xeni Gwet'in*.

A case study approach is utilized to address the descriptive and explanatory characteristics of the research questions of this thesis (Yin, 2003, p.6). This study helps to understand the complex relationships between TEK, traditions, and the strategic and traditional uses of land/water resources. A single case study approach is applied to understand the research phenomena in a detailed way (Yin, 2013). A single case study approach is appropriate because it helps to examine the situation of the *Xeni Gwet'in* within the context of their traditional lands. This enabled me to explore the descriptive nature of the research questions (Yin, 2003; Yin, 2013). I also feel a single case study is complementary to qualitative research that requires an in-depth study of one group.

A single case study, however, cannot rely on a single source of evidence (Yin, 2003). Therefore, I read many academic articles and books related to Indigenous people and their opinion towards industrial development in their traditional territory. This helped me to study the impact of development activities, such as mining, on their life including its impact on their culture. The review of the literature and the CEAA Hearing transcripts also assisted me to avoid conveying deceptive information, which often is characterized as the negative consequence of using a single case study method. This helped me to produce evidence that led to understanding the *Xeni Gwet'in* case and the answers that addressed my research questions. Nevertheless, I was cautious while gathering evidence to decrease the chances of conveying misleading information (Yin, 2013). Therefore, I read the entire CEAA Hearing transcripts of the Prosperity project numerous times. I am presenting my research with careful consideration of the interpretation of the statements *Xeni Gwet'in* people submitted to the CEAA Hearing by using the *Xeni Gwet'in* statements exactly as they said in the transcripts.

Documentary Analysis of the Data

This study uses transcripts that present the opinions of the *Xeni Gwet'in,* including their experiences of living in the Fish Lake area since time immemorial, following the methods described by Corti & Thompson (2006) and Verdi & Andrew (2011). Use of Government documents, such as CEAA Hearing transcripts was useful to identify social, economic, and political as well as community issues (Selwood, 2002).

The study was also helpful to generate insights into the local First Nation opposition to industrial development. It gave me an opportunity to explore the range of *Xeni Gwet'in* concerns brought before the hearing. The CEAA Hearing transcripts were a useful source to collect *Xeni*

Gwet'in concerns about industrial development within their traditional territory. This helped me to understand how land and water shape *Xeni Gwet'in's* culture. Thus, this research compared information in the statements of *Xeni Gwet'in* respondents and provided me the opportunity to think about those responses through the analysis.

Use of a Data Sampling Method

Selection of a sampling method is an important element in conducting successful qualitative research (Morse et al., 2002). The submitted statements by *Xeni Gwet'in* people were purposefully selected as the sample because the proposed Prosperity project lies in their traditional territory.

To select participants, this study developed a sampling framework by dividing statements into six different groups (see Appendix I): "by *The Tsilhqot'in* National Government", "on behalf of *The Tsilhqot'in* National Government", "individual submission by expert (outsiders) about *The Tsilhqot'in* First Nation", "*The Tsilhqot'in* First Nation (Non *Xeni Gwet'in*)", "The *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation", and, "by *The Tsilhqot'in* and others with specific focus upon the *Xeni Gwet'in* issues". Appendix II list the CEAA Hearing documents for the Prosperity Project, Appendix III lists the numbers of statements across these groupings, while Appendix IV lists more detailed information about the CEAA Hearing transcripts that were found. Appendix V is a codebook on the organization of data under the themes and sub-themes created within the analysis.

A purposeful sampling method provides the freedom and authority to select the most relevant sample (Babbie, 2015). The application of a purposeful sampling method made it possible to give every single sampling unit an equal opportunity of inclusion (Kemper,

Stringfield & Teddlie, 2003). Within the CEAA Hearing transcripts, my focus is on the *Xeni Gwet'in* because they are most directly affected by the project.

Categorization and Use of Data for the Study

A total of 63 pdf files of CEAA Hearing transcripts available from the Prosperity review (Sep-1-2009 to May-3-2010) were identified as being related to the *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation. This includes a total of 7280 pages of transcripts. Out of the 63 files, 9 were submitted by the *Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 8 were presented on behalf of the *Tsilhqot'in* National Government, 4 were individual submissions by experts (outsiders) about the *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation, 21 were representing the *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation (non-*Xeni Gwet'in*). A total of 30 transcript files were submitted by the *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation, and 1 by the *Tsilhqot'in* and others with a specific focus on *Xeni Gwet'in* issues. My research draws upon these *Xeni Gwet'in* focused transcript files. These files include not only submitted documents, but also many face-to-face presentations made by *Xeni Gwet'in* people directly to the CEAA Hearing panel.

Data Analysis Method-Manifest and Latent Content Analysis of Prosperity Project

In conducting qualitative analysis of the texts, I employed constant comparisons, dividing data into different subgroups, considering observed patterns with respect to the research questions (Corbin, & Strauss, 2014). Coding is a systematic study of data that starts with reading each document then coding it to words, sentences, paragraphs, and sections respectively (Krippendorff, 2012). The selection of key words for coding is guided by existing theories and my academic literature review so as to identify critical terms and ideas. I used NVivo software for managing the coding process for the CEAA Hearing transcripts used in this study. The

coding of themes is useful to understand how the *Xeni Gwet'in* statements perceive industrial development in their traditional territory and the effects of such development activities on their culture. New ideas were incorporated throughout the coding process. My assessment of these conceptual categories was made by undertaking concept mapping. Multiple rounds of content analysis are carried out to manage and determine the patterns of the data in relation to the research questions (Schreier, 2012; Krippendorff, 2012). I used two specific types of analysis on the transcripts – manifest content analysis and latent content analysis (Schreier, 2012). I remained flexible according to the need of the research problem while using content analysis for this research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Use of Content Analysis in Prosperity Project

From the original 63 pdf files, I separated out individual statements specifically related to the *Xeni Gwet'in*. I further divided these statements into smaller files so that they could be individually entered in the NVivo software. In this process, I did not change or modify the hearing transcripts, but simply selected the text focused on the *Xeni Gwet'in*. There is no division in the transcripts of CEAA Hearing transcripts of statements by bands. As a result, I read all the transcripts to identify statements by the *Xeni Gwet'in*.

Use of NVivo Software

In this process, I explored the data using QSR: NVivo qualitative data analysis software. There were two basic steps to the process. The first involved generating lists of frequently mentioned words that linked to my research questions. These words helped provide guidance in the selection of my initial themes for step two. In the simple word count, I selected 7000 of the most

frequent words using NVivo (with a minimum length of 3 letters). The most counted word appeared 2696 times whereas the least frequently mentioned was 1. I again used NVivo to pull out the top 100 words from those documents and organized these to review against the research question.

Table 4.1 Latent Analysis of Prosperity Project

Name	Description	Examples
Culture	How are land and water described within the cultural context of the *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	People, cultures/cultural, aboriginal, *Xeni Gwet'in* family, Nations, The *Tsilhqot'in*, traditional, tradition, life story, Elders, native, gathering, chief, *Chilcotin*
Land	Importance of land to the *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	Lands, hunts/hunting, territory, mountain, horses
Place	How *Xeni Gwet'in* perceive 'place' and their traditional territory	Area, impacts, sites, community, environment, resources (land, water, culture), contamination
Water	Value of water to *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	Waters, fishing, river, lake, *Teztan biny*

I then organized my keyword search according to whether they best fit under the categories of 'water', land', 'place', or 'culture' (Table 4.1). Organization of keywords under these categories supported the development of themes that could be further examined in my analysis.

Manifest Content Analysis

The CEAA Hearing text data related to the *Xeni Gwet'in* was then analyzed using manifest content analysis in two stages. In the first stage, a list of phrases, sets of words, and word-pairs

was created. These focused on concepts applicable to the research questions (Bryman & Teevan, 2005). Manifest content analysis refers to the analysis of the apparent, measurable, and countable characteristic of communication such as specific words and phrases that increase the reliability of the concepts and themes for latent content analysis (Babbie, 1998; Dunn, 2005).

Latent Content Analysis

Latent content analysis refers to the analysis of deeper structural issues described within the textual data. It is the process of analyzing data for 'meaning'. Thus, latent content analysis is defined as the overall examination of communication and the interpretation of the major themes and meanings of that data (Bryman & Teevan, 2005). A latent content analysis approach continued the analysis by examining the relationship between concepts and themes within the text (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, & Kyngäs, 2014). For example, I was looking for statements that explained connections between land, water, and culture. The important aspect of the latent content analysis is to organize thoughts before doing the analysis. The academic literature, the word count, and the manifest analysis all helped to focus the latent analysis. New concepts and themes were generated through concept mapping as well.

I read the entire transcript numerous times to develop and elaborate on emerging themes. A conceptual category generated through concept mapping was compared to prevailing concepts to develop final themes. The concept mapping was very important to learn relationships between concepts by arranging them visually into different categories and organizing them by focusing on connections to the research questions (Babbie, 2004). Three rounds of latent content analysis were conducted. These steps helped to create a more refined list of themes.

Latent Content Analysis of Prosperity Project

Drawing upon those transcripts that focused on statements from *Xeni Gwet'in* people, I isolated quotes about land, water, culture, and place. I then considered the statements that addressed topics in my research quetions.

Table 4.2 Coding of words for the analysis of *Xeni Gwet'in* opinions using CEAA Hearing statements

Codes	Sub-Codes
Activities	Hunting Fishing Hiking
Cultural Significance/Cultural Survival	Kinship Elders Chief Lifestory Community Relations Traditional Ecological Value Potlatch[2]
Environmental Ecological Value	Picking berries Use of medicinal herb gathered from the *Tsilhqot'in* territory Use the herbs to heal people
Spiritual Sacred Connection	Value land as a gift from the creator Respect land as a mother earth Perform traditional practices Gatherings and ceremony in their everyday lives

I started with a list of words that are generated based on their frequent occurrence and I then came up with codes such as land-activities, land-cultural significance/cultural survival, land-environmental ecological value, land-spiritual sacred connection, and land-tourism industry. There was a parallel set related to water including water-activities, water-cultural significance/cultural survival, water-environmental ecological values and waters-spiritual sacred

[2] Potlatch: Ceremonial feast among the North American Indian peoples at which possessions are given away or destroyed to display wealth or enhance prestige (Johnsen, 1986).

connection (see Table 4.2). These codes later helped me to create subcodes. I then started coding the CEAA Hearing transcripts to analyze the *Xeni Gwet'in* comments. Based on those comments, themes were refined through multiple coding rounds.

Validity and Reliability of the Study

I spent a lot of time reading the CEAA Hearing transcripts. According to Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, Koole & Kappelman (2006, p.2), "coding schemes must be both effective from a reliability perspective and efficient from a resource perspective." All those times going through these documents helped me to understand things a lot better. Initially, it was a difficult task coding the statements (Holton, 2007). I sometimes even ended up putting everything into the same 'basket' as it was difficult to draw the line between the different categories of my research questions (See Chapter 6). I found a lot of overlap. I was trying to do something that assumes people only talk about things in binary categories, but really Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and thinking are not like that.

Saturated Data Analysis

In the process of creating themes and coding the CEAA Hearing transcripts, I realized that I was reading the same themes repeatedly. In addition, no new themes were coming up as I went through rounds of latent content analysis. At this point, it seemed that my coding had reached a saturation point. According to Ness (2015), the quality and validity of content analysis are determined by its ability to reach a point of data saturation in the analysis of the data used (see also Fusch and Ness, 2015). Since, the "most common guiding principle for assessing the

adequacy of purposive sampling is saturation" (Morse et al., 2002), I believe data saturation is acceptable in this study as I had used a purposeful sampling method.

Internal and External Validity

Measures were taken to address the internal validity of the research results. The study used the CEAA Hearing transcripts and focused only on those transcripts that concerned statements by *Xeni Gwet'in* people. External validity is concerned with whether the results of the study can be generalized beyond the specific research context in which data were collected. Lincoln and Guba (1989) argued that applying the concept of reliability and validity to qualitative research is inappropriate and inapplicable. I agree with the statement since the main criticism of the case study method is that its findings cannot be generalized (Bryman & Teevan, 2005). This study is based on a single case study of *Xeni Gwet'in* peoples' CEAA Hearing statements. The main objective of this study is to examine the views of the *Xeni Gwet'in* people about the Prosperity project in their traditional territory.

Chapter 5: Result of the Analysis

This chapter reports on the analysis done for my research. I present the statements of the *Xeni Gwet'in* people as the unit of analysis. The findings focus only on the CEAA Hearing transcripts of *Xeni Gwet'in* people regarding the Prosperity project and convey a synopsis of the meaning and importance of land and water to culture.

Coding of Data and Organization of Themes

Even though we are going to explore several themes, it is important to acknowledge from the very beginning that understanding the perceptions of *Xeni Gwet'in* people opposing mining activities in their traditional territory is a very complex topic. All the themes are interconnected. I will explain this statement further in Chapters 6 and 7. I am presenting in this chapter the themes and sub-themes that have emerged from the qualitative data analysis. Table 5.1 consists of four columns with separate headings. Information about themes and sub-themes is assembled according to the number of files of CEAA Hearing transcripts along with the number of times those themes and sub-themes were referenced in *Xeni Gwet'in* statements.

Various themes and sub-themes emerged from the coding. The list of themes included land, water, culture, and place. These four themes were selected as they appeared to represent the most counted words that are linked to my research questions. The patterns of CEAA Hearing statements appeared to be closely connected to each other. Therefore, I found it challenging to separate those four themes. Such inseparability of land, water, culture, and place is described in Chapter 6. I then decided to focus the data analysis into two themes only: land and water. As shown in Table 5.1, five descriptive sub-themes emerged under the main themes of 'land' and 'water'.

Table 5.1 Organization of Themes and Sub-Themes

Theme/ Sub-Themes	Description of terms/concepts informing analysis under each theme	Files	References
Land	**"Without land we are nothing"**		
Land-Activities	Hunting, trapping, camping, gathering berries and traditional medicinal herbs and plants for healing, activities related to land not only as sources of food, clothes, shelter but also the harvesting of hay for cattle and horses. Prepare food for winter by drying moose, deer meat, and fish. Harvest wild potatoes from the mountains, eating wild meats and fish. Horseback riding, use of forest and everything else is a source of food and shelter for everyday life. Activities performed on land for survival as well as sustenance are linked to their culture.	60	863
Land-Cultural Significance / Cultural Survival	Land based activities by *Xeni Gwet'in* remain consistent since time immemorial and have great economic and cultural significance. The land is not the only a source of food, clothes, shelter but land is associated with traditional teaching and learning space. This includes performing the rituals, ceremonies such as '*Lehal*' (Stick game played in the funeral), Pow wow, smudging. Teaching and sharing of food, traditional knowledge and values of land through oral storytelling, dance, prayers, hand drum songs, narratives, and	63	892

	metaphors. The practice of belief system such as '*Ishila*' that teaches to respect land without extreme use of it. Teaching and sharing of the traditional knowledge to children by Elders of the community. The *Tsilhqot'in* knowledge about land is rooted in their languages, religions, social systems, culture, and identity. Land teaches young families to keep the cycle of life going for their nation. Everything about land connects to the culture of *Xeni Gwet*'in people; such connections create balance in their traditional way of living. These *Xeni Gwet'in* people want to preserve their culture through teachings and taking the family out on the land. This connects them together as *Tsilhqot'in* people and helps them preserve their identity as the *Xeni Gwet'in* people of the Fish Lake area.		
Land-Environmental Ecological Value & Wish to Prevent its Destruction	The mining project is going to wipe out and chase away deer, moose. We will not be able to make hides and trade it. Loss of traditional culture. Destruction of wildlife or change of migration route to another territory. Loss of any type of land-based activities will affect everyone within the territory. There is a scarcity of animals to hunt/game. Noise pollution from a helicopter, interference in traditional practices (the use of land, forest, animals and their spirits) will hinder us to carry such activities on the land. Drilling areas will	56	550

	have no vegetation by killing medicinal plants and herbs. Increase air pollution of the Fish Lake area. Various physical health issues will deteriorate the whole ecosystem including mental health to the residents of the Fish Lake area. The grief of unnecessary destruction of land is far more painful than losing family members to *Xeni Gwet'in* people (caretakers of the *Tsilhqot'in* Territory). Memories of the landscape are severely altered. The environment is not only for survival and for sustenance but also to preserve and protect the *Xeni Gwet'in* culture. The main concern is the impact of mining in their environment and ecology of the pristine landscape of the Fish Lake area. Abuse of Indigenous hunting and trapping rights would impose an undue hardship on the *Xeni Gwet'in* people and the wildlife of the area. Traditional activities, the sacred law of the picking berries, use of medicinal plants for healing, holding ceremonies like Potlatch gatherings, following the *Tsilhqot'in* law such as respecting the land, animals, forest, all this affects the spirits too. Effect of mining will be a loss of *Nabas* would create not only loss of land but also a vast loss of the *Tsilhqot'in* cultural heritage. Loss of environment will eventually help create the loss of identity of the *Xeni Gwet'in* people.		

Land-Spiritual Sacred Connection	Fish Lake and the *Tsilhqot'in* cultural sites are highly sacred sites. Important to value and respect the land as "Mother Earth" and as a source of life. Living in a spiritual way by keeping sacred laws since time immemorial are principles and values given to *Xeni Gwet'in* by the Creator. The land has a spiritual value. Land makes *Xeni Gwet'in* complete because they believe it is an extension of their body/soul giving them joy, security, comfort to them. In addition, it feeds these people along with healing and protecting *Xeni Gwet'in* people. They love their land in all forms. Sacred regard for all the relation and the survival of language, culture, customs, and traditions, such as sweathouse (purification lodge). Smudging ceremony, Tobacco Treatment, and Pow Wow are practiced out in the land listening to the drum, and traditional songs for healing body, mind, and soul. Telling oral stories and teaching the younger generation by the Elders as they learned exactly from their ancestors about ancestral sacred culture and values of the traditional way of living on a daily basis. This will help the traditional values and stories stay the same. Use of language, oral song, and burial sites is sacred because the *Tsilhqot'in* practices of these activities revolve around the land, forest, animals, and their spirits. If the mining project destroys the land,	50	394

	such *Tsilhqot'in* traditional practices (hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering medicines, plants/berries, holding ceremonies and following our laws, such as respecting the land, forest, animals, water and spirits by taking only what you need so that there are resources for our future generation) this will be directly affected making it impossible to carry out as our ancestors did in the past. *Xeni Gwet'in* people follow the spiritual way of life connected to their traditional land.		
Water	**"Our water is nothing for you, but it means everything for us"**		
Water-Activities	Water based activities such as fishing, utilized fish, the wild Salmon, and wild *Chinook* in the *Taseko* River, *Chilko Lake* from a time prior until present day for sustenance, social, and ceremonial purpose taught by Elders. *Teztan Biny*, use of different material to create tools of survival like traditional dip net to catch salmon. Mining is a hindrance for the traditional use of the land and to use of the lake to perform water-based activities.	50	297
Water-Cultural Significance/Cultural Survival	The memory of the first caught fish with sibling and family in *Teztan Biny* (Fish Lake) holds a significant value to the respondents that have a cultural value of water to their life and they want to protect it in the quest to keep their identity/birth place. Destruction of the lake is to destroy all the lakes and to destroy *Xeni Gwet'in*	49	307

	culture and way of life. For *Xeni Gwet'in* people, Little Fish Lake (*Nabas*) and Fish Lake (*Teztan Biny*) are homes where they learned their traditional knowledge and skills such as drying meat and fish by their grandmother. The Prosperity mining project is likely to deny the right of *Xeni Gwet'in* and the *Tsilhqot'in* Nation to exercise aboriginal fishing rights at *Teztan Biny*. Respondents learned the *Tsilhqot'in* cultural values through oral stories told to them by their Elders. Drumming, singing, storytelling and language is part of a culture that has the potential of destruction by the mining project in their traditional territory so they do not want to destroy their Fish Lake that reflects their identity as the *Xeni Gwet'in* people of the *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation. The mining project will have an affect not only on the *Teztan Biny* but also on their livelihood, future, and future generations too.		
Water-Environmental Ecological Value	The massive concern of the *Xeni Gwet'in* is about degradation of environment and pollution of water resources of the Fish Lake and surrounding areas. Fish Lake is one of the last fresh unpolluted salmon spawning rivers and lakes around. The construction, operation, and long-term maintenance of an open- pit mining project of this magnitude would cause the destruction of the fish bearing quality of the lake. It will	47	244

	significantly affect the ecological, cultural and spiritual integrity of the surrounding lands and waters. These respondents are concerned about the destruction of the Fish Lake area that they call home. So, these respondents want to protect it. Oil extraction from their traditional territories could have a devastating impact on these *Xeni Gwet'in* people, culture, and their environment. Impact on health, impact on the drinking water source, food source as the impact on fish of the lake. Seepage from the mine could be lethal to the pristine Fish Lake and would harm the health of fish, animals and all living beings that depend on and use the Fish Lake. Value of the lake is not quantifiable, and its loss is neither mitigatable nor compensable. As the pollution in water contaminates living beings within the body of water and ultimately people who depend on fish for their protein and livelihood making them sick from tailings of the mining project. Diseases like asthma and cancer would come to all the living beings dependent upon the Fish Lake after mining project development.		

Water-Spiritual Sacred Connection	Fish Lake and other *Tsilhqot'in* cultural sites are highly sacred sites due to the nature of reverence held for life, survival, and earth in general and even places of worship. Numerous lakes, wetlands, and the water are considered as containing healing properties. *Tsilhqot'in* ceremonies, ritual transferred through ancestors, puberty rights, cold-water bath carried out while fishing and harvesting plants, food and medicine and occasional cleansing of hunting and trapping tools, purifications, and offerings are a few examples that hold sacred value to the *Xeni Gwet'in* people. Fish Lake is a sacred ground where you can hear the heartbeat of drumming sound come from the lake and the surroundings *Tsilos (Mt. Tatlo)* area in the evening shows the spiritual connection to these areas and its value as a sacred ground by these respondents. Fish Lake is important as it represents their spiritual and cultural connection to their ancestors.	35	153

Source: NVivo QSR, 2018

Analysis of Data

Table 5.2 lists the percentage of total transcripts where the dominant theme was mentioned. At first glance, it might appear that the land-related themes dominated. However, as I argued in my methodology chapter, these themes are in fact inseparable. Moreover, respondents often used themes such as land and water interchangeably. Therefore, as I was conducting the coding operation, it became apparent to me that when people are talking about land, they might also talk

about water, and vice versa. In addition, many testimonies emphasize the inseparability of land and water.

Table 5.2 *Xeni Gwet'in* statements on land and water in their traditional territory

Themes	% of total transcripts including these themes
Land-Opinion of *Xeni Gwet'in* on land	
Activities	52.17
Cultural significance/cultural survival	54.58
Environmental ecological value	42.71
Spiritual sacred connection	33.28
Water- Opinion of *Xeni Gwet'in* on Water	
Activities	18.27
Cultural significance/cultural survival	18.85
Environmental ecological value	17.41
Spiritual sacred connection	11.22

Source: NVivo QSR, 2018

According to various scholars, Indigenous people have always had a close relationship with their land (Aikenhead, 1997; Barry, 2012; Wilson & Graham, 2005). This relationship has been celebrated, shared, practiced, and valued as an important aspect of their culture since time immemorial. Nelson states "The *Xeni Gwet'in* people are assigned to protect and preserve their traditional *Tsilhqot'in* territory representing themselves as the member of the *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation as a whole" (Bhattacharyya et al., 2012, p.213). Given such significance, this thesis focused on the two research questions and found five inter-related sub-themes related to both land and water, their importance to *Xeni Gwet'in* culture and related concerns about the impacts from mining projects. I present the findings in two different sections. The first consists of a description of the land while the second focuses on water.

Land as a Main Theme

Without a secure future on the land, *Xeni Gwet'in* people are at risk. Therefore, this study attempts to understand the *Xeni Gwet'in* statements in the CEAA Hearing about industrial development in their traditional territory (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 *Xeni Gwet'in* statements on land in their traditional territory

Themes	**% of total 'land' theme mentions**
Land-Opinion of *Xeni Gwet'in* on land	
Activities	29
Cultural Significance/Cultural Survival	30
Environmental Ecological Value	23
Spiritual Sacred Connection	18

Source: NVivo QSR, 2018

Sub-Theme 1: **Land = Activities**

In this section, I review the *Xeni Gwet'in* statements regarding the activities that they carry out on their land. Through the coding process, the first sub-theme that I came up with is in relation to land-based activities that are conducted and practiced. Such activities play an important role in the traditional way of living. For the *Xeni Gwet'in*, the land is not just a place where they live or express a sense of belonging. *Xeni Gwet'in* people respect and value their ancestral land, and the resources available in and on it, through their activities.

Respondents told about a wide range of activities that they perform in the continuation of their traditional life. The activities frequently mentioned by respondents were hunting, trapping, and gathering berries and medicinal herbs for healing. According to one respondent:

> "Our way or life is out on the land, fishing, hunting, and trapping, camping out, gathering berries, medicines, and plants" (Francis Sammy William, 1853-Nov-19-2010, pages 88-125).

Respondents also referred to other activities:

> "For many generations, our family, our people have relied on the Fish Lake area for food, medicine, trapping, and harvesting hay for the cattle and horses. This is where we prepare food for the winter by drying moose, deer meat, and fish" (Doreen William, 1986-March-30-2010, pages 1789-1976).
>
> "The *Xeni* members very much harvest traditional medicines of the mountains, berries, wild potatoes, and eating wild meats and fish" (Betty Lulua, 2074-April-8-2010, pages 2730-2743).

Some of the other activities mentioned included harvesting of hay for cattle and horses, wild potatoes, drying wild meat, having cattle and horses, camping and horse riding. In general, all these statements reveal that land-based activities are a part of their traditional lifestyle.

As presented in Table 5.1, out of the total CEAA Hearing statements analyzed, statements on land-based activities were referenced 863 times. As demonstrated in Table 5.3, about 29 percent of the CEAA Hearing statements submitted by *Xeni Gwet'in* people specifically mentioned land-based activities. This shows a deep knowledge of land-based activities that are integrated into a broader culture (Schnarch, 2004). Such respected use of land demonstrates one form of ownership and control, especially since Indigenous rights and title were never ceded. According to one respondent:

> "People of *Xeni* used to travel to Lilooet to trade horse; dried fish, dried meat, *Tsilhqot'in* crafts, to socialize, they acquired arrow-heads through trade with the neighboring tribes,

> they picked berries and dried them, and they came back with huge bagful's, and pack-boxes for the horses to pack for the winter……. *Tsilhqot'in* did not keep to one specific trail or area for hunting or trapping. The trapline covers the area from Fish Creek up to *Nabis,* and down to the end of Taseko Lake. When hunting or trapping we used the whole area for our needs. Some trapping areas could be given a rest, and go to another place" (Jimmy Bulyan, 2026-March-31-2010, pages 2-268).

Respondents repeatedly expressed that the *Xeni Gwet'in* have been using their ancestral land for various activities such as subsistence and survival, to address daily needs all linked closely to their culture.

Sub-Theme 2: **Land = Cultural Significance/Cultural Survival**

After reviewing the *Xeni Gwet'in* statements, the second sub-theme that emerged under land is cultural significance/cultural survival. As presented in Table 5.1, the sub-theme of cultural significance/ cultural survival related to land is referenced 892 times. To help clarify the importance of land to the cultural survival of the *Xeni Gwet'in* people, Table 5.3 illustrates that approximately 30 percent of CEAA Hearing statements mentioned land and its relationship to *Xeni Gwet'in*. One example is the statement:

> "*The Tsilhqot'in* patterns of land use in the area has remained consistent across generations, dating back at least to the 1800s; "hunting, trapping and ranching as well as habitation have great significance to the people who use the mine development area", including a "great economic and cultural significance" and there is a strong *Tsilhqot'in* cultural interest, in general, in the Fish Lake study area" (Catherine Haller, 2351-May-3-2010, pages 18-57).

Cultural significance/cultural survival is closely related to the respondents' opinions on their traditional land. This second sub-theme used culture as a lens to understand the statements by *Xeni Gwet'in* people. The literature and transcripts show that the *Xeni Gwet'in* people have been living in their traditional territory since time immemorial (Lutz, 2009; Turner et al., 2000; Wilson, 2008), and that their traditional territory is significant in the *Xeni Gwet'in* culture. While reviewing the statements, I recognized that to these respondents, the land is a resource to address everyday needs (such as a source of food, clothes, shelter, and income) and is also associated with traditional teaching and learning space. The land is central to the teaching of traditional knowledge about sharing, performing ritual, ceremonies and other activities like *Lehal* [3], smudging, and traditional ways of sharing knowledge and teaching about sharing as a part of the culture. One of the testimonies about sharing as a part of culture states that:

> "*The Tsilhqot'in* people often share their food with each other…There is a teaching about sharing, that you should never go hunting or fishing and then brag about it to other people unless you are prepared to give those people some of you kill or catch. Otherwise, they said this would make the person feel *ishila*[4]" (Julia Quilt, 1853-Nov-19-2010, pages from 54-159).

Other statements say:

> "We use land seasonally. Individual families, Elders, and youth use the area to teach and learn their tradition and culture. Children taught to respect the land and take only what they

[3] Lehal (Stick game played in funerals and other gatherings).
[4] Ishila"= This is an old *Tsilhqot'in* word used in connection with this teaching to describe how a person would feel if they understood that you had meat and they did not, you were not prepared to share" (Julia Quilt, Elder of *Gex Nat's Endghili* (*Yunest'in*) also known as (Stone) reserve, pages from 1853-Nov-19-2010, page 61).

> need for food and for use. This way food and medicine plants will be there for them in the future" (Dinah Lulua, 2262-Apri-23-2010, pages 1-5).

The testimonies by *Xeni Gwet'in* respondents also mentioned that teaching and sharing of knowledge is practiced through ritual, belief, ceremonies, prayers, oral stories, traditional knowledge, dance, language, and hand drum songs. The *Xeni Gwet'in* Elders transfer traditional knowledge to the young generation to preserve their culture through teaching and by taking them out onto the lands. Carrying out the old traditions and embracing such ancient knowledge helped the *Xeni Gwet'in* culture to remain strong across the generations. A statement by a scholar who gave testimony specifically mentions that:

> "Much of Indigenous peoples', including the *Tsilhqot'in* knowledge about the land is embedded in their languages, religions, ceremonies, cultures, social systems and identity. Teachings that govern human behavior towards the environment come in many forms, including narratives, metaphors, and ceremonies" (Nancy Turner, 1854-Nov-19- 2014, pages 93-117).

A young respondent stated:

> "Our land and our culture are very important to us. We can't just destroy it …. Because what they are doing is killing, they are killing my descendants' future, our historical land and most importantly the animals …. I still have a lot to learn about my culture …. I don't see how they don't see that they are killing our future, along with me. Or maybe they just don't care …. It's like going home and stabbing your kid. That is how I see it and that is how it feels. No one should have to fight for freedom" (Kayla Lulua, 1967-March-29-2010, pages 1708-1709).

As mentioned, the transfer of traditional knowledge to the younger generation by Elders shows that respondents are concerned about losing their identity in the course of development intervention on their traditional land. Respondents want to preserve their *Xeni Gwet'in* identity. From all the statements, the fundamental aspect of preserving the culture of the *Xeni Gwet'in* is through respecting and valuing the traditional land. While reviewing the statements, I also noted that respondents mentioned the importance of culture associated with the land. As one of the respondents said:

> "We are here fighting for Fish Lake from the Taseko Mines because of the damage it will cause to our lands, animals, and waters…..We do not look at our trees, minerals or waters as money. We look at them as Mother Earth's gift to help us heal, live and protect…..Our culture revolves around our lands" (Sami-Joe Perry, 1991-March 31-2010, pages 2207-2209).

The expressions linked to the land in relation to cultural significance/ cultural survival indicate that traditional knowledge of land-based activities, ownership, control over the uses of, and value of land and water of their traditional territory are combined into a comprehensive culture (Schnarch, 2004). Analysis of the CEAA Hearing statements show respondents expressing their concern about the effects of mining or any development activities on their traditional land, on their culture, and how this is a potential threat to their identity. These respondent statements also reflect the knowledge that any development intervention can contribute to cultural destruction. Respondents suggest that if mining activities occur in their ancestral land then the transfer of traditional/cultural knowledge to future generations will be impossible. Such traditional knowledge is a key part of culture. The *Xeni Gwet'in* need the natural and physical resources of their

traditional land to practice, perform, and teach their culture to the younger generations as their ancestors did.

Sub-Theme 3: Land = Environmental Ecological Value

Respondents offered a wide range of concerns about the effect of mining activities on the natural environment of the Fish Lake area. One respondent stated that:

> "If this mine does go in… it's going to wipe out, chase away our moose and deer like, we won't be able to make hides, won't be able to trade it. It would be like more of loss of our culture. We are meat dependent people. We live off of it and we still do" (Alex Lulua, 1991-March-31-2010, pages 2110-2143).

Another respondent said:

> "I believe all the wildlife will either be destroyed or have to move into another territory including migration route…" (Gilbert Solomon, March-29-2010, pages 127-139).

The review of testimonies shows that the *Xeni Gwet'in* traditional territory is rich in its geographical, physical, environmental, and ecological aspects. The traditional territory of the Fish Lake area is dynamic in its characteristics as well as in its use. Such usage of land is equally shared by all living beings from wild animals, birds, and fish, to Indigenous people. This Fish Lake area also falls under the migration route for various wild animals such as moose, deer, and bear. Therefore, for the *Xeni Gwet'in*, any development intervention in their traditional land is a threat for all living beings.

Review of CEAA Hearing statements led me to develop the third sub-theme under land: its environmental ecological value. As shown in Table 5.3, statements under this sub-theme cover 23 percent of the transcripts used. Statements connected to the environmental ecological

value subtheme were referenced 550 times in *Xeni Gwet'in* statements (see Table 5.1). One respondent states:

> "I have seen the mining exploration activity impact the animals and guiding because the game is not as abundant as before. Examples of disturbances are; noise pollution of helicopter activity scaring the animals, employees driving with excessive speeds on the roads and almost ran into a crew of our game trainees and teachers….. I have seen drill areas where there is still no vegetation, such as *Tcheikazan* area south of Taseko *Tchuzka* Lakes. I do not want to see this kind of impact take away my being….." (Emery Dean Philips, 2337-April-30-2010, pages 1-2).

Some of the examples that respondents talked about are scarcity of game for hunters, a decrease in the quality of air of the Fish Lake area, disturbance in the vegetation such as medicinal herbs and plants, effect on wild animals, birds, insects, and the overall life of the Indigenous people. Pollution, mental and other health issues, as well as ecosystem change are major concerns. Another respondent stated:

> "The destruction impact of the Prosperity Project alone will likely cause mental health concerns and physical deterioration of health among *Tsilhqot'in*……. The grief over unnecessary destruction of land is likely far more painful than losing family members, to people who have been caretakers of land for thousands of years. Memories invoke images of the past, and it will be impossible for *Tsilhqot'in* (present and future generations) to enjoy and cherish the same mental images after the landscape is severely altered…." (Linda Smith, 2351-May-3-2010, pages 184-190).

These responses thus reflect on the commonly held concerns within this sample of respondents about the physical, mental, and environmental impact of the mining project. Reviews of these

statements explain that environmental ecological aspects are imperative to the *Xeni Gwet'in* culture. The land, and being on the land, is essential for intergenerational cultural transmission. The statements from respondents show that *Xeni Gwet'in* people live off the land for subsistence and income generation, and undertake various traditional activities on their land. All of this underscores their concern for the health of the ecosystem. Respondents do not overuse the resources that they have in their territory more than they need because they value the environment as the source of their livelihood and the foundation of their cultural identity.

Review of the CEAA Hearing statements show that valuing and respecting the environment is not only for survival or for sustenance. It is also to preserve the resources for future *Xeni Gwet'in* generations. Thus, it is indisputable that environmental and ecological features of the land have value in the lives of the *Xeni Gwet'in*. The main concern of many respondents is the impact of the mining project on the ecology and environment of this untouched remote *Tsilhqot'in* territory. As one respondent said:

> "The adverse effects of the Prosperity Project on the Aboriginal Hunting and Trapping Rights are unreasonable, would impose undue hardship on the *Xeni Gwet'in* and *Tsilhqot'in* peoples, and would interfere with their preferred means of exercising their Aboriginal Hunting and Trapping Rights" (Marilyn Baptiste, 1854-Nov-19-2014, pages 104-117).

The exercise of traditional ways of living is their Aboriginal right. They are apprehensive about the fact that if development happens in their traditional territory, they will not be able to continue these traditional activities. Therefore, implementation of any mining project is considered a serious threat to the Aboriginal rights to ownership and use of their traditional land by these respondents. Destruction of the environment will affect the whole *Tsilhqot'in* community

including the *Xeni Gwet'in* as they would lose their identity and way of life as an Indigenous people. Loss of identity would then result in loss of their cultural heritage.

Sub-Theme 4: Land = Spiritual Sacred Connection

After reviewing the CEAA Hearing transcripts, the fourth sub-theme identified is land in relation to its spiritual sacred connection. Land is a source of spirituality and spiritual connection for respondents. Table 5.1 shows that land in relation to the spiritual sacred connection is referenced about 399 times in the transcripts. Thus, review of the CEAA Hearing statements shows that land is a source of spirituality and spiritual connection for respondents. One respondent stated that:

> "Fish Lake and other *Tsilhqot'in* cultural sites are highly sacred sites due to the nature of the reverence, which is held for life, survival and the earth in general, that one could say confidently that all the cultural sites are places of reverence or even places of worship" (Loretta William, 1943-March-25-2014, pages 1110-1125).

Such statements explain that the spiritual and sacred connection is a key to explaining the importance of land to the *Xeni Gwet'in*. In the CEAA Hearing transcripts, many respondents used the term 'Mother Earth' when they talked about the sacred value of their traditional land. The importance of this sub-theme is that it reveals that the *Xeni Gwet'in* value and respect the land as a mother. In addition, the land acts as a source of life. As one respondent stated:

> "Since time immemorial, the *Chilcotin* people have lived in a spiritual way in keeping with our sacred laws, principles and values given us by the Creator. Our ways of life are based on respect for the land and its resources, a sacred regard for all relations and the survival for our language, culture, customs and traditions." (*The Tsilhqot'in* National Congress (TNC), 2154-April-15-2010, pages 1-4).

Such testimonies help to explain that Indigenous people acknowledge and respect the spiritual value of their traditional land for the survival and the sustenance of their traditional way of life. Therefore, land is not just an area of space that has a physical value, but it also has a spiritual value to these respondents.

Spiritual sacred connection holds significant value because it acts as a way of keeping the sacred law that these Indigenous people follow in their traditional lifestyle. Review of the statements illustrates that about 18 percent of the CEAA Hearing statements talked about land in terms of the spiritual sacred connection it has to the respondents (Table 5.3). Land in relation to spiritual sacred connection helps people to heal, comfort, protect, as well as be nourished. One respondent mentions that:

> "We have many structures of this nature out on the lands, this sweat house is a spiritual entity that we continue utilizing to keep ourselves balanced spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally. As *Tsilhqot'in* people, we have come through many hardships of encroachment and alienation; we continue to practice our beliefs as *Nenqayni* (people of the land)" (*Denisiqi* services society of *The Tsilhqot'in* First Nation, 2155-April-2010, pages 1-23).

According to statements by the respondents, land is not just important as a physical space, resource, and source of continuing cultural activities. These respondents treat land as a spiritual entity with utter respect. The traditional territory of the Fish Lake area provides a location to purify body and spirit. Purification of body and spirit is performed through traditional cleansing and healing ceremonies in the Sweat Lodge. The smudging ceremony is a healing ritual that cleanses the body, mind, and soul. The tobacco treatment is used to pray and give thanks to the creator and Mother Earth. The medicinal bath is one of the ways of healing that is practiced out in the land and

so is listening to drum, flute, and traditional songs. The respondents chose to embrace and follow such sacred values, teachings, laws, and ceremonies in their lives as their ancestors did. The respondents' way of transferring their spiritual knowledge to the younger generation is through storytelling by the Elders of the community. Storytelling teaches the younger generation about ancestral sacred culture and values that helps to bring a sense of understanding and embrace traditional ways of living. One of the statements says;

> "*The Tsilhqot'in* people continue to practice oral stories throughout daily basis. Through these oral stories, many disciplines are known on how to prepare for ceremonies, ritual beliefs, and to be a responsible adult. The sacred oral stories also prove the existence of the *Tsilhqot'in* People and their way of cultural values…. Sacred stories are an identity for *Tsilhqot'in* People to where they come from and who owns a certain territory on *Tsilhqot'in* land mass…. Many of these sacred oral stories are passed down through many generations. Many youths are taught to learn right from wrong within these oral stories. Oral stories bring wisdom and beliefs and values" (Maryann William, 1991-March-31-2010, pages 244-263).

Other respondents talked about storytelling, language, respecting land, use of medicine, learning traditional knowledge and values from Elders, and teaching that to the younger generation to help them spiritually connect to the land. As one respondent said:

> "*The Tsilhqot'in* people just tell a story the way it was taught to them; that's how the story stays the same. Some of them even remember the names of the *Tsilhqot'in* people who did things a long time ago…" (Joseph John William, 1853-Nov-19-2010, Pages 28-54).

Review of the testimonies also shows that storytelling teaches the *Tsilhqot'in* generations to gain traditional knowledge to protect the land and to help them to get to know all the trails for hunting. Another respondent states that:

> "This is the spiritual and economic homeland of our people…. We practice our traditional native medicine, religion, sacred, and spiritual ways. Such as *Xeni Pow Wow* is established to close the gap between the Elders and youth. It has also brought back our traditional drumming, singing and dancing" (Joyce Charleyboy Cooper, 2135-April-15-2010, pages 1-11).

This spiritual connection is continued through various activities performed on their land. Such activities include the *Pow Wow*, healing methods, and use of land as burial sites. These practices of ancestral ways of living helps close the generation gap within their community. Such expressions of cultural and spiritual connection also show a profound association to the Fish Lake area as part of their ancestral home. Two respondents mentioned that:

> "I love to camp and one of my favorite places to camp is *Teztan Biny* because of the scenery, it looks like heaven. *Teztan Biny* is sacred and special to me because it is a part of me. The whole *Tsilhqot'in* is a part of me" (Naomi Setah, 1986-March-30-2010, pages 181-184).
>
> "We don't need to prove anything"! We have been here for centuries; and if our ancestors were here, you would hear it loud and clear straight from the heart. They are not here but they are in Spirit. No matter where we go out on the land, up the mountains, they are always there. And there is not a place where they have not left their footprints" (Maryann Solomon, 2151-March 30-2010, pages 1-2).

Despite the threat from the mining project to their spiritual connection to the land, these respondents still chose to live a traditional way of life. The spiritual connection to their land represents a core characteristic and life story of the *Xeni Gwet'in* people. These indigenous people follow a spiritual way of life because they believe that it is the true way of life. Such spiritual connection to their land is the way to respect their sacred *Nenquay* (the surface of the earth/ living off the earth). Such spiritual connection to their traditional land explains the fundamental reason to oppose mining activities in their ancestral land.

Water as a Main Theme

This section of the chapter explores descriptions about water as a main theme within the analysis. Four descriptive sub-themes were identified: water = activities, water = cultural significance/cultural survival, water = environmental ecological value, and water = spiritual sacred connection (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 *Xeni Gwet'in* statements on water in their traditional territory

Themes	% of total 'water' theme mentions
Water-Opinion of *Xeni Gwet'in* on land	
Activities	28
Cultural significance/cultural survival	29
Environmental ecological value	26
Spiritual sacred connection	17

Source: NVivo QSR, 2018

Sub-Theme 1: Water = Activities

According to CEAA Hearing statements submitted by *Xeni Gwet'in* respondents, water is an essential resource within the traditional territory of the Fish Lake area. For the people, water-

based activities performed in their traditional territory are particularly important. Whether people are selling or eating fish, or performing their traditional activities on their land, water-based activities link closely to their livelihood. One of the respondents stated that:

> "The *Xeni Gwet'in* members very much harvest traditional medicines off the mountains; berries, wild potatoes, and eating wild meats and fish……water is more precious than gold…….*Teztan Biny,* Fish Lake, we do fishing, hunting, harvesting wild potatoes, medicines, tea leaves, berries, and it is very sacred ground with pit houses and burial grounds" (Betty Lulua, 2074-April-8-2010, pages 4-17).

Fishing is an important part of *Xeni Gwet'in* culture. Table 5.4 shows that statements regarding water in relation to fishing activities account for 28 percent of the submitted statements. As shown in Table 5.1, water as a sub theme is referenced 297 times. Such water-based activities are directly connected to the traditional lifestyle that respondents live, are taught, and are shared by their Elders and ancestors. Hence, water has significant cultural importance. The place of water in *Xeni Gwet'in* life as important is expressed by one of the respondents saying:

> "My mother would trap and fish with her father and siblings. They would fish at Fish Lake every summer and every fall of every year. They would catch so much fish and take it home to *Nabis* where the females of the family would dry all the fish. They would eat that fish and also would eat all through the winter…. Fish Lake is a big part of the family and it will always be. The family still goes to the lake and fishes and the catching is great….*Nabis* and Fish Lake is my family's homeland. If destroyed there is going to be so much pain that cannot be cured" (Geraldine William, 1982-March-28-2010, pages 1-2).

Water-based activities, like fishing in the Fish Lake area, reflects a strong cultural connection to traditional territory. Therefore, respondents want to continue these water-based activities

embracing the traditional *Tsilhqot'in* lifestyle. The review of CEAA Hearing statements shows that people performed activities such as fishing, camping, and making of traditional dip nets to catch salmon. CEAA Hearing statements illustrate that water-based activities are traditionally shared and transferred by their Elders. As one respondent stated:

> "Fish lake is a good fishing place. I like that place anyways, but. How you going to remove that place for? Why? I don't think fish will survive if you just move anywhere…You are not just going to destroy this beautiful fishing place, hunting" (Michael Setah, 2074-April-8-2010, pages 1-7).

The CEAA Hearing statements reveal distress regarding the potential impact of mining on the traditional territory, eventually affecting water-based activities that their lifestyle relies upon. For this reason, respondents are apprehensive about mining.

Sub-Theme 2: Water=Cultural Significance/ Cultural Survival

Table 5.4 shows that statements related to water as being important for cultural significance/cultural survival accounts for 29 percent of the statements analyzed in this study. Table 5.1 illustrates that water in relation to its cultural significance/cultural survival is a key theme, referenced 307 times throughout the CEAA Hearing statements. The review of these statements shows that water plays a significant role in the culture of the *Xeni Gwet'i*n. One respondent states that:

> "My brother took me fishing and I caught my first fish, but I didn't keep it because it was small…. This is my memory of *Teztan*. I have begun to learn my culture and heritage. However, how am I supposed to do that if Prosperity Mine destroys everything before I can know who I am?" (Jeffan Smith, 1967-March-29-2010, pages 142-144).

The emotional and cultural value of water-based activities is embraced by respondents while carrying out traditional activities. As one respondent explains, there is a specific way of preparing salmon that has been passed down through many generations. Thus, fresh clean water is necessary to practice traditional activities, and there is a strong cultural value and significance of water to the life of these respondents. The mining project presents a high potential risk to the water and to the culture by the proposed mining project. As one respondent states:

> "We do have big connections with the nature of *Teztan Biny*. We have Elders Gathering and work with the youth about values of our culture at *Teztan Biny*……we need to keep this beauty as is, as it is so our young generations to come can enjoy the land and culture so that we can teach, so they can teach their children… Yes, there will be a big impact on our community, our culture, and our traditional values that have been carried over from generations to generations" (James Lulua Senior, 1996-March-31-2010, pages 113-116).

Another respondent states that:

> "The only place other than *Xeni* that feels like home is Little Fish Lake (*Nabas*). I like fishing and exploring around Little Fish Lake (*Nabas*), and Fish Lake (*Teztan Biny*). I like watching my?*etsu* (grandma), make dry meat and fish. I like listening to my ?*etsi* (grandpa), when he tells me stories. I do not want Taseko Mines to destroy our home. This is where I am learning my culture and language. Just like the way that I am learning to drum and sing at the panel hearings" (Tamara William, 1986-March-30-2010, pages 116-117).

Respondents comment on learning their language, singing, drumming, fishing, and drying meat skills as a part of their culture from their Elders in the traditional *Tsilhqot'in* land they call

home. Therefore, respondents want to protect and preserve their homeland to protect their culture and identity as *Xeni Gwet'in*. One respondent stated that:

> "This is an oral history from mom and dad; people from miles around used to get together at *Teztan*, for fishing, visiting, building sweathouses, sweats. When people got together, they shared whatever food they had. They fished and shared the fish that they caught. People got together to tell stories; sing and dance, it was the way to socialize, this was their way before and after European contact. Most of the *Tsilhqot'in* of that time made and had their own songs; which still exist today ….. I do not like the thought of losing the land that dad and mom lived in and worked so hard to make it livable" (Mary-Jane William, 2026-March-31-2010, pages 11-19).

Testimony illustrates that these respondents need Fish Lake for their people and especially for the younger generations to have a cultural connection to their ancestors and keep their identity and cultural values intact.

Sub-Theme 3: Water=Environmental Ecological Value

Many of the *Xeni Gwet'in* respondents live in the Fish Lake area and embrace a traditional *Tsilhqot'in* way of life that is embedded in nature and the surrounding environment. Therefore, there is concern about environmental degradation and pollution of water. Assessment of the CEAA Hearing statements confirm that Fish Lake is an essential part of *Xeni Gwet'in* land use and cultural identity. One of the respondents states that:

> "We get some of our clean drinking water up by Fish Lake when we go camping. You will be taking away our way of life and destroying our clean water we all drink" (Edmund Haines, 1986-March-30-2010, pages 1-2).

Fish Lake is one of the last lakes untouched by pollution. Respondents want to protect and preserve the water of the Fish Lake areas. They want to consume water for drinking purposes, performing different water-based activities that link to their culture and preserve it for their future generations. As one respondent states:

> "If Fish Lake, *Teztan Biny,* mine starts, and poison gets into the river, it will not only affect fish and animals downstream because fish come out of the lakes and go downstream for the summer then head back up to the lakes before the ice ….
>
> When they get back into the lakes, the animals that eat fish, like ospreys, eagles, mink, otter, and people, will wind up getting cancer like the fish in the Great Lakes that have bright red cancer lumps on their lips. All the lakes in the Interior that are connected to the Taseko River will be affected" (Herbert Jeff, 2135-April-15-2010, pages 1-11).

The statement illustrates that Fish Lake area needs to be protected from mining projects because of its ecological, cultural, and spiritual integrity.

According to the Table 5.4, the CEAA Hearing statements about water that are related to environmental ecological value account for more than 26 percent of the testimonies. As shown in the Table 3, the environmental ecological value of water is referenced 244 times. Respondents are concerned about the life of their people and the resources available in the traditional territory. One respondent presented her ideas in a poem that she read during the CEAA Hearing:

> "Taseko Mines Limited is proposing an open-pit gold and copper mine in the *Tsilhqot'in* Territory to destroy Fish Lake. Drainage the lake just for the gold and copper is just GREED. For money, and destroying a wilderness, which will never be replaced ever. There is a lot of history there." (Theresa Wiliam Stump, 2026-March-31-2010, pages 26-28)

Another respondent stated that:

> "It is not simply a First Nation 'fishery' that is about to be destroyed—it is the permanent use (material and spiritual) of a richly productive part of the *Tsilhqot'in* land-based economy, situated historically and contemporaneously in the heart of their social and spiritual landscape. Its value to the *Tsilhqot'in* is not quantifiable, and its loss is neither immitigable nor compensable." (Patt Lancombe, 2290-April-30-2010, pages 1-26)

The respondent statements represent Indigenous voices to protect the water resource. Water is a precious resource in their traditional territory. All the statements mentioned above echo fear about destruction of the lake, destruction of the environment, ecology, and overall natural system that eventually will affect all the living beings in the territory. These respondents feel that Fish Lake, and the other surrounding lakes, are important for them to protect because that will ensure food for future generations:

> "This pollution contaminated all living things within the body of water, ultimately the people who depend on the fish for their main source of protein and their economic livelihood. Polluting our waters may cause long-term effect. People who are exposed to the toxic waste from tailings become sick. They develop skin rashes, headaches, vomiting, diarrhea. In fact, the symptoms of mercury poisoning can cause permanent damage like cancer" (Shannon Stump William, 1986-March-30-2010, pages 119-130).

Sub-Theme 4: Water = Spiritual Sacred Connection

Table 5.4 lists that 17 percent of the CEAA Hearing testimonies in my sample mentioned water in relation to a spiritual sacred connection. Table 5.1 shows that water as a spiritual sacred value is referenced 153 times in the files. Review of CEAA Hearing statements illustrates that water is a

sacred entity with many healing properties. One respondent states that: "*Teztan* has numerous lakes, wetlands… and the water is considered to contain healing properties…… Fish Lake is a spiritual sanctuary, a spiritual centre of the *Tsilhqot'i*n" (Linda Smith, 2342- April-30-2010, pages 23-418).

Fish Lake and the surrounding area is also important for various traditional ceremonies and rituals. As one respondent described: "There are *Tsilhqot'in* ceremonies besides puberty rights and cold-water bath…. carried out while fishing and harvesting plant, food and medicine…. an occasional cleansing of hunting and trapping tools" (Loretta Smith, 1943-March-25-2014, pages 1-20). Water rituals carried out in the lake for cleansing, purifications, offerings, puberty rights, and cold-water baths hold sacred value. Such traditional ceremonies confirm deep spiritual and sacred connections to the water. As one respondent states: "*Teztan Biny* and the surrounding area is culturally and spiritually important to the *Tsilhqot'in* Nation, to *Tsilhqot'in* communities and to individual *Tsilhqot'in* people" (2351-May-3-2010, pages 1-57).

Xeni Gwet'in people believe they have a responsibility to protect and nurture water. Another respondent stated that such a spiritual and sacred relationship with water is a means to connect with the ancestors. Ancestors are a crucial part of their existence because the whole belief system, values, teachings, and lifestyle is taught, shared, and transferred to them by their ancestors. Thus, a number of respondents state:

> "We strongly oppose the destruction of important lakes such as *Teztan Biny*, as it represents our spiritual and cultural connection to our ancestors" (Chief Percy Guichon, 2351-May-3-2010, Pages 2-57).

> "*Tsilhqot'in* healers and how they continually go back to *Teztan Biny* for cleansing, for purification and healing purposes themselves" (Chief Joe Alphonse, 2342-April-30-2010, pages 24-418).
>
> "The *Tsilhqot'in* spiritual connection to *Tezta*n is reinforced by the time-depth of traditional use, the pristine nature of the area, and the intact ecosystem. We are spiritually dependent on our ancestors, our traditions, our land and its species. We need all aspects of our culture and pristine environments to be physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally healthy" (Chief Baptiste, 2356-May-3-2010, pages 1-5).

From the CEAA hearing statements, it is clear that respondents want to practice their traditional ways of living and follow the sacred laws and values given to them by their creator to protect water. Water is thus sacred for the *Xeni Gwet'in* people – they believe that their existence is impossible without water from Mother Earth.

Chapter 6: Decolonizing Research: Social science and an Indigenous holistic approach

As a researcher, I acknowledge my responsibility to let the reader know about the choices I made in selecting the best research methods to address my research questions (Putt, 2013). I employed a single case study of the *Xeni Gwet'in* to identify and engage with understanding the phenomenon and context of the research (Baxter, 2010; Yin, 2013). I wanted to examine and explore Indigenous perceptions about industrial resource developments in their traditional territory in order to understand impacts on the environment and culture of the people. I used the CEAA Hearing statements submitted by the *Xeni Gwet'in* as they are the community most likely to be affected by the proposed Prosperity mine project.

Throughout the qualitative analysis component of my work, I became aware of the complications involved in trying to conduct western social science research among Indigenous people. I was adopting a reductionist social science approach, using transcript data from a colonial 'judicial' process, where I was trying to separate the results into one category or another. For example, if there is land where people can collect medicinal herbs, such knowledge about medicine is traditional ecological knowledge. Such traditional knowledge is associated with the identity and culture of the Indigenous community. Identity and culture are linked to the intergenerational transfer of knowledge. Such transfer of traditional knowledge is also linked to spirituality. Since such categorization of statements into single categories does not fit with the Indigenous holistic sense of spiritual, cultural, environmental, and historical oneness, my analysis method was only partially helpful.

The *Xeni Gwet'in* statements were made to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, an agency of the colonizing government. An important thing to consider here is that

gathering data from an Indigenous people does not necessarily indicate Indigenous knowledge has been gathered (Simonds &Christopher, 2013). Since the CEAA Hearing transcripts also represent the western colonial judicial entity, those transcripts were not especially collected to understand the *Xeni Gwet'in* views on land, water, and culture within their traditional territory. This highlights the challenges associated with using colonial data, information, or processes when trying to build understanding or address reconciliation discourses in Canada (Todd, 2014). Therefore, a western social science method makes it difficult to understand the CEAA Hearing statements as it forces a separation of ideas into discrete categories even though the meanings being communicated by Indigenous testimony may understand those ideas as intimately interwoven. In a western way of knowing, such divisions are artificial. As a researcher, I was confused and lost within the methodological approach I had considered for the analysis of this study.

Decolonization of the research methodology was needed. According to Simonds and Christopher (2013, p.2185), "decolonizing research is a process for conducting research with Indigenous communities that places Indigenous voices and epistemologies in the center of the research process." I then decided to reflect upon an Indigenous holistic method to obtain a clearer picture of my situation as a researcher. Holistic research is likely to use a range of methods in analyzing data that is framed by an interdisciplinary strategy, it also integrates research concepts and practices from a number of disciplines (Kenny, Faries, Fiske & Voyageur, 2004). Indigenous people have their own epistemologies or sciences of knowledge. These can only be revealed by reflection on lives and traditions (Barnhardt & Oscar Kawagley, 2005). An appropriate holistic method would honour the past, present, and future in interpretive and analytical research processes. It would include historical references and intergenerational discourses and would honour the interconnectedness of all of life and the multi-dimensional aspects of life on the Earth. It would

build this interconnectedness into the research design and implementation, and would honour the spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental aspects of the person and the community in all research protocols, methodologies, and analyses. Thus, as an Indigenous person who is learning about research methods, I find it valuable to use a holistic Indigenous approach. The holistic framework approach helped me to be in a better position as a researcher to identify realistic, relevant, and practical results of the study.

As claims of knowledge cannot be limited to one approach, research involving Indigenous people demands methodologies that engage with a reflexive evaluation of negotiated research design, data collection, and data analysis (Nicholls, 2009, p.117). Exploring reflexivity as a methodology, this study is informed by my position as an Indigenous researcher from a different country. Since reflexivity is one part of a broader approach to reframe and decolonize research, it can be effective in engaging and critiquing the systems of the dominant culture (Russell-Mundine, 2012). Self-reflection as a researcher helped me to understand my position as a cross-cultural Indigenous person reflecting on my own worldview as well as the case study. To me, this necessarily means understanding us as human-beings, and our relationships with land and water.

Understanding that social science and Indigenous holistic approaches are two parallel research methods, the whole point of this research journey, and also my personnel journey as an Indigenous researcher from a different culture, placed me in a vulnerable position. I realize now, however, that this journey was a useful one. I also believe that the story of my research journey and learning experiences along the way might be useful to other Indigenous researchers who want to conduct research with Indigenous people.

Inseparability of Land and Water

Figure 7.1 presents one interpretation of the way the *Xeni Gwet'in* value the land and water of their traditional territory as based on the statements presented at the CEAA Hearings. This study shows the interconnected character of land and water with various aspects of *Xeni Gwet'in* culture. Both land and water have a strong spiritual component in the *Tsilhqot'in* tradition and experience.

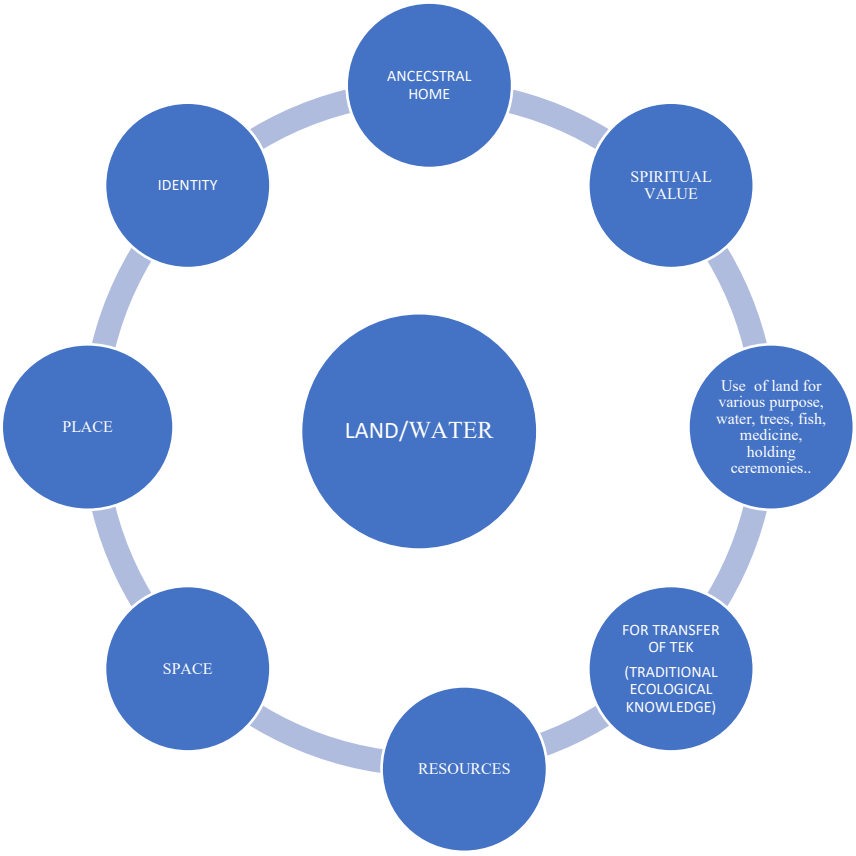
Figure 7.1 is not a western diagram of connections between listed elements. Rather, it is an Indigenous circle – a concept that is inclusive and encapsulating. As an indigenous symbol, the circle is one where all of the pieces are linked, and all of the ideas and concepts are both 'inside' the circle and 'equal' within the circle. I found this the best way to reflect how the Indigenous voices I reviewed sought to describe and represent the constellation of important issues that formed a circle of support and meaning around their community's culture. All of the concepts listed in the circle were mentioned in all the themes generated through the qualitative social science methodology.

However, Figure 7.1 is not a definitive picture of the community's (or any particular Indigenous community's) views of land and water. Such views will change with time and context. Rather, it illustrates with some examples the link to spiritual values, and the interconnected character of land and water within *Xeni Gwet'in* culture. I created the diagram to show that all of these things are connected with one another. They form a circle that supports life. I use the notion of a circle to represent the interconnectivity and inseparability of things in an Indigenous worldview.

A more holistic approach and personal reflection have helped me to understand that there is something distinct when these *Xeni Gwet'in* respondents talk about land and water. To explain it

further, I use the example of statements made about the use of land as a burial ground. Such burial land has a cultural meaning, as well as spiritual value. However, a burial ground does not necessarily have to be near water bodies such as lakes. In the same way, mountain areas are the best for picking berries and other medicinal herbs, and Indigenous people might not necessarily have to go to water bodies to collect those herbs and plants. Therefore, I think there is something separable, as well as lots that is inseparable, between land and water. Interconnectedness and relatedness are basic concepts of TEK (Pierotti & Wildcat, 2000).

Figure 7.1: Meaning of Land and Water in the *Tsilhqot'in* Indigenous Worldview



Source: Author

The analysis helped me to understand that land is kind of a broad category. Land is not just a physical area, but it is considered and related to understanding the world. Within the land are resources, there is water, there are trees, there are moose, there are fish, and there is medicine, as mentioned many times in the CEAA Hearing transcripts. Some examples from the testimonies point this out:

> "Our people have lived off the land and still do it this day. And will continue from generations to generations…….we the *Tsilhqot'in* people have great respect for our Mother Earth as it provides for us. The Creator has placed us the *Tsilhqot'in* People on this beautiful land and everything within it for us to survive and protect…..We pray for everything we use and take only what we need. If the mine should go into Fish Lake, my pain and sadness turns to anger, as Mother Earth is being ripped apart and into pieces. It is like ripping my heart out of my chest" (Agnes William, 1991-March-31-2010, pages 4-10).

> "There is no babbling or boredness. We are trying to show who we are. We are tearing our skin off and saying that is who we are underneath. Our land, our culture. The mining is hurting us……..we cannot regenerate. We cannot go somewhere else and build another home" (April William, 1991-March-31-2010, Pages 3-4).

All the statements presented above explain the connection of land and water to *Xeni Gwet'in* culture. They explain that land is a resource, land is space, land is place, land is identity, land is the ancestral home, and that land has spiritual value. Within the land, there is water, lakes, creeks, rivers, there are trees, there is fish, and there is medicine that the *Xeni Gwet'in* talk about and use. All the resources available in the environment – the landscape, the vegetation, the

animals, the plants, the trees, the living beings – are all inseparable from each other. All hold significant value to the *Xeni Gwet'in* people. These beliefs and values act as a basis of moral responsibility to Indigenous people to save and protect their environment.

Traditional Knowledge as a Part of Indigenous Culture

Traditional knowledge is part of the culture of First Nations and represents who they are. According to Hiebert and Van Rees (1998, p. 3), "the traditional knowledge had many definitions but the central theme consisted of cultural beliefs and traditions being passed on from their forefathers to the present generations for the purpose of survival while still living in harmony with the ecosystems." Hiebert and Van Rees further state that, "traditional knowledge is something that is learned during lifetime and realizes the interconnectedness of the trees, soil and water." Usher (2000, p. 184) says, "According to the requirement of the Government of Canada with special focus to Northern Canada, traditional knowledge is considered and incorporated into environmental assessment and resource management." Traditional knowledge includes hearing testimony submitted to the courts, for instance, the Supreme Court of Canada. Therefore, the recent court ruling that gave title to the *Tsilhqot'in* people supporting their rights to use their traditional territory places a greater burden on governments to justify economic or industrial development on traditional land (*Tsilhqot'in* Nation, 2007).

Oral stories and testimonies about their knowledge from the *Tsilhqot'in* First Nations and their practice in everyday life, in their territory, were used as a means to win their court cases. There is a strong linkage between Indigenous culture, their values, and nature which cannot be detached. Thus, the TEK lens provides a mechanism to understand the values, culture, and livelihood needs of Indigenous people. So traditional knowledge is an extremely valuable source

of information that helps Indigenous people like the *Xeni Gwet'in* to protect and preserve their way of life. These traditional landscapes support the belief systems and are also sites of sacred teachings and the foundation for traditional beliefs (Loppie, 2007; Turkel, 2004). Such beliefs are transferred orally by the Elders. The legends teach the listener how the land was formed; the need to respect the land and all it has to offer; the bond between plants, animals and people; the rules that must be followed and the consequences of failing to follow those rules; land stewardship principles; places, events, and all other matters of importance that provide substance and meaning to the lives of the people. Community members visit these sites and landforms in order to re-connect with ancestral spirits, to pray, to make offerings, to hunt and fish, and to perform rituals and ceremonies. These are pilgrimage sites, and will not be traded for money or for resource development (Kunkel, 2017; Loppie, 2007). Traditional values that maintain Indigenous cultural integrity and the interconnectedness to the land appear to be disregarded in the value systems held by colonial governments (Muir, & Booth, 2012).

Concept of Culture and its Spiritual Aspect

The concepts of cultural and spiritual connections were described in the previous chapter as two different sub-themes. Before delving into this part of the thesis, I recognize that the concepts of cultural and spiritual connections are complex in the Indigenous worldview because of its interrelated character. *Xeni Gwet'in* statements suggest clearly that land is associated with cultural and spiritual connections. According to various scholars, any attempt to describe these two concepts is anticipated to be inadequate because of the variation in the definition of culture and spiritual connection in different fields of research. Some scholars even

pointed out that defining these two constructs separately can make it difficult to comprehend them (Hill, Pargament, Hood, McCullough, Swyers, Larson & Zinnbauer, 2000).

Nonetheless, my decision to proceed with sub-themes related to cultural significance/cultural survival on the main theme of land is intended to describe the meaning of land beyond its physical features. As an Indigenous person, I think spiritual and cultural connections have a distinct meaning from the Indigenous perspective. One scholar writing about Africa states that, "Spirituality refers to an individual's belief in the sacred and transcendent nature of life, and the manifestation of these beliefs in a sense of connectedness with others (e.g., humans, spirits, and God), and in quest for goodness" (Mattis, 2002). To me, spirituality is more like a healing process within my body, mind, and soul, while culture is behavior that I learned from my family and the place where I was brought up. All of this was impacted by my people, society, ancestral history, and its traits. Yes, I do follow and practice those learned behaviors that signify my culture of respecting and valuing my Indigenous way of life. As a result, I took careful consideration while doing analysis of the spiritual and cultural value of land and water.

Reflection on Limitations

As I went through the CEAA Hearing statements, it occurred to me that coding consists of artificial separation, and these constructs are insufficient. It could be interpreted as culturally inappropriate to be analyzing Indigenous testimony because the core aspects of everything are interconnected, inseparable, and indivisible. A caveat or caution is that coding always seems a little bit artificial because it is about the western practice of putting things into categories. As an Indigenous person, it became obvious to me that the way these things are being talked about, they are being interrelated, so coding creates a problem through putting up artificial walls.

My text does recognize that the CEAA is an institutional tool of colonialism. Review of hearing texts was challenging within a community whose cultural context is based on oral tradition, songs, narratives, and oral stories. I do identify that the data limits the representation of perceptions of land and water, in terms of what is included, and what is left out. There is a tremendous amount of testimony given by Elders that speaks to their relationship to land and water. They even took the William or *Tsilhqot'in* court case because they were not happy with the clear-cutting taking place in their territory. I do acknowledge that I could not study that incredibly valuable information in this thesis. Because of the limitation of time, I have focused my study to the testimony given to the CEAA Hearings.

A holistic approach has proven more valuable to me as an Indigenous researcher when studying the value of the lands and waters of traditional territories to culture. Hearing testimonies identified a comprehensive range of factors such as activities, cultural significance/ cultural survival, environmental ecological value, and even spiritual sacred connections. The researcher did not facilitate or become involved in the presentation of the *Xeni Gwet'in* statements to the CEAA Hearing panel since this thesis used the publicly available Hearing statements as its main source of data. This study revealed that the *Xeni Gwet'in* respondents are concerned about the proposed mining project in their traditional territory. The wide range of aspects recognized by the respondents can provide insights to understanding the expressions of Indigenous people about their land and water as an important aspect to their identity and culture.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

This thesis examined the *Xeni Gwet'in* statements submitted to the CEAA Hearings about their view on the land and water of their traditional *Tsilhqot'in* territory. In this final chapter, I summarize the two themes of land and water with discussion of the five sub-themes that emerged through the analysis of this study: activities, cultural significance/ cultural survival, environmental ecological value, and spiritual sacred connection. I then describe the development of themes of the study, address the objectives of the research, and make some recommendations for future research.

Themes

Land and water emerged as the main themes in the coding process using the *Xeni Gwet'in* statements made within the CEAA Hearing process. Five different sub-themes emerged by coding, and the entire exploration offered rich insights into the views of *Xeni Gwet'in* respondents about the importance of land and water to their culture and identity. I understand different themes incorporate different conceptual bases stirring different empirical concerns. There is not a single universally correct theme (Barker & Galasinski, 2001; Barker 2002). Therefore, the themes and sub-themes generated through my coding process do not compete with one another in some search for an imaginary universal truth. However, each of the themes is expected to contribute to the goal of cultural geography which is to make sense of the real worlds of both people and place.

I wanted to study the perspectives of the *Xeni Gwet'in* people to understand the importance of land and water to the people. Review of the statements by *Xeni Gwet'in* respondents helped identify serious concerns about the potential impact of a large mining project in their traditional territory. Various literatures support that land and Indigenous people are intimately connected

(Wilson & Graham, 2005; Barry, 2012). This helped me to understand that land is not just a source for the physical sustenance of Indigenous people, but that it also fostered their cultural well-being. Initially, I had envisioned that land and water could be separate aspects. The key thing I learned through reviewing the CEAA Hearing statements is the inseparability of land, water, and culture. This study shows that the *Xeni Gwet'in* need the resources of their traditional territory to teach culture to their current and future generations. Therefore, inseparability or connectedness is the key between land, water, and culture. Everything is connected in an Indigenous worldview.

Addressing the Objective of the Research

This study was pursued with a goal to address my two research questions:

1. How are the connections between land, water, and culture described in *Xeni Gwet'in* statements made to the CEAA Hearings on the Prosperity mine proposals, dated September 2009 to May 2010?
2. What do these texts suggest about how industrial development affect the *Xeni Gwet'in* use of, and values associated with, land and water resources within their traditional territory, which includes Fish Lake?

To address these questions, it is essential to understand the Indigenous view of the relationship of land and water in their traditional territory to their culture. The cultural values associated within the land and water influence their lifestyle and create the identity of these Indigenous people as connected to their community and their particular traditional territory. From the analysis, the study highlights four prominent views about land and water:

1) Land is central to *Xeni Gwet'in* identity and future;

2) 'Control' and 'ownership' of their traditional land and its use is also essential;

3) Land is used for intergenerational cultural transfer; and

4) The sacred spiritual connection to their traditional territory is also essential to the culture and identity of the *Xeni Gwet'in* people.

1) Land is central to *Xeni Gwet'in* identity and future

The predominant theme across all the transcripts is that land is central to the *Xeni Gwet'in* identity and future. Review of the CEAA Hearing statements illustrates that without a secure future on the land, the *Xeni Gwet'in* people are at risk. The findings suggest that the effects of mining will result in damage of *Nabas* (the *Xeni Gwet'in* caretaker area). This would create not only a loss of land, but also a loss of cultural heritage. The implications of the findings direct our attention towards the profound impact of resources development projects upon Indigenous communities. The value of Fish Lake to the *Xeni Gwet'in* is not quantifiable, and its loss can be neither mitigated nor compensated (Patt Larcombe, April-30-2010, Pages 6741-6798). This shows the intrinsic value in environmental wisdom beyond and above material survival (Beckford et. al., 2010). There is a need for consideration by the state and governing bodies to understand that the relationship of Indigenous people to their traditional territory as being an integral part of their culture and life.

2) 'Control' and 'ownership' of their traditional land and its use is also essential

The Supreme Court of Canada declared that the *Tsilhqot'in* people have Aboriginal title over much of the land claimed in the court case on June 26, 2014. The *Tsilhqot'in* and *Xeni Gwet'in* have not given up their Aboriginal rights and title over their uses and values of their traditional land. The *Xeni Gwet'in* identify themselves as caretakers of the land to protect it (Parkins & Reed, 2012), including to protect *Teztan Biny* as a sacred place. Such proven rights can be the powerful tool to

demonstrate the 'control' and 'ownership' of the traditional land and its use. However, the findings indicate that recognition of such rights and title is not practiced in reality; as approval of preliminary drilling for the mining project by the province on February 2019 proves that the state is still governed by assumptions about the dominance of the state over its citizens, which needs to be revised so that Indigenous traditional knowledge is considered as having a greater value, before approving industrial projects in traditional territories.

3) Intergenerational cultural transfer

Intergenerational cultural transfer includes the transfer of knowledge to the younger generation by Elders. The CEAA Hearing statements show that *Xeni Gwet'in* Elders share oral stories to the younger ones about all the traditional knowledge as their ancestors did in the past. This allows the *Xeni Gwet'in* culture to remain intact. Since Elders are the keepers of cultural values that underpin the well-being of the family and the community (Cook & Brown, 1999), activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping are taught by the Elders. Another important thing explained in the CEAA Hearing statements is that no one is allowed to modify the story so that story will stay the same along with its value. When Elders tell stories, they tell it in the same way as they were taught by their ancestors. One of the key challenges encountered by the *Xeni Gwet'in* is emerging mining projects on their traditional territory. Cook and Brown (1999) suggest that the intergenerational cultural transfer of knowledge is feasible only on the good quality of the land. The *Xeni Gwet'in* people, therefore, need quality land as they too say. Land is treated with intrinsic value and is respected in *Xeni Gwet'in* culture. The traditional ways of teaching and transferring knowledge helps to keep their culture alive for current and future generations. The *Xeni Gwet'in* people need their traditional land and resources to teach their traditional knowledge to their future generations. As one *Xeni*

Gwet'in respondent said, "This is our natural way of our knowledge…. through prayers, oral stories, traditional knowledge, language, rituals, plants and medicines, hand drum songs" (Maryann William, March-31-2010, Pages 2208-2227).

4) Maintaining spiritual sacred connection to their traditional *Tsilhqot'in* territory

Findings of the study show that Fish Lake is sacred to the *Xeni Gwet'in*. Some of the prominent sacred aspects that respondents talk about are pit houses, burial grounds of the ancestors of *Nemiah* Valley, wilderness, harvesting ground for berries and medicinal plants for healing, all of which give a source of spirituality and spiritual connection.

Another important thing to understand from the CEAA Hearing statements is that people are expected to learn through observation in traditional ways of knowing things. This includes how to behave on the land, how to survive on it, and how to interact appropriately with the lands, water, and with other living beings. Such behavioral norms are taught by people, animals, and the land itself through daily practices of livelihood. The practice of traditional lifestyle is also taught through oral stories, legends, and spiritual beliefs. Therefore, the spiritual connection to the land is a key to understanding the value of land and water for the *Xeni Gwet'in*. The spiritual value and sense of connection between Indigenous people and their traditional territory suggests land and resources are also a major source of identity. This research shows the concern of Indigenous people about loss of traditional values and culture as a direct impact of development projects in their territory.

The objective of this study is not only intended to convey messages about Indigenous perspectives on land and water to academic journals. Rather I am concerned about making suggestions which I hope other researchers will draw on for further research and debate. This study

used an Indigenous worldview to study the opinions of *Xeni Gwet'in* respondents about development interventions in their traditional territory. The findings are respectful to the *Xeni Gwet'in* peoples, their tradition, culture, and beliefs. I believe this study is valuable in the sense that it is presented as a summary of what those respondents had to say. However, this is just an interpretation of the comments submitted to the CEAA Hearing panel – which itself was an opportunity for people to take the challenge of sharing their use of and the value of land and water.

Although the focus of the study is on the views of *Xeni Gwet'in* people, the statements may be illustrative of the issues that emerge in any Indigenous context where a development intervention is carried out in traditional territory. Since a community is heterogeneous, there is no guarantee that the representatives will speak for the interests of the whole community. Nonetheless, this process offers to, at the very least, protect the community from potential exploitation and it emphasizes provisions of accountability for all stakeholders.

Xeni Gwet'in and Resource Development

Based on the Hearing transcripts that I analysed and all the literatures that I read, I think that mining is not inherently in conflict with Indigenous values. The amount of time that I spent on thinking and working on this thesis topic, with constant self-reflection as an Indigenous researcher from outside Canada, helped me to understand that some forms of resource development can be done in a more appropriate and respectful way in or near Indigenous communities.

In terms of the *Xeni Gwet'in*, while they opposed the Prosperity Mine and New Prosperity Mine projects, they are not 'anti-development'. Instead, they want any such projects to be done in a correct way, with strong relationships and sharing in the benefits. According to

Chief Joe Alphonse of the *Tl'entinqox* First Nation, "*Tsilhqot'in* are not opposed to development, provided it is the right project, in the right place, with consultation from the get-go and fair profit-sharing" (Lavoie, 2019). He further emphasized that Taseko has not met any of these criteria and states "societies and companies have to adapt and, with our title case, companies have to learn to work in partnership with First Nations people. Ten years from now, it's the companies that have done so that are going to be excelling" (Lavoie, 2019).

On June 26, 2014, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized that the *Xeni Gwet'in* people have Aboriginal Title to a large part of their traditional territory. This amounts to about 1,700 square kilometers of land in British Columbia. This Aboriginal Title gives the Indigenous group the right to use and control the land and enjoy its benefits. However, in 2019, the provincial government approval for exploratory drill shows that the state is still governed by out-dated assumptions about the dominance of the state over its citizens. Such recognition of Title is not yet practiced in reality.

Based on everything I learned, there are several key ingredients that might lead to better or more appropriate development projects. A first involves engaging Indigenous people in conversation to build understanding and relationships. A second is to include Indigenous people in all forms of information sharing including baseline surveys, meetings, notices, and emails, etc. about the project. Another key ingredient is transparency – between Indigenous people, industry, and policy-/decision-makers. Because establishing and maintain mutually respectful relation between Indigenous people, industry stakeholders, nearby communities, and policy makers is important, 'meet them, talk to them'.

My Journey and Self-Reflection

As noted at the start of this thesis, my graduate studies journey at UNBC has involved a transition of both the research as well as myself as a researcher. When I started doing my study, the focus was on the whole process of sampling/selecting data, the coding procedures, and the use of Nvivo software to sort and categorize the themes and sub-themes. I was using a western approach to qualitative social science research. I also acknowledge the data I was using for the analysis came from statements submitted to a CEAA Hearing process by *Xeni Gwet'in* speakers in regards to the Taseko Mines Ltd.'s Prosperity Project, and that this was a 'colonial' process and document where the Hearing transcripts were for a different purpose than the topic of my thesis. As I read further about how the *Xeni Gwet'in* value the importance of land and water to their culture, however, the findings suggested again and again that to the *Xeni Gwet'in* land, water, and culture are inseparable, interconnected, and interwoven.

When we take all of this together, my internal conflict and struggle with the findings was alongside my own transformation as an Indigenous person. Many times, when I met my supervisor in the office or in our graduate committee meetings I talked about the conflict between the instructions of a social science methodology versus where my heart felt the research needed to go. Long before I started to write down the second analysis that used an Indigenous approach, I had started feel that I should write a different analysis. This feeling was a marker along my long research journey. This research journey was across method, across self, and across the data. I saw differences in how the *Xeni Gwet'in* speakers were coming to the table between the two rounds of the environmental assessment hearings. To me, I cannot imagine being asked to do something like that twice. I am an Indigenous Sherpa woman from Nepal. We never had to fight for our land. Being from a smaller community, I cannot imagine what it must

be like to have to describe the potential impacts of development on who I am and on the value and meaning of my traditional land – all within a very formal judicial process that is external to my community and culture, and then being asked to do it again a few years later. It was overwhelming just to read those *Xeni Gwet'in* statements.

My self-reflection as a researcher from a different country complemented my research findings. An Indigenous way of doing research meant decolonizing the research process. This helped me to realize that the whole research process did not really fit with an Indigenous conceptualization of life. I was doing this research by categorizing and coding statements about Indigenous beliefs on mining, the lake, the environment, and their culture. I decided to use an Indigenous holistic approach and discuss the research process in ways that fits with Indigenous ways of knowing. I was always putting myself in the shoes of the *Xeni Gwet'in* speakers as I was reading the transcripts. An Indigenous holistic method helped me to reflect on myself as an Indigenous researcher from a different country other than Canada. This self-reflexivity helped me to understand the deeper meaning of land, water, and culture to Indigenous people.

Recommendations and Future Research Questions

My research suggests that there should be ongoing research that pertains to First Nations cultures, spiritual values, and the cultural history of their traditional territory because land and water represent the cultural core and identity of Indigenous people. Further research is required to effectively create, maintain, and improve the relationship between industrial projects and Indigenous communities before the planning and development of those projects gets underway. This engagement will allow equal contributions of traditional knowledge, respect of Indigenous culture, valuing of their spiritual entity, and linkage to their ancestral territory to be brought in.

Such a link is related to the identity of the *Xeni Gwet'in* people. Therefore, research on planning and potential formation of policies to integrate First Nations' spiritual and cultural needs should be recognized. Hence, culturally sensitive issues and First Nations values should be integrated in creating new policies with regard to any development interventions in Indigenous territory.

This study emphasizes that the *Xeni Gwet'in* have a right to maintain their voice against development activities affecting their culture, identity, and well-being. This research also recognizes the difference in opinion of prevailing western ways of knowing to that of Indigenous ways. This research emphasizes that the Indigenous perception about their ancestral land must be considered and valued before implementing any project in their traditional land.

The development industry must be transparent in any project that they wish to construct and implement in the traditional territory of Indigenous people. There is a need of clear communication between the industry and rights holders before establishment of any development project. The impact of a large-scale mining project to the people, environment, culture, and the history of a traditional territory can be profound. There is a need for comprehensive research on the perspective of Indigenous people on the exploration and development of an industrial project such as mining in traditional territory. Without this there is a significant research gap.

This study is presented in a way to understand the importance of land and water to a First Nations' people. I acknowledge the fact that this study will have a nominal chance of influencing mining, policy, or maybe even Indigenous stakeholders. As stated by Dorling and Shaw (2002, p.638), "It takes time for academic work to influence policies and lives, but it has happened in the past and will happen again." However, I truly believe this research will be useful to understand the value of land and water to Indigenous people. Since every drop of water has a ripple effect on the lake; this study may contribute to the academia of human geography.

This study provides a summary of what *Xeni Gwet'in* respondents had to say and that is what I think is valuable. This is not a definitive story of *Xeni Gwet'in* but an interpretation of their comments. There may be some unheard voices and opportunities for other people to take the challenge of sharing their understanding of the use and value of land and water. It is anticipated that this study facilitates understanding Indigenous ways of knowing about the land and water and resources of their traditional land and territory. The study can also serve as a foundation for policy makers to consider the impacts of industrial projects in traditional Indigenous territory.

Final Thoughts

My own Indigenous identity inspired me to study how the Indigenous people of the Fish Lake area feel about their traditional land and resources. The aim of this research has been to increase our understanding of an Indigenous valuation of lands and resources through the evaluation of statements recorded in an environmental impact assessment hearing. Another goal of the study was to reflect on the type of relationship we can build between Indigenous people and the state by examining these issues through a cultural lens since development approval processes often overlook the effects of such projects on the cultural, environmental, spiritual, and identity elements of Indigenous peoples and their communities. However, understanding the relationship between resource development and Indigenous communities is a challenge itself to observe and monitor because of its influence and impact that is varied according to the projects. Therefore, this research is significant in that it assessed *Xeni Gwet'in* opinions pertaining to the value of the lands and resources of their traditional territory with special focus on the Fish Lake area.

This research was also my personal journey as an Indigenous researcher from a different country. This helped me to examine the biases and assumptions of my own views compared to

those reflected in this study. As researchers, we must be flexible enough to shed our western ways of knowing, for its only when we incorporate other ways of seeing that we can begin to see the limitation of our own epistemologies. My research journey taught me that we must acknowledge that Indigenous ways of knowing are valid and may challenge and contradict western perceptions.

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Appendix I:

Detail about Data Used in the Study
Prosperity Gold Copper Mine Project (Sep-1-2009 to May-3-2010)

CEAA Hearing documents by who is speaking / being represented	**Total number of document files**	**Total percentage %**
By *Tsilhqot'in* National Government	9	14.3
On behalf of *Tsilhqot'in* National Government	8	12.7
Individual submission by expert (Outsiders) about *Tsilhqot'in* First Nation	4	6.3
Tsilhqot'in First Nation (Non *Xeni-Gwet'in)*	21	33.3
Xeni Gwet'in First Nation	20	31.8
By *Tsilhqot'i*n and others with specific focus upon *Xeni Gwet'in* issues	1	1.6
Total number of documents related to *Tsilhqot'in*	**63**	**100.0**

Source: CEAA 2010

Appendix II

Prosperity Gold-Copper Mine Project Documents (Sep-1-2009 to May 2010)

The proposed Prosperity mining project by Taseko Mines Limited is situated in the Fish Lake area of the Indigenous territory of the *Tsilhqot'in* people. The proposed site for the high-volume open pit gold-copper mine is located 125 km southwest of Williams Lake, BC. The project also includes tailings and waste rocks areas, an onsite mill, a 125 km long power transmission line corridor, and an access road. The lake is located in close proximity to the Taseko River, a major salmon-bearing watershed (Hoogeveen, 2016). The environmental assessment of the project commenced on January 1, 2015. The federal authorities responsible for the environmental assessment include Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Natural Resources Canada, and Transport Canada. Initial assessment by the review panel was completed on January 19, 2009. However, the project was declined in 2010.

There are a total of 2366 documents submitted as CEAA hearing statements by various individuals, organizations, communities and people. Among those documents; 8 documents are related to public participation opportunities; 15 contain all the news releases related to the environmental assessment process; 1602 documents are comments received related to the environmental assessment process and, when applicable, responses to those comments; 364 documents are related to the public hearing process; 158 documents were produced by the review panel or its secretariat, except those produced during the public hearing process; and there are an additional 219 documents related to the project and the environmental assessment process. The Prosperity Project archived its documents from May 15, 2009 until November 16, 2010. The hearing documents archived are dated from September 1, 2009 to May 3, 2010 and include a total of 274 documents, out of which, 73 are related to the *Tsilhqot*'in people.

Appendix III

Hearing Submission of Prosperity Project

Source of documents	Documents no.	Date	Total	Page no.
Tsilhqot'in National Government	1881	March 22, 2014	1	257
	1905	March 23, 2010	1	248
	1936	March 25, 2010	1	119
	1943	March 25, 2010	1	302
	2080	April 13, 2010	1	4
	2154	April 15, 2010	1	4
	2206	April 23, 2010	1	32
	2352	May 3, 2010	1	289
	2356	May 3, 2010	1	5
Total	**-**	**-**	**9**	**1160**
On behalf of *Tsilhqot'in* National Government	1851	March 19, 2010	1	24
	2117	April 16, 2010	1	242
	2233	April 27, 2010	1	143
	2235	April 27, 2010	1	110
	2271	April 27, 2010	1	375
	2272	April 28, 2010	1	363
	2290	April 30, 2010	1	26
	2351	May 3, 2010	1	57
Total	**-**	**-**	**8**	**1340**
Individual submission by expert	1854	Nov 19, 2010	1	117
	1998	March 31,	1	106

(Outsiders)		2010		
about	2155	April 15, 2010	1	23
Tsilhqot'in First Nation	2325	April 3, 2010	1	28
Total	-	-	**4**	**274**
Tsilhqot'in First Nation	1939	March 25, 2010	1	17
(Non-*Xeni Gwet'in*)	2002	March 31, 2010	1	10
	2011	March 29, 2010	1	6
	2015	April 7, 2010	1	237
	2054	April 8, 2010	1	7
	2056	April 10, 2010	1	13
	2074	April 8, 2010	1	176
	2075	April 9, 2010	1	191
	2076	April 10, 2010	1	313
	2077	April 12, 2010	1	231
	2078	April 13, 2010	1	280
	2132	April 16, 2010	1	3
	2134	April 14, 2010	1	175
	2135	April 15, 2010	1	257
	2153	April 8, 2010	1	2
	2156	April 15, 2010	1	14
	2175	April 15, 2010	1	3
	2176	April 15, 2010	1	4
	2210	April 20, 2010	1	271
	2311	April 30,	1	49

		2010		
	2342	April 30, 2010	1	418
Total	**-**	**-**	**21**	**2677**
***Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation**	1853	Nov 19, 2010	1	159
	1928	March 23, 2010	1	122
	1986	March 30, 2010	1	218
	1940	March 25, 2010	1	19
	1967	March 29, 2010	1	171
	1979	March 28, 2010	1	2
	1982	March 28, 2010	1	2
	1985	March 28, 2010	1	1
	1991	March 31, 2010	1	379
	1996	March 31, 2010	1	184
	2010	March 31, 2010	1	1
	2012	March 31, 2010	1	1
	2013	March 31 2010	1	1
	2026	March 31, 2010	1	268
	2151	March 30, 2010	1	2
	2172	March 30, 2010	1	11
	2174	April 8, 2010	1	3
	2262	April 1, 2010	1	5
	2336	April 30, 2010	1	1
	2337	April 30, 2010	1	2
Total	**-**	**-**	**20**	**1552**

By *Tsilhqot'in* and others with specific focus upon *Xeni Gwet'in* issues	1930	March 24, 2010	1	277
Total	**-**	**-**	**1**	**277**
Total	**-**	**-**	**2**	**8**
Grand Total			**63**	**7380**

Source: CCEAA, 2010

Tsilhqot'in **National Government = 9**

1. **1881 - March 22, 2010 (257-page documents)**

   Hearing submission submitted by Sean Nixon and Jay Nelson for the *Tsilhqot'in* National Government. And also, submission from other bands within *Tsilhqot'in* National Governments such as, *Tl'etinqox*, *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation, *Esdilagh*, *Yunest'in*, *Tl'esqox*.

2. **1905 - March 23, 2010 (248-page documents)**

   Written hearing submission by Mr. Nelson (via telephone) and former Chief Roger William for the *Tsilhqot'in* National Government.

3. **1936 - March 25, 2010 (119-page documents)**

   Tsilhqot'in Nation Strategy towards sector strategies to address the impact of mountain Pine beetle prepared by Cariboo *Chilcotin* Beetle Action Coaltion, *Tsilhqot'in* Stewardship department. *Tsilhqot'in* National Government.

4. **1943 - March 25, 2010 (302-page documents)**

   Hearing submission by Ms. Williams, the mining coordinator at the *Tsilhqot'in* National Government and Ms. Smith for the *Tsilhqot'in* National Government.

5. 2080 - April 13, 2010 (4-page documents)

1998 General Assembly of the *Tsilhqot'in* Nation, A Declaration of sovereignty signed by all the bands of *Tsilhqot'in* National Government.

6. 2154 - April 15, 2010 (4-page documents)

Chilcotin National Congress organizational profile. Membership to the *Tsilhqot'in* National Congress is open to all *Tsilhqot'in* people and communities who subscribe to the vision of the *Tsilhqot'in* National Congress. It is a political organization of the *Tsilhqot'in* Nation which is presently led and managed by a National Executive Committee, that is responsible for and actively involved in all matters related to Nation's aboriginal title and rights.

7. 2206 - April 23, 2010 (32-page documents)

A strategic engagement agreement for shared decision-making respecting land and management by *Tsilhqot'in* National Government.

8. 2352 - May 3, 2010 (289-page documents)

Closing remarks in hearing submission by all chiefs of *Tsilhqot'in* National Government.

9. 2356 - May 2010 (5-page documents)

Hearing submission by Chief Baptize of *Tsilhqot'in* National Government.

On behalf of *Tsilhqot'in* National Government = 8

1. 1851 - March 19, 2010 (24-page documents)

Legal brief framing submissions for the Prosperity Mine Federal Review Panel by Woodward and Company on behalf of *Tsilhqot'in* National Government.

2. **2117 - April 16, 2010 (242-page documents)**

   Topic specific hearing submission by various experts on behalf of *Tsilhqot'in* National Government.

   Water Quality and Quantity

   Dr. Kevin Morin, P.Geo. L. Hydrogeo. Minesite Drainage Assessment Group.

   Dr. Ann Maest, Dr. Cameron Wobus, Dr. Josh Lipton, Dr. Jeff Morris, Mr. James Holmes, and Ms. Constance Travers, Stratus Consulting Inc.

   Fishery stocks, habitat and fish compensation plan

   Chief Thomas Alexis from the *Tl'azt'en* Nation *Tsilhqot'in* fishery experts and Dr. Jeff Morris, Stratus Consulting and Dr. Gordon Hartman.

   Terrestrial Ecosystem

   Wayne McCrory RPBio. McCrory Wildlife Services Ltd.

   Socioeconomic Issues

   Ms. Patt Larcombe, Symbion Consultants.

   Written Submission for Kevin Morin

   Review of ML-ARD and Mine site water chemistry in the EIS/A.

3. **233 - April 27, 2010 (143 page documents)**

   Presentation on Prosperity Project geochemical issues related to metals production Prepared for Federal review panel of Prosperity Gold-Copper Mine Project. By Ann Maest, Ph.D.; Cameron Wobus, Ph.D.; Connie Travers, MS; Jamie Holmes, MS Stratus Consulting Boulder, Co.

4. **2235 - April 27, 2010 (110-page documents)**

   Presentation on Prosperity EIA/A comments on metal leaching and acid rock drainage (ML-ARD) By Kevin A. Morin, Ph.D., P.Geo. L. Hydrogeo. Minesite Drainage Assessment Group.

5. **2271 - April 27, 2010 (375-page documents)**

   Presentation at Topic specific hearing session by Dr. Kevin Morin, Ph.D., P.Geo. L. Hydrogeo Dy. Anne Maest, Ph.D.; Cameron Wobus, Ph.D.; Connie Travers.

6. **2272 - April 28, 2010 (363-page documents)**

   Presentation at Topic specific hearing session. By Dr. Gordon Hartman, Ph.D. in Fish science (thesis on ethology), expert in fish study. Review of fish compensation plan. Dr. Jeff Morris: Ph.D. in aquatic toxicologist with experience in aquatic biology, biochemistry, contaminant fate and transport, environmental remediation, and alternative energy generation. Mr. Richard Holmes: Registered biologist. Experience of working in the fish research for 30 years.

7. **2290 - April 30, 2010 (26-page documents)**

   Presentation on the topic of *Tsilhqot'in* current use and cultural heritage values to the Federal Prosperity Panel. By Patt Larcombe, Symbion Consultants.

8. **2351 - May 3, 2010 (57-page documents)**

   Final submissions for the Prosperity Mine Federal Review Panel by Woodward and Company on behalf of *Tsilhqot'in* National Government.

***Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation = 20**

1. **1853 - Nov 19, 2010 (159-page documents)**

   (Written submission of Roger William and his family, on his own behalf and other *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nations Government to the Supreme Court). Introduction of his family background. Written about trapping and hunting. He also talked about *Teztan Biny*, medicines, Graveyard Valley, *Tsilhqot'in* ancestors, logging, interference with their traditions and practices.

2. **1928 - March 23, 2010 (122-page documents)**

   Written submission of Russell Samuel Myers Ross. It is about land management issues and *Tshilqot'in* William court case.

3. **1986 - March 30, 2010 (218-page documents)**

   Written submission by *Xeni Gwet'in* people. They talked about their family, traditional lifestyle and about their traditional right to fishing and hunting and also talks about William court case. Some talked about their life and spiritual connection to Fish Lake.

4. **1940 - March 25, 2010 (19-page documents)**

   Presentation of Cultural Tourism Development by *Xeni Gwet' in* First Nation.
   The presentation consists of various topics such as values of tourism for aboriginal communities, community development working towards their future, tourism infrastructure, improving transportation link, sharing culture, nature and building capacity. Planning for healthy, sustainable economic future.

5. **1967 - March 29, 2010 (171-page documents)**

   Written submission by Chief Marilyn Baptiste of *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation. She talks about their responsibility to protect their traditional land, water to protect their future. She

talked about how First Nation is working honorably and respectfully with governments and industry. She further informed about Fisheries act of government.

6. **1979 - March 28, 2010 (2-page documents)**

Written submission by Tasheena William. She is concerned about water being polluted if the project is allowed in their traditional territory. She opposed the Prosperity project to protect their water resources to protect their culture.

7. **1982 - March 28, 2010 (2-page documents)**

Written submission by Geraldine William. She talked about her family and how Fish Lake and *Nabis* area is important to her family and the *Tsilhqot'in* people. They were all raised at *Nabis* and the Fish Lake area. Their wish is to save the Fish Lake because their traditional land is everything to their future generation.

8. **1985 - March 28, 2010 (1-page documents)**

Written submission by Kylan William who talks about his family and how they all were brought up in the Fish Lake area. He thinks this lake will not be the same in 20 years if the project is allowed. To him, water is more precious than gold. Water is everything and it is their life.

9. **1991 - March 31, 2010 (379-page documents)**

Written hearing submission by Alex Lulua and Maryann William. He talked about hunting of moose, deer, wild chicken, ducks, geese, and many others animals. He said he will stop hunting if he finds out those animals get into the tailing pond of the project. Industry has damaged their plants. He is concerned about destruction of the Fish Lake by the project which would impact the earth as a whole polluting air, water, plants and humans. Leaking of mines is poisonous for everyone and every living being.

10. 1996 - March 31, 2010 (184-page documents)

Written hearing submission by Lulua family of *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation. Lulua family talks about their grandmother and how she talked about *Teztan Biny*. He also talked about hunting, Elders gathering and works with youth about values of their culture at *Teztan Biny.* They are sure that there will be a big impact of industry on their community, culture, traditional values that have been carried over from generation to generation.

11. 2010 - March 31, 2010 (1-page documents)

Written submission by Rena Lulua. She does not want mining at Fish Lake because she believed the Fish Lake has four elements such as Fire, Earth, Air and Water that are very important to their culture.

12. 2012 - March 31, 2010 (1-page documents)

Written submission by Bonnie Myers of *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation. She wrote that Fish Lake offers luxurious view, relaxation, freedom and a place where her people can teach their children their culture because children are the future generation.

13. 2013 - March 31, 2010 (1-page documents)

Written submission by Rachael Lulua. She presented a song or poem that talks about how we as an individual will react if someone wants to destroy our house and it is the same with *Tsilhqot'in* people. The Fish Lake area is their home and will do anything to save as it holds a cultural, spiritual, social value in their lives.

14. 2026 - March 31, 2010 (268-page documents)

Written submission by *Xeni Gwet'in* Family (Jimmy Bulyan, Amelia (Char) William, Joseph William and his wife Delia, Mary Jane William. The writing was about their story

of family and their own life, medicines and berries, rituals, ceremonies, trapping animals, fishing, hunting, tough ranching days.

15. 2151 - March 30, 2010 (2-page documents)

Written submission by Maryann Solomon. She states that, "Like the Elders I prefer not to share my personal life and mistrust anything and anyone who would go so far as to destroy our mother earth for money, and in this case today 'for gold'. My own perspective on this whole matter is that 'we don't need to prove anything'. We have been here for centuries; and if our ancestors were here 'you would hear it loud and clear straight from the heart'. They are not here but they are, in spirit. No matter where we go out on the land, up the mountains; they are always there. And there is not a place where they have not left their footprints." She further wrote about *Xeni Gwet'in* traditional medicine book, Annual *Xeni Gwet'in* Elder's gatherings, Elder's meetings, Elder's medicine drives and about Fish Lake and Nabas.

16. 2172 - March 30, 2010 (11-page documents)

Written submission by Shannon Stump-William. She wrote about *Xeni Gwet'in* traditional village site. She is against mining as Fish Lake is sacred ground for *Tsilhqot'in* people. She is against Prosperity Project and states that there should be no commercial road building, all-terrain vehicles only shall be permitted for trapping purposes. Fish Lake is the spiritual and economic homeland for *Tsilhqot'in* people, and they want to exercise their traditional rights of hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering natural resources to carry on with their traditional ranching way of life and also to practice traditional native medicine, religion, sacred, and spiritual ways.

17. 2174 - April 8, 2010 (3-page documents)

Written submission by Betty Lulua. She mentioned that industry would increase health issues as it will pollute water, land, air and the environment. She is also concerned about the waste that mines would leave and its impact on *Tsilhqot'in* people. She talks about the *Tsilhqot'in/ Xeni Gwet'in* declaration as of August 23, 1989 stating that there should be no mining within *Nemiah* Indigenous wilderness reserve.

18. 2262 - April 1, 2010 (5-page documents

Written submission by Dinah Lulua. She mentioned about Fish Lake and it's a paradise for them. They are proud that they are taught to respect their land and take only what they need for food and for use and not taught to over use any one area. She talked about her parent's lifestyle and how they raised cattle, trapped fur animals in winter and gathered medicine and food. She truly believed that chemicals from the industry will poison their lake and destroy everything in its path.

19. 2336 - April 30, 2010 (1-page documents)

Written submission by Wayne William. He opposed mining because he does not want *Tsilhqot'in* land to be disturbed and destroyed because land belongs to Natives and is not for anyone for the taking.

20. 2337 - April 30, 2010 (2-page documents

Written submission by Emery Dean Phillips. He/she said that he has seen that the mining exploration activity impacts the animals. Disturbances from mining activities are noise pollution of helicopter activity scaring the animals, employees driving with excessive speeds on the roads. He further states that, "Our land cannot withstand the impacts of the proposed mine as our animals are already being impacted in the areas." He/ she is

opposed to the destruction and pollution of Fish Lake because the entire area will be impacted for future generations.

By *Tsilhqot'in* and others with specific focus upon *Xeni Gwet'in* issues = 1

1. 1930 - March 24, 2010 (277-page documents)

Hearing submission by Ms. Nancy Opperman and Chief Marilyn Baptiste for *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation issues about fish habitat of their culture.

Appendix IV

Detailed Information of the CEAA Hearing Statements Used in the Study

S. N	Sources of Documents	Band	Page
1.	1851 - March 19, 2010 by Jay Nelson Woodward & Co. Lawyers ltd.pdf	On behalf of TNG	24
2.	1853 - Nov 19, 2010b by Roger William on behalf of TNG.pdf	On behalf of TNG	159
3.	1854 - Nov 19, 2014 by Robert on behalf of TNG Thesis.pdf	Individual submission	117
4.	1881 - March 22, 2014 by all Chiefs of TNG.pdf	TNG	257
5.	1905 - March 23, 2010 by TFN and TNG.pdf	TNG	248
6.	1928- March 23, 2010 by Russel *Xeni Gwet'in* family.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	122
7.	1930 - March 24, 2010 by Hearing transcript of Nancy Opperman, Chief Marilyn Baptiste and Councilor of *Anaham* Band of TFN	TNG	277
8.	1936 - March 25, 2010 by TNG strategy to address Mountain pine beetle issue.pdf	TNG	119
9.	1939 - March 25, 2015 by Linda Smith.pdf	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in* (Yunesit'in)	17
10.	1940 - March 25, 2010 by XGCTP.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	19
11.	1943 - March 25, 2014 by TNG and *Xeni Gwet'in*.pdf		302
12.	1967 - March 29, 2010 by *Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	171
13.	1979 - March 28, 2010 by Tasheena.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	2
14.	1982 - March 28, 2010 by Geraldine *Nemiah* Valley.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	2
15.	1985 - March 28, 2010 by Kylan William of *Nemiah* Valley.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	1
16.	1986- March 30, 2010 by TNG and *Xeni Gwet'in*.pdf		218
17.	1991 - March 31, 2010 by TNG and people of *Nemiah* and *Tsilhqot'in*.pdf		379

18.	1996 - March 31, 2010 by Lulua family *Xeni Gwet'in*.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	184
19.	1998 - March 31, 2010 by Kenneth G. Brealey.pdf	Individual submission	106
20.	2002 - March 31, 2010 by Gene Cooper and family a *Tsilhqot'in* People.pdf		10
21.	2010 - March 31, 2010 by Rene Lulua a *Tsilhqot'in* FN.pdf	*Tsilhqot'in First Nation*	1
22.	2011 - March 29, 2010 by Carmen Nunez.pdf	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in* (*Tl'entinqox*)	6
23.	2012 - March 31, 2010 by Bonnie Myers of *Xeni Gwet'in*.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	1
24.	2013 - March 31, 2010 by Rachael Lulua of TFN.pdf	TFN	1
25.	2015 - April 7, 2010 by *Yunesit'in*.pdf	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in* (*Yunesit'in*)	237
26.	2026 - March 31, 2010 by *Xeni Gwet'in* submission.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	268
27.	2054 - April 8, 2010 by *Yunesit'in*.pdf	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in* (*Yunesit'in*)	7
28.	2056 - April 12, 2010 by Sherry Stump *Tl'entinqox*.pdf	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in* (*Tl'entinqox*)	13
29.	2074 - April 8, 2010 by *Xeni Gwet'in* and *Yunesit'in*.pdf		176
30.	2075 - April 9, 2010 by *Toosey, Yunesit'in* and *Xeni Gwet'in*.pdf		191
31.	2076 - April 10, 2010 by *Tl'esqox, Toosey, Esdilagh* for *Xeni Gwet'in*.pdf		313
32.	2077 - April 12, 2010 by on behalf of *Tl'entinqox*, *Yunesit'in*.pdf		231
33.	2078 - April 13, 2010 by *Tl'entinqox*.pdf	*Non-Xeni Gwet'in (Tl'entinqox)*	280
34.	2080 - April 13, 2010 by a declaration of sovereignty of *Tsilhqot'in*.pdf		4
35.	2117 - April 16, 2010 by Topic specific Hearing by TNG to review panel.pdf		242
36.	2132 - April 16, 2010 by *Yunesit'in*.pdf	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in* (*Yunesit'in*)	3

37.	2134 - April 14, 2010 by *Tsi del del*.pdf	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in* (*Tsi del del*)	175
38.	2135 - April 15, 2010 by *Tsi del del*,TN Congress, *Tl'etinqox*.pdf		257
39.	2151 - March 30, 2010 *Xeni Gwet'in* FN.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	2
40.	2153 - April 8, 2010 by *Yunesit'in* FN.pdf	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in* (*Yunesit'in*)	2
41.	2154 - April 15, 2010 by *Tsilhqot'in* National Congress profile.pdf		4
42.	2155 - April 15, 2010 by Denisiqi Services Society of *Tsilhqot'in*.pdf		23
43.	2156 - April 15, 2010 by Joyce.pdf	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in* (*Tsi del del*)	14
44.	2172 - March 30, 2010 by *Xeni Gwet'in* william family.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	11
45.	2174 - April 8, 2010 by *Xeni Gwet'in*.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	3
46.	2175 - April 15, 2010 by Chief Ivor Myers	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in* (*Yunesit'in*)	3
47.	2176 - April 15, 2010 by Chief Ivor Myers family tree and documents of *Tsilhqot'in* Myers	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in* (*Yunesit'in*)	4
48.	2206 - April 23, 2010 by TNG .pdf	TNG	32
49.	2210 - April 20, 2010 by Jerrita Elkins of *Tlentiqox, Anaham, Yunesit'in*.pdf	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in*	271
50.	2233 - April 27, 2010 by Ann Maest on behalf of TNG.pdf	On behalf of TNG	143
51.	2235 - April 27, 2010 by Dr. Kevin on behalf of TNG.pdf	On behalf of TNG	110
52.	2262 - April 1, 2010 by Dinah Lulua of *Xeni Gwet'in* FN.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	5
53.	2271 - April 27, 2010 by Kevin Ann on behalf of TNG.pdf	On behalf of TNG	375
54.	2272 - April 28, 2010 by on behalf of TNG		363
55.	2290 - April 30, 2010 by Patt Larcombe on behalf of TNG.pdf	On behalf of TNG	26
56.	2311 - April 30, 2010 by Linda Smith	*Yunest'in*	49
57.	2325 - April 3, 2010 by Titi.pdf	Individual submission	28

58.	2336- April 30, 2010 by *Xeni Gwet'in* Wayne Williams.pdf	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	1
59.	2337- April 30, 2010 by Emery D. Phillips	*Xeni Gwet'in* First Nation	2
60.	2342 - April 30, 2010 by on behalf of TNG and Chief of *Tl'entiqox,Tl'esqox*.pdf	Non-*Xeni Gwet'in*	418
61.	2351 - May 3, 2010 by TNG.pdf	TNG	57
62.	2352 - May 3, 2010 by chiefs of TNG.pdf	TNG	289
63.	2356 - May 3, 2010 by Chief Baptiste of TNG.pdf	TNG	5

Appendix V

Codebook - Organization of Data by Created Themes and Sub-themes of Prosperity Project

Name	Files	References
Land-opinion of *Xeni Gwet'in* PI		
Sub-Theme: Land-Activities	60	863
Sub-Theme: Land-Cultural Significance- Cultural Survival	63	892
Sub-Theme: Land-Environmental Ecological Value	56	550
Sub-Theme: Land-Spiritual Sacred Connection	50	394
Water-opinion of *Xeni Gwet'in* PI		
Sub-Theme: Water-Activities	50	297
Sub-Theme: Water-Cultural Significance-Cultural Survival	49	307
Sub-Theme: Water-Environmental Ecological Value	47	244
Sub-Theme: Water-Spiritual Sacred Connection	35	153