

Running head: GENDERED BOOMTOWN IMPACTS

**Gendered Boomtown Impacts: A Social Service Perspective on Experiences of Women in
Resource Extraction Communities**

by

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The above committee determined that the thesis is acceptable in form and content and that a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by the thesis was demonstrated by the candidate during an oral examination. A signed copy of the Certificate of Approval is available from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

ABSTRACT

The natural resource industry is dynamic, unpredictable, and unconventional. Past research on this industry has examined ‘boomtown impacts’ such as challenges to community cohesion, infrastructure issues, and crime, but few have examined the gendered impacts of the resource industry. Therefore, this thesis examines the gendered impacts associated with resource boomtowns by exploring how the industry impacts women’s lives, what women are impacted, and what resources need to be put in place for women in boomtowns. In exploring gendered impacts, this thesis draws on Connell’s and Messerschmidt’s theorizing on gender, masculinities and emphasized femininity and in-depth interviews with 10 social service workers. The findings indicate that economic dependence, family impacts, and lack of affordable housing are the largest challenges facing women in boomtown communities. This thesis also discusses recommendations offered by social service professionals to improve the lives of women in resource extraction communities and urges future research in this area.

Keywords: Gendered boomtown impacts; women; oil and gas; extraction; masculinities

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Madison Charman

STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication. I have used standard referencing practices to acknowledge ideas, research techniques, or other materials that belong to others. Furthermore, I hereby certify that I am the sole source of the creative works and/or inventive knowledge described in this thesis.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to all the women who have felt these impacts and to those who tirelessly continue to advocate for women's wellbeing in resource extraction communities.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the early 2000s, Canada and the United States (US) experienced an oil boom that drastically changed the social and economic makeup of several oil and gas communities. This modern-day gold rush can be attributed to technological advances in hydraulic fracturing, or 'fracking', which allows drilling deeper into the earth to extract natural gas in places which were previously labeled as exhausted or dry. Since the early 2000s, there has been a large increase in fracking throughout Canada and the US that has taken place in mostly rural areas. The precarious nature of the industry coupled with the dramatic micro and macro social and economic impacts led researchers to label the oil boom as a “massive socioeconomic phenomenon” (Fernando and Colley, 2016, pg. 410). At the epicentre of this change are boomtowns. Loosely defined as once rural, “out-of-the-way settings,” these communities become home to the transient workforce attracted to the area by extraction industry work. Boomtowns can be seen throughout the US and Canada, with the best-known examples being Williston, North Dakota, US, and Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada. When booming, these communities experience rapid population and economic growth. However, due to the unstable nature of the industry, these communities can experience busts, or micro recessions, just as quickly. Most people see the economic benefits and high paying wages that come with this industry, but often do not critically examine the social impacts that this type of work may have on the community it has monopolized. Examples include increased crime and disorder, housing shortages, infrastructure and service delivery challenges (Flanagan, Heitkamp, Jayasundara, & Nedegaard, 2014; Ruddell, 2017). More importantly, researchers often do not examine how these impacts can be gendered. This thesis will add to the literature by examining the gendered nature of boomtowns.

There is no single agreed upon definition of a boomtown. Since the topic is fairly under-researched, there are a few definitions found in literature, but no formal understanding. Specifically, Ruddell (2017) outlines that the difficulty and inconsistency of defining boomtowns are related to specifications of growth. For example, Malamud (1984) defines boomtowns as experiencing a 15% population increase, while Archibald (2006) defines them as a 6% increase over three years. This paper will be using the term boomtown less quantitatively. I understand and define boomtowns as communities in which the natural extraction industry monopolizes employment, and causes population growth which mainly consists of the transient workforce (O'Connor, 2015; Ruddell, 2017). Ultimately, boomtowns are communities that are economically dependent on the extraction industry for the livelihood of their citizens.

Two of the most well-known modern-day boomtowns are Fort McMurray, Alberta and Williston, North Dakota. Fort McMurray acts as the hub for the Athabasca oil sands attracting numerous companies and workers to the area. Fort McMurray is located in Wood Buffalo Regional Municipality, which has reported a population increase of 24.5% from 2001-2006 (O'Shaughnessy, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2006) and an estimated shadow population¹ of 25,000 (O'Shaughnessy, 2011; Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, 2009). Williston North Dakota is located in the Williston Basin, containing the Bakken Formation. In 2014, Forbes reports Williston had the "fastest growing economy" in the US (Millsap, 2016). Moreover, between 2010-2014, Williston saw a 67% population boom according to the US Census (Millsap, 2016). It is important to remember that this census data does not include the shadow population. Both areas have reported infrastructure difficulties, such as shortages in housing or the need for more schools

¹ Shadow population refers to the transient work population and will be further discussed below.

due to the rapid population increase (Millsap, 2016; O'Shaughnessy, 2011). Since these statistics are from the early stages of the boom, it is important to note that these numbers may fluctuate rapidly due to the boom and bust nature of the industry.

Another example of the oil boom's impact can be seen in the Fort Berthold Reservation, North Dakota. The Reservation is a unique example as the extraction takes place on self-governing, sovereign, Indigenous land. Tex Hall, former tribal council chairman, welcomed fracking on to tribal land and reported generating over \$1 billion in royalties that funneled to Tribal Government rather than residents (Public Broadcasting Service, 2014). The former council chairmen's approach and use of funds has been widely criticized by the community, as royalties were used to fund a 96-foot yacht worth \$2.5 million rather than invest in social welfare and housing in a community with a life expectancy of 57 in 2014 (Anderson, 2016; Public Broadcasting Service, 2014; Sontag and McDonald, 2014). Much like Williston and Fort McMurray, the lucrative nature of the boom introduced non-Indigenous workers to the Reservation and surrounding area. Much like other boomtowns, social issues and infrastructure challenges arose in the area. For example, high truck traffic led to increases in fatal motor vehicle accidents and 23 tribal officers were left to protect 1 million acres of tribal land with no jurisdiction over the new non-Indigenous population that moved into the area (Public Broadcasting Service, 2014).

What makes boomtowns particularly socially precarious is the large population influx consisting of FIFO's: fly-in-fly-out transient workers. This population is often referred to as the 'shadow population' as their living situations, fly-out-fly-in lifestyle, and turnover are very hard to track and report (Amnesty International, 2016; Firelight Group, Lake Babine Nation and Nak'azdli Whut'en', 2017; Nightingale et al., 2017; Ruddell, 2017). The shadow population refers to individuals who move to extraction areas and live in informal settings that are not counted on

census data. For example, temporarily renting a room, living in motels, mobile trailer sites, or work camps (man-camps) would all qualify as informal settings.

1.1 Boomtowns and Pop Culture: Issues Raised

The social side of boomtowns has become a popular topic for documentaries, films, articles, and blogs. The Public Broadcasting Service's *Native American Boomtown (2014)* explores the Fort Berthold Reservation's diverse experiences with the oil boom. They focus specifically on the social ills that follow extraction related population booms, such as the increase of drug use in the community. Viceland's *RISE (2017)* documentary series examined the Standing Rock Reservation's protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline. In the documentary, community members specifically raised concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of young women in the community. The rising concerns of young women's safety in extraction communities inspired the conference, 'Protect the Women and Families from the KXL Violence' hosted by the Women of the Brave Heart Society and the Ihanktonwan Treaty Council (Yankton Sioux Tribe). The conference brought community members together to discuss how to remedy the increase of sexual violence and trafficking in their community (Pember, 2013).

Boomtowns have made their way into Hollywood as they are the topic of two recent films; the independent film, *Boomtown (2017)*; and the Hollywood movie *Wind River (2017)*. In particular, *Wind River (2017)* focuses on the rape of an Indigenous woman, perpetrated by the male security guards at an oil drilling site on the reserve. The ending of the movie shows one of the perpetrators attempting to justify his actions by saying "you know what it's like out here in this frozen hell? With nothing to do, no nothing, no women, no fun, just fucking snow and silence. That's all" (Sheridan, 2017). This movie not only highlights the risk of violence against women,

but also the extreme feeling of isolation felt by workers in these areas, and the lack of support provided to them.

1.2 Boomtowns in Academia: The Gaps

When examining the social environment in boomtowns, most literature fails to explore the female experience. Instead, current literature focuses mainly on increased crime rates, specifically the male-on-male violence, theft, and drug use experienced in these communities (Carrington, McIntosh & Scott, 2010; O'Connor, 2015; Ruddell et al., 2014). Literature has focused on the experience of social isolation and how this impacts individuals' behaviours and actions, such as pushing them towards substances and/or criminality. Not only do past studies often fail to examine gendered approaches, their methodology often uses data which do not accurately reflect impacts on women. For example, when examining an increase in violence, scholars often use UCR and crime statistics (Jayasundara, Heitkamp, Mayzer, Legerski and Evanson, 2016; Ruddell, 2011). This is problematic as many of the gendered issues raised in qualitative studies, such as increases in interpersonal violence, are not accurately reflected in quantitative data.

Another methodological barrier evident in past literature is a lack of comparison between boomtowns. When examining the social impacts in boomtown communities, many studies use a case study approach (Ennis, Tofa, Finlayson and U'Ren, 2016; Shandro, Veiga, Shoveller, Scoble and Koehoorn, 2010). This approach prevents us from examining patterns across boomtowns, which would be an extremely useful tool for communities who are expecting this type of development. Examining patterns across boomtowns can allow us to create action plans for developing boomtowns and could help communities put emergency preventative measures in place. Lastly, studies that discuss impacts on women often do not examine these challenges using an intersectional lens. This means that impacts on women are discussed in general while ignoring

how women of colour or women of low socioeconomic status are impacted differently, and even more severely (Shandro, Veiga, Shoveller, Scoble & Koehoorn, 2011; Endo, Ellington & McCarl, 1984; Huey & Ricciardelli, 2017). While recent studies have made gendered impacts their focus (Amnesty International, 2016; Firelight Group, Lake Babine Nation and Nak'azdli Whut'en', 2017; Jayasundara, Heitkamp, Mayzer, Legerski and Evanson, 2016), much more research and a fresh methodological approach is needed to truly understand the gendered impacts of boomtowns.

1.3 Research Questions and Thesis Roadmap

This thesis seeks to better understand the social and economic impacts of oil and gas boomtowns on women. It does so by using exploratory interviews with local social service providers who work directly with women in extractive communities. The following research questions guide this thesis:

1. How does the existence of the oil and gas industry in a community impact women's lives?
2. Are all women impacted in a similar manner or are there differences across racial and socioeconomic lines?
3. Given the uniqueness of boomtown settings, are there particular resources that women require in order to navigate the impacts of the oil and gas industry.

These research questions were explored using in-depth, qualitative interviews with social service providers throughout resource extraction hotspots in Canada and the United States. Given the exploratory nature of this research, I use a multi-theoretical approach to understanding boomtowns but focus primarily on hegemonic masculinity theory to explain women's experiences. In Chapter Two, I first discuss classic sociological theories that discuss rapid social change and disorder in communities and then move towards the thesis' theoretical frame of hegemonic masculinity. I then discuss multiple 'boomtown effects' that have been discussed in past literature

including infrastructure challenges, industry culture, and gender-specific impacts such as economic hardships and domestic violence.

Following this, in Chapter Three I explain the methodological approach to my thesis. I first outline the exploratory nature of my study and move on to discuss my qualitative methodological approach and sample. Specifically, the target group for my sample was social service providers who work with women in boomtown communities. I then move on to discuss the recruitment processes, interview structure, analytic strategy and how data was coded.

In Chapter Four I present my findings. Specifically, I discuss the emergence of themes from my data including the hyper-masculine industry culture, drug use of workers and women, women's feelings of isolation and mental health, and the infrastructure and financial challenges women face. The findings from the interviews suggest that the existence of resource extraction and the culture of its industry create unique challenges for women in boomtown communities. Specifically, themes of drug use, the loneliness of workers and women, lack of support, financial and infrastructure challenges in both boom and bust times are discussed. These issues seriously impact women's quality of life and well-being in these areas. The research findings contribute to the literature by helping us better understand the connection between the extraction industry and challenges to women's well-being.

Chapter Five is my discussion chapter in which I examine the key takeaways from my research and consider further research. My findings are consistent with past boomtown literature which discusses challenges to women in regards to interpersonal violence and increased victimization but uniquely discovers that crucial challenges women face include economic dependence, lack of affordable housing and the breakdown of relationships and the family unit. These concepts can help us understand the other challenges we see emerge, such as increased

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survival sex or drug use amongst women in boomtown settings. Moreover, it moves the conversation forward by examining how women are impacted differently. I discuss how women of colour and women facing poverty are at higher risks of violence and are more susceptible to boomtown impacts. Lastly, I discuss what resources are needed in these areas to mitigate the impact on women. These not only include crisis and housing services, but also an increase in social activities for women.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND PAST LITERATURE

The literature surrounding resource extraction areas, or ‘boomtowns’, can be seen in multiple disciplines such as economics, sociology, and criminology. Topics can range from extremely macro-level theories, such as the resource curse, to more local case studies of specific communities. This chapter begins by discussing general and broad theoretical approaches that can be applied to boomtowns. It then discusses hegemonic masculinity as the dominant theoretical frame of this thesis. Next, the ‘boomtown effect’ literature is examined paying particular attention to the contemporary issues that have been identified in boomtown research. This includes discussions around boomtown and industry culture, frontier culture, and infrastructure challenges. Finally, I examine a small body of past boomtown literature that discusses the gendered impacts and women-specific challenges experienced in boomtown environments.

2.1 Theoretical Approaches

A breadth of theoretical approaches can be used when discussing the social phenomenon of boomtowns. This section will first discuss the more broad-level theories that focus on boomtowns and will move forward to discuss the main theoretical frame, hegemonic masculinity. A broad approach of theorizing boomtowns starts with classical theories that focus on environments of dynamic social change, such as anomie and social disorganization. Moving on to more modern approaches, late modernity theory, and the resource curse can also be applied to gain a better understanding of the social impacts of boomtowns. Most importantly for this thesis, hegemonic masculinity will be focused on as it discusses the relationship between gender and social impacts.

Because boomtowns are areas of rapid social change, attempts to theorize them have been rooted in classical sociological theories such as anomie, collective efficacy, and social

disorganization. Emile Durkheim's (1984) anomie theory is a useful framework to understand the relationship between disorder and rapid social change in communities. According to his theory, mass migration to a community alters its sense of cohesiveness which creates a state of anomie (Durkheim, 1984; O'Connor, 2015a). Anomie occurs when communities "once connected by tradition and sameness [are now] defined by their differentiation" (O'Connor, 2015, pg. 220). Social disorganization theory can also help theorize the disorder seen in extraction environments. That is, this theory focuses on the relationship between the physical environment and disorder, and how informal social controls play an essential role in regulating behaviour in communities. Kurbin and Weitzer (2003) argue that once communities lose the ability to police themselves and their member's behaviour, there will be an increase in crime. Factors such as "poverty, residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, and weak social networks" play an important role in decreasing a community's ability to control its members (James and Smith, 2017, pg. 127; Kurbin & Weitzer, 2003).

Informal social control is based on community members acting to prevent disorderly conduct in their neighbourhoods. Examples include "informal surveillance of the streets, admonishing individuals who are misbehaving, and informing parents about their children's misconduct" (Kurbin & Weitzer, 2003, pg. 376). It includes private control (pertaining to family) and parochial control (relating to wider social networks and community groups). Informal social control is often discussed as one of the most important mechanisms of crime prevention and trumps formal practices. The theory states that as informal social control decreases we should expect to see crime and disorder increase. Collective efficacy builds upon social control, and is defined as the "process of activating or converting social ties among neighbourhood residents to achieve collective goals, such as public order or the control of crime" (Cullen & Wilcox, 2010 pg. 2;

Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Or put another way, collective efficacy can be described as the “willingness of residents to intervene for the common good” and is seen as a tool of informal social control (Sampson, 1997, pg. 919).

Building off of anomie, social disorganization and collective efficacy theories is Freudenburg’s (1986) density of acquaintanceship concept. The density of acquaintanceship is a variable which examines how a community is connected through its relationships, and how this cohesiveness can be altered through rapid population growth. Communities with a low density of acquaintanceship, such as boomtown communities, are communities in which people do not share strong social ties with each other, and instead can characterize neighbours as strangers. Freudenburg (1986) found that a decline in the density of acquaintance led to consequences within communities impacting “control of deviance, socialization of the young, and care for the community’s weaker members” (pg. 27). Specifically, the notion of ‘control of deviance’ echoes concerns of a lack of informal social control, where people could point out outsiders vs. community members. Freudenburg (1986) notes that, in boomtown communities, a “degree of anonymity” has greatly “decreased the effectiveness of deviance control” (pg. 43)

Anomie, control theory, collective efficacy, and the density of acquaintanceship can help us understand the link between the unstable nature of boomtowns and increase in social disorder. Boomtowns see a mass migration of non-resident workers to small, rural communities. These small-town settings are often governed through informal social controls which can breakdown due to the population increase. Moreover, boomtowns see high resident turnover and instability due to the ‘fly-in-fly-out’ working culture. Workers travel from around the country and abroad for industry jobs and often plan to return to their families after a fixed amount of time. For example, workers can come to the area for 2-month rotations, or 2-week rotations, leaving and returning to

the community periodically. The temporary nature of their stays prevents them from creating strong social ties to, and within, the community (Carrington et al., 2016). The transiency of workers and high population turnover decays the ability to create collective goals and a sense of togetherness. These theories help explain why frequent resident turnover, or residential mobility, is positively related to crime (Kirk et al., 2010). Fly-in-fly-out workers lack strong social ties to the community which helps explain increases in disorder that follow these workers' arrival in boomtown communities. The fly-in-fly-out nature of boomtowns will be further explained in the latter parts of this thesis.

Other theories that have been used to explain the boomtown social phenomenon include late modernity theory and the paradox of plenty. As explained by O'Connor (2015), late modernity discusses the rapid social change with the transition from traditional to modern society and can be tied to general attempts to theorize boomtowns (Beck, 1992; Beck & Williams, 2004; Giddens, 1991; O'Connor, 2015). He argues that that the early twenty-first century was a time of predictability and that the late twenty-first century, or late modernity, is no longer an environment of predictability because we are undergoing rapid social change. Specifically, employment structures are no longer steady and predicable (O'Connor, 2015). Late modernity theory states that rapid social change is influenced by global events due to the interdependence in current economic structures. Boomtowns are a prime example of the social change and unpredictable nature of late modernity in a "way that is hyper-exaggerated" (O'Connor, 2015, pg. 221). Individuals migrate to extraction areas for employment in the lucrative industry, and often because of the lack of other employment opportunities in their hometowns. This migration alters existing community dynamics through the introduction of different cultures and backgrounds into a previously predictable environment (O'Connor, 2015). Moreover, the precarious boom and bust cycle of the

industry demonstrates a lack of employment and economic stability. Lastly, the extraction industry is highly susceptible to “global events” (O’Connor, 2015). Ultimately, he argues that this influx happens at a period of rapid social change and uncertainty.

The paradox of plenty, or the resource curse theory, hypothesizes that the more resources an entity has, the worse off their social affairs will be. Ultimately, it shows a negative relationship between the production of resources and a region’s stability and wellbeing. This is pertinent to understanding boomtowns as they are areas that are resource-rich, and therefore according to the paradox of plenty, are likely to experience negative social impacts. Economic instability, regional conflict, inflation rates, and environmental problems are all impacts that should be expected in resource rich areas. Moreover, ‘the resource curse’ disproportionately impacts women due to a male-dominated workforce which can increase gender-based violence, create a lack of employment opportunities for women, and increase the impact of HIV/AIDS on women due to the high demand for sex work (National Resource Governance Institute, 2015). Although the resource curse is often used to discuss nations and global regions, Measham, Fleming, and Schandl (2015) say that local resource curses can also be seen due to poor income growth in some boomtown communities. Therefore, the theory can also be adapted to understand the local impacts of small-scale resource booms throughout Canada and the United States.

Although these theories help us understand the social impacts of boomtowns, they lack focus, for the most part, on how these social impacts can be gendered. Therefore, while this thesis utilizes a multi-theoretical approach to understanding boomtowns, hegemonic masculinity is used as the dominant theoretical frame for understanding women’s lives within boomtown environments. Hegemonic masculinity provides the most powerful understanding of the social impacts of boomtowns by using gender as its lens. R.W. Connell (1995) defines hegemonic

masculinity as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (pg. 77). It is understood as “the pattern or practice” of actions that asserted and normalized men’s dominance over women (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, pg. 832).

Hegemonic masculinity is the “struggle for dominance” in masculine or male culture and identity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p.832). It is not about a specific type of man, but instead, about the “way that men position themselves through discursive practices” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 841). These discursive practices can include racist and sexist language and humor. Moreover, material mechanisms “in the workplace and the wider community, such as excluding [the subordinated other] from spaces” can also help construct hegemonic masculinity (O’Shaughnessy, 2011, pg. 92). The subordinated other is created because hegemonic masculinity and practicing masculinity is relational (Connell, 1995). This subordinate other is often women as outlined by emphasized femininity, which can be explained as the expectations of how to practice femininity relative to hegemonic masculinities. Nagy (2018) also notes the subordinated others could include “Indigenous people, people with disabilities, immigrants, blacks, non-English speakers” (pg. 22) and the LGBTQ+ community.

Connell (2005) argues that Western ideals of gender shape and define men’s and women’s positions in society. This is reflected in Western societies’ division of labour which works to produce a “male wage worker-female domestic worker couple” and reinforces masculinity being tied to money and the economy, while domesticity is tied to femininity (Connell, 2005, pg. 8). This reinforces that the big earners and money makers in families and societies are inherently tied to the masculine identity. Relative to the concept of hegemonic masculinity is emphasized femininity.

Emphasized femininity is “focused on compliance to patriarchy” as it is the idea that women must conform to men’s desires through sexual validation, childbearing, and keeping the household (Connell, 1987; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, pg. 848; Currier, 2013; Schippers, 2007). These asymmetrical theories of gender help explain the socially dominant position of the masculine gender identity and the compliance and subordination of the female gender identity.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) note that hegemonic masculinity is often used in the criminological field to understand the relationship between masculinity and crime. They note that “research in criminology showed how particular patterns of aggression were linked with hegemonic masculinity, not as a mechanical effect for which hegemonic masculinity was a cause, but through the pursuit of hegemony” (Bufkin 1999; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, pg. 834; Messerschmidt 1997). Messerschmidt analyzes how men perform, or ‘do’, their masculine gender identity through expressions, and argues that violence against women is one way to pursue ideals set by hegemonic masculinity. For example, when discussing rape, he explains:

a woman may have far superior material resources than an unemployed man, yet he nevertheless may exercise interpersonal power in the form of, for example, rape. That exercise of power is more than merely an individual embodiment; it is structural by being profoundly embedded in power inequalities...Thus, authority and control become defining characteristics not only of gender relations but of the social construction of masculinities as well (Messerschmidt, 1993, pg. 73).

This demonstrates that committing crimes (especially against women who are viewed as the subordinate) is one-way men can perform their masculinity as it exercises their authority and control over women and each other. Moreover, when discussing sexuality and masculinity, Messerschmidt (1993, pg. 75) reports that hegemonic masculinity idealizes men’s “uncontrollable and insatiable sexual appetite for women which results in a naturally coercive male sexuality”. A dangerous environment for women is created when a male feels as though his masculinity performance inherently possesses an uncontrollable sexual appetite.

2.1.1 Hegemonic Masculinity and Boomtowns

These gender roles are strongly perpetuated in boomtown contexts. The normalization and admiration of ‘male culture’ in resource industries is the main example. Filteau (2014) explains that men in frontier or ‘manly’ occupations legitimize the exclusion and subordination of women in resource extraction industries. Nagy (2018) argues that “hegemonic masculine culture has become an intrinsic part of the oil sands’ culture, delineating resource extraction work as being primarily, or even exclusively, for men, and thus privileging traits that are stereotypically associated with masculinity” (pg. 22). These rewarded behaviours in areas constructed as dangerous places where only the toughest of men will survive are much like the ‘Frontier’ and ‘Wild West’ environments of the past. Emphasis is placed on “self-sufficiency, daring, ruggedness and strength” where the “reward for those who ‘make it’ on the frontier are [rewarded] with considerable financial rewards” (O’Shaughnessy, 2011, pg. 119; Miller, 2004).

This stereotype in the oil industry perpetuates oil workers as “tough guys who work long hours, macho men who endure heavy labour, and are ultimately the breadwinner” (Nagy, 2018, pg. 22). Therefore, the idea that only the ‘manliest of men’ would survive in extraction environments facilitates a hyper-masculine environment in which men compete and strive for this hegemonic masculine ideal. Moreover, Filteau (2014) argues that “men change the dominant conception of masculinity” as more women enter resource industries, which threatens “the previously dominant masculinity” (pg. 399). This leads to elevated praise and emphasis on physical strength to battle these ‘frontier’ environments. This is then used to exclude women from resource industries as they are often seen as being unable to endure the long hours and physical work within the industry (Filteau, 2014).

Since the extraction industry is mainly male-dominated, men are the breadwinners of the family while their wives or partners become dependent on their income and industry perks, most notably being housing. If these partners are unable to find employment themselves or are in a position where they don't need to work, they often become homemakers. Hegemonic masculinity can also help explain domestic violence and abuse, as men are expected to keep their wives in line in the "informal culture of neighbourhoods, workplaces and pubs" to avoid damaging comments from other men such as "she wears the pants" (Connell, 2002, pg. 93-94).

Importantly, hegemonic masculinity not only recognizes the hierarchy between women and men but also between men themselves (Connell, 2002). This power dynamic and hierarchy among men is important in the boomtown context as it helps explain later discussions of 'male-on-male' violence in boomtown settings. Hegemonic masculinity and its discussion of hierarchy amongst men can be used to explain "the cultural embedding and specific shape of violence in communities where physical aggression is expected or admired among men" (Connell, 2002, pg. 93). Male-on-male violence is often discussed in boomtown literature in the context of masculinities due to the gender imbalance that is created in the community when male migrant workers move in (Carrington et al., 2010). Boomtowns see an influx of young men to the area, leaving boomtowns with a disproportionate sex ratio. This means men are in competition for female attention and ultimately are in competition with each other in this frontier environment. Frontier masculinity is tied into this concept as well as existing males and new residents compete as to who is the most authentic 'frontier' worker.

2.1.2 Intersectionality

The impacts of hegemonic masculinity on women living in boomtowns must be viewed through an intersectional framework. Intersectionality refers to multiple layers of someone's

identity, and how these different layers create a unique, individual experience of discrimination. The term was introduced by bell hooks (1981) and popularized by Crenshaw's (1989) discussion of violence against women of colour and their unique experience of violence. Intersectionality examines the intersections of a person's different identities based on factors such as age, race, gender, and class to explain the experiences of victimization (Crenshaw, 1989; Potter, 2013). When including an intersectional framework to understanding women's experiences in relation to hegemonic masculinity, women of colour experience more subordination than white women due to the intersection of gender and race. This can also be seen institutionally in the resource extraction industry, as Indigenous women find themselves further disadvantaged in the workforce as they have fewer employment opportunities and receive lower compensation (Nightingale et. al, 2017). Moreover, intersectionality must be used to examine violence against women that appears in boomtown communities. This must be especially emphasized when looking at violence against Indigenous women and the colonial legacy in Canada and the United States that has dehumanized Indigenous women and labeled them as 'more rapable' (Monchalin, 2016), putting them more at risk of gender-based violence.

In conclusion, both classical and more modern theoretical approaches help us understand boomtowns' social dynamics. Although this thesis will use hegemonic masculinity as its dominant theoretical frame, it also appreciates that no theory alone can explain boomtowns in their entirety. Therefore, I draw on multiple theories to provide a robust understanding of boomtowns and their impacts on women. Social disorganization, anomie and collective efficacy help to understand the environmental contexts of boomtowns; late modernity and the resource curse help to understand the context of boomtowns; while hegemonic masculinity and intersectionality help to understand the gendered and racial experiences of boomtown environments.

2.2 Contemporary Boomtown Literature

Boomtown literature focuses on the social impacts of resource extraction, which are often referred to as boomtown effects. This section of the literature review examines common boomtown effects discussed in past literature. More specifically, I examine boomtown culture, blowing off steam and frontier culture, and infrastructure challenges. This section aims to outline and describe the social environment of boomtowns and help explain why each boomtown effect has a gendered impact. Following this, I discuss women's relationship to extraction. This will outline what research has found regarding the female experience, such as financial hardships, violence, mental, and sexual health. I conclude by discussing the gaps in the literature and areas where further research needs to be conducted.

2.2.1 Boomtown Culture

The isolated nature of boomtown living can create precarious working and living conditions. Most industry workers follow a fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) employment regimen. FIFO refers to non-resident workers who travel to extraction communities for work for fixed periods. They often live in temporary rented rooms or 'man camps' that are not included in Census Bureau statistics (Ruddell, 2017). Man camps can be described as mobile trailer park-like living quarters that often provide food, laundry services, transportation, and recreational facilities, and can sometimes serve alcohol (Carrington et al., 2010). Ruddell reports that, at one point, an estimated 13,000 workers were living in man camps outside of Fort McMurray, Alberta. As mentioned in previous sections, this isolation leading to precarious work predicaments make defining boomtowns complicated. Therefore, the only consistent definition of boomtowns is that they experience a rapid influx of often young, blue-collar, male workers. These workers do not often have ties to the community, and are instead, motivated to move to these isolated areas due to the lucrative nature of employment in the extraction industry.

The possibility of high paying labour jobs in the industry often leads to large population growth in and around extraction sites. This influx of people is also mostly young men seeking labour positions. Therefore, boomtowns often have a skewed ratio where men largely outnumber women. When examining population demographics in Fort McMurray, Ruddell (2011) reports more single men in the area (approximately 5-7% more) than the provincial average. Moreover, large earning averages can be seen in boomtowns because of the lucrative nature of the industry. Boomtown income averages surpass provincial averages. For example, the average family income in Fort McMurray was \$124,592, while the provincial average was \$73,823. The individual income average for Fort McMurray was \$43,920, in comparison to the provincial average of \$28,896 (Ruddell, 2011). Carrington et al. (2010) discovered that in Pembleton, a boomtown in Australia, 72.2% of men made \$1,000 or more per week compared to the national 27.7% average. Similarly, 26.7% of males were making \$2,000 or more per week in the boomtown versus the national average of 6.2% of males. Goldenberg, Shoveller, Koehoorn and Ostry (2010) outline the same boomtown characteristics in Fort St. John, British Columbia, where 32% of its local economy is dependent on oil and gas resource-based industries (Goldenberg et al., 2010). Comparable to Fort McMurray and the Australian boomtowns mentioned previously, Fort St. John experienced an influx of non-resident workers (FIFOs), which consisted of mostly young men who are “attracted by high-paying oil/gas jobs” (Goldenberg et al., 2010). With family incomes reaching 15% over the provincial average, Fort St. John has the second lowest median age (15-30) in BC and its population has increased by 8.4% since the beginning of the boom in 2006 (excluding the population living in man camps mentioned previously).

Although each boomtown has slightly different experiences, the trends remain the same in that individuals are motivated to move to extractive environments because of the high incomes

that can be made in the oil and gas industry. When discussing youth and extraction, Goldenberg et al. (2010) indicate that many young men are attracted to the ‘get rich quick’ appeal of oil and gas work. Similarly, Ruddell and Ortiz (2015) argue that the demographic drawn to resource booms are “young single men in search of high salaries” (pg. 132). In a Public Broadcasting Service (2014) documentary, a young oil worker that was interviewed explained that people are migrating to these areas because “you can find an entry-level job up here with no training, no schooling, no nothing and you can move up”. Work in oil and gas often does not require a high school diploma and/or higher education, which makes the job attractive to less educated, young men seeking labour intensive, blue-collar professions (Goldenberg et al., 2010). Carrington et al. (2010) argue that the extraction industry is attractive to young men because “regardless of their skill level, they can secure a well-paid job in mines, on construction sites, in transportation or on offshore rigs” (pg. 404). Moreover, Ruddell and Ortiz (2015) report that anecdotal information has revealed that many of these workers have criminal records, but they are often overlooked as they are willing to participate in this hard, isolating, ‘dirty work’. Moreover, Berger and Beckmann (2010) reported a higher settlement of registered sex offenders in resource-based boomtowns.

Therefore, the particular profile of worker that is being attracted to these jobs (i.e., young, uneducated males who are attracted to big money, but who have been unsuccessful at home due to potentially criminal pasts), must be considered. Of course, not all workers fit this description but employment opportunities appeal to these specific demographics. In addition to this, workers often do not have access to well-being resources, such as mental health supports or medical attention because of the time demand of their shifts (Amnesty International, 2016; The Firelight Group et al., 2017). The Firelight Group et al. (2017) reports that mental health concerns, such as depression and loneliness, and physical health concerns are exacerbated for oil workers due to the lack of

resources and access to health care in these settings (The Firelight Group et al., 2017; Goldenberg, Shoveller, Koehoorn and Ostry, 2008; Shandro et al., 2011).

Although money attracts people to industry professions, these jobs are extremely difficult. Often, these workers are subject to 12-14+ hour shifts in oil patches on two-week rotations in high stress and sometimes dangerous working conditions (Goldenberg et al., 2010; Ruddell, 2017; Amnesty International, 2016). Along with stressful working conditions, many of these workers experience heightened social isolation, as they are separated from family, friends, and any other traditional support systems from home (Ennis et al., 2017; Angell & Parkins, 2011; Sharma, 2010). This separation also leads to strained family relationships which contribute to stress and a socially isolating experience (Palmer, 2017; Ruddell, 2017; Nightingale, Czyzewski, Tester, and Aaruaq, 2017; Goldenberg et al., 2010)

2.2.2 Blowing Off Steam and Frontier Culture

After working long hours in the oil fields, many of these workers (who possess large disposable incomes and are separated from their families) aim to ‘blow off steam’ through the use of alcohol and drugs (Carrington et al., 2016; Goldenberg et al., 2010; Ruddell et al., 2014). Ennis et al. (2017) explain that the industry workers become “cashed up” when they are away from home, “seeking alcohol, recreational drugs, and sex in their downtime” (Ennis et al., 2017). Goldenberg et al. (2010) discuss the idea of blowing off steam as a ‘work hard, play hard’ mentality. When explicitly discussing man camps, Goldenberg et al. (2010), says that after their regular 12 to 18-hour workdays for periods of 21-28 days, these individuals often engage in hard partying, particularly abusing alcohol and illicit drugs. Oil workers interviewed in their study revealed that their “entry into the oil/gas industries also provided an entry into a drug scene” where workers often used crack cocaine as an ‘upper’ to aid their hangovers and exhaustion (Goldenberg et al.,

2010). This type of behavior is connected to “high levels of disposable income earned by workers” and “the social isolation they experience” (Goldenberg et al., 2010). Amnesty International (2016) reports that ‘blowing off steam’ is where “accumulated stress is released into drugs and alcohol,” and where “older partiers set the standard for new workers at the camps” (Amnesty International, 2016, pg. 44)

Since many of these workers are separated from their home lives, they can engage in activities without consequences sanctioned by informal social control. As mentioned previously, many boomtown workers follow a “fly-in-fly-out” lifestyle, meaning they have little-to-no attachment to the community and are often separated from their families. Young men with large amounts of disposable income and no ties to the community create social disorder (Ruddell, Jayasundara Mayzer & Heitkamp, 2014). Typically, rural communities and small towns display higher levels of informal social control in comparison to their urban counterparts due to their small size and traditional values, such as an emphasis of a community member or their family maintaining a good reputation (Carrington, Hogg and Scott, 2016). This norm is challenged in boomtown settings, as newcomers’ behaviours are not policed by this informal social control (Ruddell et al., 2014; Carrington et al., 2016).

Blowing off steam through drinking and drugs is deeply ingrained into industry culture, also known as ‘frontier’ culture. The pub setting is a key socialization agent within industry culture as it works to initiate young men into the “public culture of masculinity” and the “local blue-collar workforce through their participation in drinking rituals” (Carrington et al., 2010, pg. 400; Campbell, 2006). Campbell (2006) and Carrington et al. (2010) stress the importance of the interconnectedness of the pub, the workplace, and industry culture. In Pembleton, an Australian boomtown examined by Carrington et al. (2010), some of the work camps have liquor-licensed

venues, and also provide transportation between the camps and local bars. The pub acts as the centre stage to perform masculinities to defend manhood and status (Carrington et al., 2010, pg. 400). One of the main ways that masculinity is tested and proven, especially in industry and frontier culture, is through violence (Carrington et al., 2010).

Carrington ties in frontier masculinities, the role of hierarchy and status, and how tensions between residents and non-residents can lead to violence. FIFOs often rank low in social status, especially compared to local men. Local men do not view them as “authentic bearers of frontier masculinity” because of the compensation they receive for their hard work in the form of “high incomes, which some spend excessively on alcohol, gambling and prostitutes” (Carrington et al., 2010, pg. 402). Their lifestyle becomes a “source of resentment by less well-off locals” who see themselves as more respectable, family oriented, rural men subject to and policed by informal social control (Carrington et al., 2010 pg. 402). Therefore, FIFO’s often result to violence to re-enforce their place and power, as they are seen as the “bottom of the barrel men;” similarly, local men’s masculinity is threatened by the “earning power of non-resident workers,” causing them to also violently defend their masculinity and social status. Essentially, both groups of men consider themselves bearers of frontier masculinity, and where “deep social divisions and rivalries between groups of men exist,” male-on-male violence is to be expected due to the threat of “honour, territory or status” (Carrington et al., 2010, pg. 403).

This influx of cash and increased substance use to a hyper-masculine demographic with little-to-no informal social control can have dangerous consequences. As discussed previously, this environment can fuel male-on-male violence. Since these individuals do not have ties to the community and often do not have to worry about their reputation as they are only there for work and their families have been left at home, a ‘what happens in the boomtown stays in the boomtown’

mentality occurs. Ennis et al. (2017) report that most of these negative sides of the boom, such as violence and drugs, are linked back to social isolation, the ‘us vs. them’ tensions between locals and FIFOs, workplace and industry culture, and the local ‘frontier-town’ culture. Ruddell (2011) states that Fort McMurray saw an increase of prostitutes and drug dealers, along with increased substance use, after these high earning, young men moved into the community. For example, Ruddell reports that Fort McMurray “ranked in the top five Canadian cities in terms of the crime severity index,” but that only approximately 35% of crimes in Canada are reported to police (Ruddell, 2011).

In closing, the negative social disruption in boomtowns can be related back to an influx of cash in an area with little-to-no informal social control as these individuals do not have ties to the community and do not necessarily have to worry about their reputation as they are only there for work and their families have been left at home. Although alcohol consumption plays a large role in male-on-male violence, and other forms of social disorder discussed in boomtown literature, it is not the sole cause. We must be careful not to use FIFO workers as scapegoats to pre-existing problems in boomtown areas. Carrington et al. (2010) claim that one of the reasons that violence is escalated is because these non-resident workers fit in too well to a pre-existing frontier and rural masculine culture and social norms of risk taking, being ‘rough and tuff’ and using aggression and violence more often with their encounters with men (Carrington et al., 2010; Carrington and Scott, 2008). Work camp culture and rural masculine culture are not all that different, and therefore, when these two social-cultural groups collide, we can expect to see an exaggeration of current male-on-male violence and other types of crime.

2.2.3 Boomtown Infrastructure Challenges

Boomtown effects not only impacts social aspects of a community but also can have serious impacts on a community's infrastructure and economy. One of the main areas of concern is the housing crisis and the increased cost of living in boomtowns (Amnesty International, 2016; Carrington et al., 2016; Ennis et al., 2017; Fernando and Cooley, 2016; Ruddell, 2017; The Firelight Group, 2017). The increased population consisting of mainly high-earning men has "driven up local prices for essentials like food and living" (Amnesty International, 2016). Moreover, the housing shortage and price increase is simply a matter of supply and demand in an area experiencing mass migration of individuals with high earnings. When examining Fort St. John, Amnesty International (2016) reports that:

During the most recent economic boom in the oil and gas industry, the price of housing in Fort St. John climbed much faster than income. According to a Fort St. John housing study, the median selling price for a single-family home increased by 96% between 2003 and 2008, an increase almost three times greater than the increase in median household income during the same period (pg. 46).

They also report that this shortage in affordable housing makes it difficult for low income families to afford rent, and it makes middle-class families who are currently renting in the area unable to save money to purchase homes. Fernando and Cooley (2016) report that newcomers for work outside of the industry, such as teachers or service providers, were forced to "double up with friends or family in Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale region" because of being displaced by high rental prices. They report that long-term residents were also forced to double up due to rising rent costs. Senior residents, the working poor, low-income individuals, women, and victims of interpersonal violence are hardest hit by these effects. Moreover, the waiting periods for affordable housing and subsidized housing increased to approximately two years in some areas since the boom (Jayasundara, Legerski, Danis and Ruddell, 2018).

Along with housing shortages, the population boom in resource areas puts extreme pressure on “local infrastructure and human services” (Carrington et al., 2016). This includes everything from over-populated education systems, to inadequate garbage collection. These services are funded “according to permanent resident population levels” which do not count the ‘shadow population’ of the extraction industry (Carrington et al., 2016). Securing funding for building schools to meet the demand of the new population can often be difficult due to the transiency of the industry workforce and its instability. Investments in long-term public housing projects are met with hesitation by governments due to the boom and bust cycle of boomtowns (Fernando and Cooley, 2018; Jayasundara et al., 2018). Moreover, Ruddell notes that there is “often a lag between the recognition of a boom and the time when local services match the community’s needs” (pg. 328). Ensign, Giles, and Oncescu (2014) note the increased demand for judicial services during the oil boom, especially in Northern Canadian communities which have felt the strongest impact. Moreover, Ruddell notes that communities have a hard time keeping up with road repairs due to road “damage caused by industry truck traffic” (Ruddell, 2017, pg. 124; Raimi & Newell, 2016). The large influx of individuals can also put extreme strain on rural police services that are simply not prepared for the rising disorder rates, traffic incidents, and emergency calls (Ruddell, 2017). Infrastructure changes are hard to financially justify as statistics simply do not reflect the reality in boomtowns.

One of the largest infrastructure challenges faced in boomtowns is the strain on police services. Given the nature and social context of these booms, police workload often increases due to higher levels of disorder, traffic accidents, and violence (Ruddell, 2011). The population increase is different than other communities due to the large influx of “young men with little stake in the community” which means that population increases due to the resource industry are more

likely to come with increased levels of crime (Ruddell, 2011, pg. 329). One of the largest challenges for police in boomtown communities is that, historically, these booms impact small rural communities which often operate through “impoverished tax bases” (pg.337), meaning their enforcement is usually underfunded. Moreover, the types of crime increase seen in boomtown communities often take teams or task force resources to tackle, such as increased human, sex, and drug trafficking.

In closing, boomtown communities experience a strain on social services mainly because of their previously rural setting. Many communities simply do not have the resources and funds needed to keep up with the growing population and the challenges that follow. The population increase of young transient men is what makes the population booms in resource communities so unique and challenging, as not only are there strains on services from the sheer increase of people, but scholars also report increases in disorder and crime.

2.3 Gendered Impacts in Boomtown Literature

All of the boomtown effects mentioned above have specific and unique gendered impacts. When discussing the housing crisis, or ‘blowing off steam’, scholars may make small mentions of gendered impacts but rarely make this their sole focus. Literature solely discussing women’s experiences and gender-specific impacts of resource extraction, to my knowledge, is sparse. Therefore, this section focuses exclusively on how these boomtown effects impact women. Each of these topics has specific impacts on women’s well-being and safety, and these effects are intersectional as women who are of different socioeconomic status, racialized women, and women of non-heteronormative sexual orientation may feel these challenges differently.

2.3.1 Economic Hardships

Women face specific challenges as workers in the oil/extraction industry. Employment in the resource extraction industry is often depicted as a man’s job: rough, dangerous, dirty, and

generally masculine in nature. When discussing mining specifically, Ennis et al. (2017) say that these job sites have become sites of “ingrained patriarchal masculinity and a work environment where men consistently outnumber and out-earn women, and where verbal and sexual harassment of women is common” (pg. 539). Men are known to dominate extraction work. Although a small percentage, women working in extraction tend to be paid less and their jobs often conform to stereotypical gender roles, such as housekeeping and kitchen staff (Baker and Fortin, 2001; Measham, Fleming and Schandl, 2016; Nightingale et al., 2017; The Firelight Group et al., 2017).

The challenges experienced by women working in extraction areas are clearly illustrated by Nightingale et al. (2017). Nightingale et al. (2017) examined Inuit women’s experiences working in mines in northern Canada and note that the main reasons for leaving these positions were due to racial discrimination, gender discrimination, and constant sexual harassment and assault in the workplace. They found that women are afraid to report or discuss any of these issues with their respective human resources departments, as they did not know their rights as workers. Moreover, because many women were working these ‘low-skilled’, domestic positions within the industry, they were low on the workplace hierarchy, putting them more at risk, as they were afraid to lose their jobs. This power dynamic is dangerous as many of these jobs are located close to male living spaces. Service providers interviewed in their study repeatedly raised concerns regarding sexual assault in the work environment, saying:

We’ve had a number of women coming in and telling us about rapes. There were rapes. I mean they weren’t just somebody who changed their mind, it was somebody who was actually raped up there (Nightingale et al., 2017, pg. 376).

Moreover, the Firelight Group, Lake Babine Nation and Nak'azdli Whut'en's (2017) report that Indigenous women in the extraction workforce often do not feel safe in such a hyper-masculine work culture. Tasks such as cleaning male rooms alone come with risk.

Women on the front-line of the industry experience discriminatory employment practices such as “wage discrimination and unequal access to employment opportunities” (The Firelight Group et al., 2017). During an interview with Amnesty International (2016), one woman discussed a time when a co-worker was sexually assaulted working on an extraction job site but due to fears of job loss, she chose not to report the incident. Another participant discussed a sexual assault that resulted in one woman losing her job and being exiled from finding work elsewhere in the industry. For example, they write:

One woman said that she did not report harassment to her supervisors because she was new to her job and did not want to jeopardize her reputation and future employment prospects. Of her male colleagues who witnessed her harassment, she said, “nobody stood up for me” (Amnesty International, 2016, pg. 43).

This lack of female representation within industry jobs and the power dynamic between those who are included in the workforce helps portray women as the ‘weaker sex’ and reinforces the subordination and marginalization of women in the industry (Sharma, 2012). This micro-level promotion of gender inequalities means the “wellbeing of women, because of their structural positioning within the domains of work, family, and community, is highly likely to be affected” (Sharma, 2012).

The lack of affordable housing in boomtowns particularly impacts women. Women's lack of employment opportunities in lucrative extractive industry jobs makes it hard to keep up with the increasing prices. Moreover, when conducting their study on access to subsidized housing

programs, Jayasundara et al. (2018) report that single mothers and women working to escape intimate partner violence find themselves with extreme disadvantages. There are long wait periods for subsidized housing in boomtowns, and an overall shortage of units despite the high demands motivated by inflated housing and rent prices. Even if one was accepted into low-income housing, inflation rates have driven up those rent prices. Even when accepted into low income housing, the portion an individual is responsible to pay has gone from \$25 to \$800 in some cases (Jayasundara et al., 2018). Childcare is another service that has found itself strained in boomtown areas. In *Boomtowners*, a documentary discussed by Ruddell (2017), residents report long wait times due to a lack of availability for child care services because there were only “100 spots for the entire city” (Ruddell, 2017). Moreover, Fernando and Cooley’s (2016) participant explains she knows “15 women right now that are not working because they can’t afford daycare. You can’t find it. If you can find it, it’s so expensive” (pg. 28) which furthers women’s economic dependence on their partners.

Many women turn to sex work due to poverty and homelessness (The Firelight Group et al., 2017). This is due to the combination of disenfranchisement and a lack of industry employment for women paired with an increase in demand for sex work. As mentioned before, with an influx of young men ‘blowing off steam’, there is an increased demand for sex workers in the area (Amnesty International, 2016; Ennis et al., 2017; Measham et al., 2016; O’Connor, 2017; Ruddell, 2017; Shandro et al., 2014). O’Connor (2017) reports a 137% increase in prostitution arrests since the oil boom in North Dakota compared to pre-boom rates (O’Connor, 2017). In interviews with oil workers in Fort McMurray, Landry (2017) found that oil workers purchase sex for three reasons: because it is seen as a luxury that only “oil workers can afford,” because purchasing sex is a way to “meet that need”, and simply that it is convenient and easier than wooing a partner (pg.

78). Moreover, she argues socio-culture factors leading to oil workers purchasing sex in Fort McMurray include sexist views of women, the normalization of purchasing sex, and the ‘work hard, play hard’ mentality of industry culture (Landry, 2017). She stresses the normalization of viewing women as ‘things’ in oil culture, as her participants constantly described women as “things men can buy,” grouping them with ‘toys’ like Skidoos and boats, and even pizza and pieces of meat (Landry, 2017, pg. 82).

Increased demand for commercial sex can result in “the illegal sex trafficking of women and girls” in boomtown environments (Ennis et al., 2017, pg. 539). The Firelight Group reports that sex trafficking has increased around industrial extraction sites in Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie due to the rise of high-income young men living in social isolation immersed in a hyper-masculine rigger culture (The Firelight Group, 2017; Sweet, 2014). Ruddell (2017) reports that boomtowns “are lucrative environments for pimps supplying sex workers to a large male population earning high salaries” (Ruddell, 2017, pg. 79). This is tightly linked to women’s disenfranchisement in boomtown environments, as many do not have the same economic opportunities in these areas as men, and when they do receive employment from the industry, they often leave due to lack of resources for childcare and/or sexual harassment in the workplace. Therefore, with the lucrative nature of sex work in boomtowns, many women resort to this to gain economic stability. Economic instability also makes many women at risk of sex trafficking. Indigenous women are especially susceptible to this, as Indigenous women and girls “represent between 70-90 percent of the sex trade, despite Indigenous people making up less than 10 percent of the population” in Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie (The Firelight Group et al., 2017; Sweet, 2014).

2.3.2 *Violence*

Women are at a high risk of violence in boomtowns. This is due to many factors including an influx of young men which disrupts gender ratios (Fernando and Cooley, 2016; Ruddell, 2017). This influx and newfound male-based population heightens women's risk of victimization (Ruddell, 2017; Taylor and Carson, 2014). In boomtown communities, there is a higher ratio of men compared to women. These men are often away from their families and are experiencing socially isolating conditions and immersing themselves in alcohol and drug industry cultures. Women experience much more unwanted male attention, and often do not feel safe doing common daily tasks such as going out or shopping at local grocery stores (Elgion, 2013; Ruddell, 2017). This increased victimization is seen in boomtown literature around the world, such as Canada, the US, Australia, Africa, and Latin America. An example of women feeling threatened is shown by the increase of concealed weapon permits held by women in North Dakota as it increased from 11.2% to 24.0% between 2010-2014 (Lott, Whitley, and Riley, 2015; Ruddell, 2017;). As mentioned, it is not simply the growth of population, but the substance abuse and hypermasculinity involved in frontier or rigger culture that endangers women's well-being (Carrington et al., 2016; Ennis et al., 2017; Nightingale et al., 2017; The Firelight Group, 2017;). Ennis et al.'s (2017) interviews with service providers regarding boomtown culture reported that the "combination of alcohol involved in the mix with loneliness [is when] you see that breakdown of positive mental decision making" which leads to "an increase in sexual attacks on women" (Ennis et al., 2017, pg. 549).

Moreover, Nightingale et al. (2016) report service providers found that the increase of substance use led to a "rise [in] incidents of violence in the community, particularly against women" (Nightingale et al., 2017, pg. 379). They report an increase in physical and sexual assault

against women, teenagers, and children (Nightingale et al., 2017). Jayasyndara et al.'s (2016) study found an increase of dating, domestic violence and stalking offences against women, while Shandro (2014) reports an increase in sexual assaults by 38% according to Fort St. James RCMP data during the construction phase of the Mount Milligan Mine (Shandro et al., 2014).

Many scholars highlight the severe sexual assault risk Indigenous women face being located near extraction environments and/or man camps (Amnesty International, 2016; James Anaya, 2014; the Firelight Group et al., 2017; Nightingale et al., 2017; Sweet, 2014). Taggart (2015) argues that there is a linear relationship between the high-income earning shadow population, hyper-masculine or rigger culture, and a rise in sexual violence and trafficking of Indigenous women (Firelight et al., 2017; Taggart, 2015). The Firelight Group shares a participant's story regarding a rape at the Endako mine she heard about when she was working as a driver for industrial camp workers. She explains that the camp workers:

Boasted amongst themselves about how they had collectively raped a young Indigenous woman. The Indigenous driver was so invisible to these young men, that they did not even consider the impact on her as they told their stories. The young men raped this young Indigenous woman, who was later found by her family on the side of the road, naked and alone. No reporting was made of the incident and no charges were pressed. (The Firelight Group et al., 2017, pg. 22)

This participant continued to discuss six more unreported rapes in the camps and nearby.

The underreporting of sexual assaults is very common as survivors often feel shame and can experience re-traumatization and re-victimization by the justice system (Firelight Group et al., 2017). This problem is exacerbated for women, and young Indigenous women, in particular, living in these rural settings as resources are sparse. For example, to be medically examined, women cannot shower or "care for themselves physically" before the exam, although the closest medical facilities can be hours away with long wait times. The lack of resources in these communities also

often means that certain health centers may not have materials, such as rape kits or proper training, to deal with these scenarios. They explain that the process of reporting rape requires “the assaulted person abstaining from changing their clothes, showering, defecating, urinating, or in the case of oral assault, consuming food or liquid until they undergo a rape exam” (The Firelight Group et al., 2017, pg. 23; Maier, 2008; Parnis and Du Month, 1999). Other barriers are a lack of access to transportation, having to leave behind children, and fear of stigmatization and traumatization by medical staff not seriously responding to their reports (The Firelight Group et al., 2017).

This is extremely troubling as Indigenous women and girls are at greater risk of sexual violence due to the colonial legacy that portrays Indigenous women as ‘rapeable’ (Monchalin, 2016). The large influx of men to remote regions for extraction, yielding them extreme economic power “emboldens them to express racist and sexist attitudes” such as justifying harassment and violence against Indigenous women and girls because they are perceived as “drunk, easy, and wanted it anyway” (Amnesty International, 2016). Therefore, studies focusing on women’s experiences in boomtowns must be intersectional. Indigenous women are at risk of victimization through two layers: for being female and for being Indigenous which can occur intersectionally (at the same time) or separately.

Studies have also shown that domestic violence is prevalent in boomtown communities. Women often become economically dependent on their partners in boomtown settings due to financial inequality, which makes getting out of a domestic violence situation extremely difficult. Amnesty International (2016) reports that men make a monthly average of \$4,286, while women made only \$2,514 (Ruddell, 2017; Amnesty International, 2016). With monthly rental costs averaging around \$1,100 per month, women alone would be spending almost half their earnings on living costs, with little left for food, child care services while at work, and many other living

expenses. This means that many women are forced into economic dependence on their partners. Industry workers often receive housing accommodation as part of their employment, but this privilege does not extend to separated spouses. This means women are often dependant on their partner's housing accommodations, which makes it difficult for them to flee situations of abuse.

Dependence is dangerous for women due to the domestic violence discussed in boomtown literature. Jayasundara, Heitkamp, Mayzer, Legerski, and Evanson (2016) found a statistically significant increase in domestic violence when using the National Incident-Based Reporting System data in North Dakota from 2004-2007 and 2009-2014. We must remember that this only includes reported incidents, and since many domestic abuse claims go unreported, especially in rural settings, these numbers only represent the small percentage that is reported (Jayasundara et al., 2016; Huey and Ricciardelli, 2017; Carrington and Scott, 2008). Carrington, Hogg, and Scott (2016, pg. 114) state that domestic violence prevails in extraction environments because of the “normalization of gendered violence in these frontier settings”. Moreover, North Dakota Council on Abused Women's Services (CAWS) data shows that reported instances of domestic violence near boomtowns such as Dickinson, Minot, and Williston (Jayasundara et al., 2016). Therefore, women are at risk of domestic violence because of ‘frontier culture’ promoting increased drug and alcohol use and ‘blowing off steam,’ partnered with stresses of work, such as job instability and long shifts.

2.3.3 Mental and Sexual Health

Many partners of extraction workers also face mental health barriers, mostly due to the social isolation they experience. Extraction workers and their families are forced to leave their hometown life behind to relocate to isolated areas. This relocation separates women from their traditional support systems and social circles from their lives back home. Social isolation makes it

difficult for women to remove themselves from interpersonal violence situations because they do not have places to go, and resources are often sparse in these areas (Ruddell, 2017). Women often do not have alternative living arrangements and enough means to support themselves and their children (Ruddell, 2017; Jayasundara et al., 2016). Amnesty International (2016) argues that women are reluctant to contact police in domestic abuse situations because they are one argument away from the streets as many of them depend on their partners for housing accommodation. This worsens for women who experience language barriers (Ruddell, 2017; Nightingale et al., 2017; Sharma, 2010). For example, it has been found that immigrant Asian women who locate to remote settings with working partners have increased feelings of loneliness because of their separation from familiar culture and language rituals, as they are limited in their new social setting and unable to utilize support services (Sharma, 2010). In addition to discussions of social isolation and communication issues, assessments of women's mental health in extraction communities are mostly missing from the boomtown literature.

High sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates are reported in boomtowns (Goldenberg et al., 2008). When looking at boomtowns in northeast B.C., Goldenberg et al. (2008) found Chlamydia rates were 22% higher than the provincial average. Moreover, they found that limited testing due to isolation, lack of resources, and 'rigger' culture prevented young, male oil workers from getting tested. One participant blamed the fact that "they don't have any attachment to these people – they're never going to see them again" and therefore don't feel the need to get tested since they are just coming in and leaving town soon after (Goldenberg et al., 2008, pg. 351). They also note that many of these workers began in the industry around 15, meaning they missed education opportunities surrounding sexual health. When these individuals purchase sex without getting tested, these STIs spread rapidly, leaving sex workers at extremely high risk. Most at risk

are migrant sex workers who have recently moved into the area due to the increased demand. Goldenberg (2014) says that migration of sex workers can increase economic opportunities but that they are more at risk of “violence and sexual risk, including reduced control over condom negotiation” (Goldenberg, 2014, pg. 45). With a high percentage of oil workers having STIs who then purchase sex without being tested, sex workers fall victim to high risks of contracting these infections, especially migrant ones who lack control of condom negotiation.

2.4 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, boomtowns are precarious social contexts where young men come to earn big money. This influx of individuals changes the pre-existing social landscape and increases disorder through violence, drugs, alcohol, prostitution, and unaffordable safe housing. The young men that move for work experience social isolation and lack mental health resources after working extremely difficult jobs. This precarious social landscape impacts women’s wellbeing, as there is a higher percentage of males that are emerged in a hyper-masculine culture that views women as objects. Women’s feelings of safety are affected, and many participants recount stories of sexual assault in connection with the industry and its workers.

This past literature is extremely important in helping to understand the sociological and economic impacts of boomtowns, along with gaining a deeper theoretical understanding of their context, as it demonstrates several current gaps that new research must address. First, boomtown literature often makes attempts to quantify the problem using traditional quantitative methods. For example, it often tries to operationalize impacts using population statistics, UCR data, and other databases. These numbers misrepresent and can often underestimate impacts on the community and lead to challenges in community funding for infrastructure or social services. It also appears to compartmentalize boomtown impacts rather than understand them as interconnected. Instead,

researchers must understand that many of these issues are deeply interconnected and have powerful gendered impacts. For example, many articles discuss the infrastructure challenges in boomtowns, such as the housing crisis, but fail to mention that this places women at extreme risk. Historically, women have been shut out of the lucrative industry and therefore become dependent on men which prevents them from leaving abusive relationships, which then puts pressure on shelters and social services. Moreover, women may turn to sex work as a means to survive which can lead to an increase in violence risk and contracting STIs. Lastly, literature often focuses on the boom and does not examine the impacts of the ‘bust’, which, arguably, may have a larger impact on crime and disorder in communities.

It is through my initial exploration of these gaps which motivated me to further research this issue. Most main-stream discussions regarding resource extraction are focused on the environment. When research does focus on the social impacts, discussions often exclude gendered impacts, or at the least, lack a solid focus on how social impacts can present challenges to women directly. Therefore, this study aims to understand if the resource extraction industry presents any challenges to women and their general health (mental, physical, sexual, financial). Moreover, it aims to understand how women are impacted using an intersectional lens, therefore assessing the experience of women across racial and socioeconomic lines. Lastly, this study hopes to look at steps and strategies moving forward that would improve women’s safety and security within boomtown environments. The methods used to explore these issues are discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

My thesis follows an exploratory qualitative structure to better understand the challenges women face in boomtown environments. It is well known that issues impacting women are not always reflected in quantitative methods, therefore, qualitative in-depth interviews with social service providers were the most appropriate method to conduct this study (Maier, 2008). For example, when analyzing sexual assault and stalking in North Dakota, Jayasundara et al. (2016) used a mixed methods approach that involved crime statistics, and qualitative methods through focus groups with women in the communities and social service providers. They argue that their “qualitative findings provide a richer narrative regarding the nature and context of the impact of oil development on survivors, service providers, and communities” and that the complexities of this environment and experience cannot be “captured by the quantitative data alone” (Jayasundara et al., 2016, pg. 2). This is because the nature of the research, including examining women’s sexual health, sexual assault, and domestic violence, often go unreported in quantitative mediums.

In this chapter, I first justify why my methodological approach was appropriate to answer my proposed research questions. Next, I explore my sampling approach, the recruitment processes, and ethical considerations. I conclude by discussing my approach to data analysis by explaining my coding practices.

3.1 Exploratory Methods and Qualitative Methods

Exploratory research is necessary when scholars “have little or no scientific knowledge about the group, process, activity, or situation they want to examine but nevertheless have reason to believe it contains elements worth discovering” (Stebbins, 2001, pg. 6). Exploratory research is, therefore, necessary to answer my research questions, which ask about how the oil and gas industry impacts women’s lives, if all women are impacted similarly, and if there are unique

resources required for women in these areas. By answering these questions, this project is able to explore what types of challenges women face and to preliminarily introduce these concepts into boomtown literature as a starting point for potential research in this area. To effectively answer the research questions for this project, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate. Qualitative research allows the researcher to see how one makes sense of their realities and experiences (O'Connor, 2010; Siedman, 1991). To answer the research questions in this thesis, I chose to interview social service providers in boomtown areas. Doing so, provided both personal and professional perspectives on the issue of women in boomtowns. Qualitative interviews allowed for a better understanding of the challenges social service providers see impacting women in their community and what they believe needs to be implemented to prevent these challenges from being exacerbated.

Qualitative in-depth interviews were the most appropriate method for my exploratory study as it allowed my participants to guide the conversation and raise concerns they see in their community. Many participants raised similar concepts and occurrences which led to the development of the themes presented in this thesis. The openness of the interview allowed my participants and I to explore ideas together and better understand how they perceived the realities and experiences in their communities.

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection Procedures

3.2.1 Sampling

I used expert sampling and critical case sampling techniques, both of which fall under purposeful sampling. Purposive qualitative sampling “focuses in-depth on relatively small samples” (Patton, 1990, pg. 169) which are carefully selected because they are “information-rich”.

Information-rich cases allow researchers to gain a large amount of knowledge from a select, yet imperative, group of individuals. Expert sampling allows “experts in a particular field to be the subjects” (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016, pg. 3) and is useful when there is a lack of empirical evidence and when “investigating new areas of research, to garner whether or not further study would be worth the effort” (pg. 3).

Critical case sampling is useful when conducting exploratory research, and particularly when looking at boomtown communities as it asks: "if it happens there, it will happen anywhere," or, vice versa, "if it doesn't happen there, it won't happen anywhere." (Patton, 1990, pg. 174). For this research project, I interviewed experts in select boomtowns across Canada and the US Ideally, the richness of these few critical cases will be able to identify what kind of environment is created for women in boomtown areas. The goal of critical case sampling is *logical generalizations* rather than traditional statistical or broad generalizations (Patton, 1990). Therefore, with this sample, we can begin to think about the next steps. While this project remains focused on a small number of cases, hopefully, this work can be expanded to look for patterns in boomtown social impacts. Due to my lack of resources, I am only able to examine a few critical cases but hope to push other researchers to continue this examination. Snowball sampling was also active in this thesis due to participant’s referrals and the use of professors in the field that were able to forward my request to their networks.

3.2.2 The Sample and Recruitment

Patton (1990) notes that “qualitative inquiry typically focuses in-depth on relatively small samples” (p. 170). My sample comprised 10 social service providers from various oil and gas towns across Canada and the US Although I hoped to interview a larger number of service providers, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) note that “there are no universally accepted rules for

sample size in qualitative research” (p. 182). Therefore, 10 participants is an adequate sample size for this research given that I began to reach the point of saturation at the end of my in-depth interviews. The point of saturation can be defined as “the point at which the data collection process no longer offers any new or relevant data” (Dworkin, 2012, pg. 1319) and when “gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights” (Charmaz, 2006, pg. 113) The target group of my study was individuals in the social service field that work with women in boomtowns/extraction areas. My participants ranged from front line workers, to project coordinators, to managers. Some worked in outreach, housing, employment services, and education, while others worked as nurses in drug response roles, and with survivors of sexual assault, interpersonal and domestic violence. Ultimately, the target group is key figures that can speak to challenges women face in boomtown environments as well as gaps in resources/service in their community for women. The broad target group is justified as part of the exploratory nature of my research. To protect participants’ privacy, as some of their roles are extremely specific, they will be referred to using their participant number (#1-10) and general location.

I interviewed social service providers rather than female community members for this thesis as I do not have existing connections within these boomtown communities. Therefore, I believed recruiting female community members would have been extremely challenging, and potentially unrealistic. I felt as though social service providers would be able to give me a general overview of women’s experiences; for example, they could speak on behalf of women in their community which would allow a smaller sample to be adequate to understand female experiences. Otherwise, I would have had to recruit multiple women from each community to gain a solid understanding of the boomtown setting and the general experience of women.

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To recruit participants, I first chose boomtowns based on my past research and previous knowledge of boomtowns. I also turned to news articles, blogs, and Reddit threads that discussed oil and gas hotspots, which can be understood as up and coming boomtowns, and job opportunities. These areas will not be disclosed specifically as these communities have limited social service organizations available, and I believe that this may put my participants' confidentiality at risk. The regions in which the boomtowns fall into include: Northern North Dakota, Northern British Columbia, Central-North British Columbia, Central West Alberta, and Northern Alberta. As mentioned, these regions were targeted as they are known for oil and gas production, along with other natural resource extraction such as mining and forestry.

Once I chose my geographical locations I researched social service organizations in these areas using online research tools such as Google Search and Google Maps. Once I researched and identified an organization whose mandate included assisting women (either through housing, counseling, etc.), I looked into key team members and their contact information through the organization's website. A few participants also recommended other organizations and individuals to contact that had different ranges of expertise. When there was no individual contact information, there was often an online inquiry form. I emailed a total of 44 individuals and organizations and received 11 responses with 10 people willing to participate. A visual representation of my sample can be seen below:

Table 1: Participant Locations and General Occupations

Reference	Location	General Occupation
Participant #1	Northern North Dakota	Crisis Prevention
Participant #2	Northern British Columbia	Women Services Outreach
Participant #3	Central West Alberta	Drug Response Nurse

Participant #4	Northern British Columbia	Employment Relations Professional
Participant #5	Central West Alberta	Drug Response Coordinator
Participant #6	Northern Alberta	Outreach and Support Worker
Participant #7	Northern Alberta	Director
Participant #8	Northern Alberta	Community Educator
Participant #9	Central-North British Columbia	Manager, Women's Services
Participant #10	Central-North British Columbia	Manager, Community Services

Once participants were emailed and agreed to participate, I responded with the informed consent document and a request to schedule an interview. The informed consent document outlined the objectives of the project and the participant's specific role in the research². It explains that the participant and their organizations' identity and specific location would remain anonymous in the study and that they had the right to withdraw any time before the conclusion of the interview. Before the phone interview began, I made sure to discuss this document with each participant to make sure they were aware of their rights and roles in the research. Specifically, I highlighted the two main points: the right to withdraw and my ethical obligation of ensuring their identity was protected and that all material was anonymized.

3.2.3 In-Depth Interviewing and Semi-Structured Interviews

Data collection for this study took place between March and July 2019. I conducted 10 in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow the conversation to be guided

² Informed consent document can be found on page 115.

by the participant, as the few open-ended questions that were formulated beforehand allowed participants to introduce topics and raise concerns they saw in their community. The semi-structured interview was also beneficial for my type of study as it allowed me to probe and to ask follow up questions on topics and concerns raised by participants. The interviews were guided by Holstein and Gubrium's (1989) active interviewing technique that allows interviewees to construct meaning from their environment which allowed me to explore further and ask follow up questions. In-depth interviews are a powerful tool as they aim to understand how a participant makes sense of their lived experience (Charmaz, 1990; Dworkin, 2012). They are not about generalizing information but are instead more "focused on meaning – which are often centered on the how and why of a particular issue, process, situation, subculture, scene or set of social interactions" (Dworkin, 2012, pg. 1319). In-depth interviews aim to obtain a "holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view or situation" (Berry, 1999). Pre-formulated questions included in the interview guide were influenced by the theoretical position of this thesis and therefore focused on the gendered experience and intersectional impacts.

The open-ended interview guide was comprised of 13 questions. My theoretical themes largely influenced the creation of my questions to effectively answer my research questions regarding the female experience, intersectionality, and gaps in service³. Ethics approval for the project was granted on January 14th, 2019 and the interviews followed all key ethical protocols, such as confidentiality. Before beginning interviews, the participants were sent an informed

³ The interview guide can be found on page 112.

consent document. Interviews were conducted over the phone and lasted between 39 minutes to 1 hour and 3 minutes. The interviews were one-on-one except for one interview which was done as a group interview and included 3 participants. Conducting in-depth, open-ended interviews allowed the participants and I to discuss a wide range of issues impacting women. As all participants were women, I was also able to learn about both professional and personal experiences. The early parts of the interview were the most structured as it involved asking the participants about their line of work and their personal knowledge and connection to the extraction around them. Following this were questions focused on answering my research questions. Mainly, questions asked about the gendered impacts of the boom and if these impacts presented challenges for women across racial and socioeconomic lines. Other than this, the majority of the interview was then based on issues raised by the participants. The remainder of the conversation consisted of me probing and asking follow up questions and concluding with a discussion on gaps in services and how we could mitigate these challenges.

The same interview guide was used for each interview, although, the directions of the interviews often differed depending on what issues were raised. For example, some participants were employment specialists, and therefore the interview largely discussed economic challenges to women, such as discrimination in the oil and gas industry. Moreover, other participants worked with women in crisis and their interviews often focused on gendered violence. It is also important to note that sometimes the questions were slightly modified or re-arranged depending on the flow of the interview.

3.3 Analytical Strategy

The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. During the transcription, I anonymized each transcript by removing any identifiable material such as organization names, specific locations, personal identifiers, and industry sites. Once transcribed and anonymized, I uploaded the transcripts into the qualitative analysis program NVivo. The use of qualitative software not only helps researchers organize their data, but also can help “identify trends across cases, investigate alternative explanations, and quickly locate negative cases that help refine or limit the theoretical explanation” (Deterding and Waters, 2018, pg. 24). Moreover, it can help researchers “test and refine the theoretical explanations they have developed” (Deterding and Waters, 2018, pg. 24). NVivo allowed me to assign different codes to my transcripts and organize the data according to those codes.

My analytical approach followed Deterding and Waters’s (2018) flexible coding method. This method requires researchers to at first analyze transcripts “with broad codes that reflect the questions they ask in their interviews and the concepts they sought to examine” (Deterding and Waters, 2018 pg. 8). Therefore, my first round of coding focused on broad codes and ‘big picture’ ideas such as *challenges to women*, *intersectional impacts*, *general negative boomtown impacts*, and *social service concerns*. My next reading then allowed me to “apply more fine-grained codes” as I was able to break these broad categories into conceptual themes within the data. Examples include ‘violence against women’ and ‘infrastructure challenges impacting women’. The final reading and coding of the transcript are where I solidified my categories into specific themes that address my research questions. This third round of coding allowed me to create topic-specific codes that arose from the data, along with previous topics discussed in past literature (Deterding and Waters, 2018; Gobo, 2008). For example, within the second-tier code of ‘violence against

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women', third-tier codes included *sex trafficking/survival sex*, *domestic violence*, and *sexual assault*. The following chapter discusses these themes and findings in depth.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The findings that emerged through my data analysis are divided into four umbrella categories: *Boomtown Social Context*, *General Boomtown Impacts*, *Challenges to Women*, and *Social, Crisis, and Anti-Violence Services*. Within each category are themes that developed through my second-tier coding method. Within each theme are specific challenges and barriers that participants discussed and highlighted.

4.1 Boomtown Social Context

The first area to be discussed refers to the social context or social environment of boomtowns specifically relating to the resource extraction industry. Within this category, two important themes are discussed: industry culture and worker lifestyle. Throughout my interviews, participants discussed the industry culture and the hyper-masculine nature of it. This section also explores the work lifestyle within this industry culture as it pertains to the transient lifestyle, drug use, and isolation.

4.1.1 Industry Culture: Hegemonic Masculinity

Due to past literature's emphasis on hegemonic and frontier masculinities in resource extraction culture (Carrington, Hogg and Scott, 2016), one of my opening questions to participants was to 'describe the culture of the industry'. This question was created to be extremely open-ended and broad, as I hoped to explore the multiple different perspectives. Although open-ended, not surprisingly, all participants immediately turned to a discussion of a 'male-dominated industry' and masculinity within the work culture. Participant #5 notes a patriarchal legacy of work as she states:

A lot of it is very male dominated. You have generations of men who have grown up with their fathers and uncles or whoever that have made a lot of money in the oilfield. So, there is a lot of young men who will leave high school - you know, why not? You could go work in the patch and make a shit-ton of money.

More explicitly, Participant #8 describes her own experience with the culture as a past worker:

Yeah, it's bad, it's like - the oil sand's industry is like toxic masculinity times 10, that's what - I mean I was there for a long time myself... Yeah and it's a misogynistic, bigoted, terrible place to be unless you're a straight, white male essentially.

The oilfield or industry work is painted as a place where only the manliest go to tough it out for big profits, and participants note that since the increase of women entering the field, there has been tension. For example, Participant #4 notes:

More women have started working in the oil field and it's getting more normal to see women in the oil field, but I think a lot of the older guys who have worked in the oil field in the last 30 years, they are so used to seeing all just men, right...in their brain they think the oil field is for men. Cause its always been like that.

This speaks to the hegemonic masculinity exercised in the oil and gas workforce as women socially excluded from the space. This attitude, as participants have noted, presents itself amongst workers, trainers, and managers in the industry. Participant #4 was extremely vocal on this point as she has technical training for trades within the field, but found it extremely difficult to gain employment.

She notes:

A lot of people they think that, you know, women are supposed to be dainty and all that kind of stuff...that's just always been the stigma around the oil and gas industry... [a] very old fashioned [mentality]. And the majority of the people that do work in the oil field, like the big-wigs out there, like all the supervisors and all that kind of stuff, they have been working in the oil and gas industry for 30+ years. So, they are really stuck on the whole, 'men are the only ones who should be in the oil-field'".

Similarly, when Participant #8 held a management position within the industry, she noted that due to these 'old fashioned' and sexist mentalities, women were often shut out of the industry.

[Women] would often get overlooked for the better positions that came up, like the higher-paying positions or the better jobs so to speak of what we did, they would often get overlooked for that because, you know, honestly the attitude was we can't trust Julie with this but we can trust Jim.

Therefore, the oil industry culture is one that prizes the ‘toughest’ men and works to reinforce hegemonic masculinity. Because of this attitude, anyone who does not fit this ideal is often ostracized, especially women, which aims to maintain the status quo ‘male-dominated’ industry.⁴

4.1.2 Worker Lifestyle: Substances and Isolation

Past literature often discusses boomtowns as a place of rapid social change because of the transient nature of natural resource extraction, and specifically oil and gas (Amnesty 2016; Fernando and Cooley, 2016; Sharma, 2012). All participants confirmed this idea as many of them referred to the ‘fly-in-fly-out’, ‘shadow’ or ‘transplant’ population that flood into their communities for work. When explaining this population, participants noted:

Yeah it can be very transient and very - like you said, lots of people who fly in and fly out. There is lots of people who come up here and stay up here for certain amounts of time because the generally the jobs are contract jobs.

- Participant #2

I mean you had all of these individuals working in the oil field who had a lot of money and a lot of time on their hands. But they'd be working shift work so like 12-hour shifts.

- Participant #1

It's very blue collar around here...the industry draws a lot of a certain kind of individual...typically on average is a little less education and usually male and younger. It draws a certain kind of people here.

- Participant #8

When you look at the resource industry what you see is transient workers coming in... and with the transient workers what you've got is different societal norms and cultures coming in.

- Participant #10

Before discussing the social impacts this specific population can have on a community, it is important to understand the social environment and culture of the FIFO population and industry.

⁴ Specific impacts on women will be further discussed in this chapter under the heading, ‘Challenges to Women’.

When discussing the lifestyle of this population, two major themes emerged: the ‘work hard, play hard’ concept of substance use and purchasing sex, and unexpectedly, the feeling of isolation and the mental health of workers.

The discussion of money, and money mismanagement was strongly intertwined with discussions of substance use amongst workers. Participant #10 notes that this transient work produces “a lot of money” that is “earned and spent in many different ways.” These ‘different ways’ in which money can be spent, as discussed by participants, is often through substance use and purchasing sex. The use of substances is one of the most discussed themes by all participants, as all ten raised concerns with heavy drug use and substance dependency in the industry. They note that drug use is embedded in the culture and lifestyle of the industry, but this, tied to the mismanagement of their money causes big problems for workers. Participants explained that drugs seemed pertinent to the oil and gas field for multiple reasons, such as something to keep them awake during shifts, a coping mechanism for loneliness, and part of the ‘work hard, play hard’ mentality as discussed in past literature. For example:

When you have people like wire-liners and snubbers who have to be up for 24-48 hours, that's what is going to keep them up. Right? Because it's an upper, it keeps you alert...keeps you awake. Cocaine is very highly sought out in the oil field because of that.

- Participant #3

It's because you're working long - I mean when you look at it...you're working long hours, you're working with individuals that you don't know that you're only going to be there with for short stints and so forth, but you're trying to survive within an industry knowing it's not permanent either.

- Participant #10

Marijuana's prevalence to stay in your system, it makes things like crack and cocaine, which is out of your system in 2 days, a lot more popular to use because drug testing is so popular here... and then being away from your family, like a lot of the shift workers are fly-in-fly-out and they are around their friends the whole time and they basically are secluded from their families and what makes them happy, they just - they pick up drugs a lot of the time.

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- Participant #8

Men will turn to substances to have a good time - they will go and look for sex workers often to fill a physical need.

- Participant #2

I think a lot of it has to do with the long, hard hours, out in the cold where men - I guess not only men but men and women work, it's like they feel as though they've earned it.

- Participant #5

Interestingly, work camps are often designated 'dry areas', which prohibits the use of substances on their premises, but most participants noted that this rule is often broken. When asked about how this works when substance use is so popular amongst workers, participants stated:

They're not. They are not dry. When I was in camp they would kick people out for drinking ... but I can guarantee you there is quite a bit of cocaine use in camps because you don't need a lot of it and you can do it at night and wake up in the morning and be ok.

- Participant #3

Of course, it's not supposed to be because they have their occupation health and safety, a lot of places and companies will have a 0 tolerance for people using or drinking but it happens all the time, right? It happens all the time.

- Participant #5

Unfortunately, the coupling of drug use, secrecy, and money mismanagement can lead to serious impacts on workers and the community. Participant #2 notes that:

We end up with men and women who develop substance use disorders and can no longer work and are now vulnerable members of our community...when it is taking over your life and it's so big that it's your whole life, then you can't get those jobs anymore. There is a lot of functioning substance users in this town too.

Participant #5 was extremely vocal in this area due to her experience working in a detox centre. She says that she witnessed "men lose everything because their substance use or their alcohol use and drug use took them down". She said the combination of being young, making lots of money, and using substances was "a recipe for disaster" and she says she witnessed a "21-year-old or 20-

year-old young man making 80k over the winter in the oilfield and he's broke by July". Participant #3 in Alberta had a similar experience as she said:

We had a little bit of a down-turn about 3 years ago and we see a significant increase of people coming in, not knowing what to do, they couldn't pay their mortgages and losing their homes, and we're saying - you've got a severance package, right? They would say yes. We're like what happened? And they're like well I didn't think I had a problem and then I didn't have any money to support it.

She also discussed her experiences of 'spring break up,' which is a prolonged period of time during the change of seasons where oil work is put on hold. Even in this short period she noticed an influx of individuals accessing services:

Break up hits and you have these mostly young men who have been making mad money in the patch all winter long and now they have time off...and there were all these young guys that were coming in to detox and they were basically broke. And I was like, you know, this was like a phenomenon that was happening and something I was very keenly aware of. And I'm like, who are these young guys? And basically, it was like the money was run out. They spent all their money on cocaine, booze, and women.

- Participant #5

Therefore, participants suggested that drug use in the oil industry is quite prevalent. What may start as a fun social activity, can sometimes lead to using substances as a vehicle to cope with being away from family or to keep you sharp on the job. If this use turns into dependency or addiction, workers are at risk of losing their jobs, as well as their general livelihood.

Another major theme discussed in the lifestyle of the resource extraction industry is loneliness and mental health. This topic appears to have been overlooked in past literature. Participant #2 was extremely vocal about this issue, stating that "men will become very withdrawn and very, they have breakdowns and they keep them secret because that's not manly to, you know, miss home so much. You know, you're supposed to be out there and be tough, you know you're a rigger or a pipe-liner." The geographical distance and isolation from family, friends, and normal routines

“creates a mentality of huge isolation from the real world, especially when you’re in camp”. This is because many industry workers are simply overworked. She explains there are often situations where someone may be on a contract job that can last from 4-6 months, where you have one day off a week, while already working 12+hour days. On that day off you’re limited due to the geographical location of camp, but also because she notes individuals fear they could lose their job if they leave the camp. She equates this experience to be “the same psychological experience as jail” because on the rare days one gets off, they fear that if they leave the camp they could lose their employment. They are often too far to go home or travel for social activities off site. ⁵

Therefore, the lifestyle of workers can be extremely precarious and they work extremely long hours sometimes with little time off. They are often separated from their family and traditional support systems, coupled with a culture of substance use and partying. These factors, coupled with money mismanagement and/or a lack of coping skills can create a toxic work environment that inevitably spills over having various community impacts.

4.1.3 Concluding Remarks

In closing, when examining the social context of boomtowns, two key themes emerged from the findings: the industry culture and the worker lifestyle. Although related, participants discussed the industry culture as toxically masculine and a place that allows hegemonic masculinity to be prized and reinforced. Within this culture, there are certain aspects and themes which relate to the lifestyle of workers within this industry. The first major theme raised by participants was drug use. This concern was raised in all 10 interviews and was described as a

⁵ Solutions to this work structure will be further discussed. Some workers are on a 2-week in, 2-week out schedule (etc.) but Participant #2 (Northern British Columbia, Women Services Outreach) notes that when it is a short contract job, workers often get 1 day off a week.

prominent part of the industry culture and lifestyle, but also one of the leading factors in future problems. This closely relates to the loneliness and isolation theme raised in the discussion of worker lifestyle in that substances often become a mechanism to cope with feelings of isolation. Although past literature had discussed drug use and masculinities, it was somewhat surprising to learn about the isolation factor and how this is at the root of the substance issue and many other issues. The concept of male isolation and substance use is a very important part of understanding boomtown impacts particularly concerning women, and will be further discussed throughout this thesis.

4.2 General Boomtown Impacts

4.2.1 Infrastructure

Infrastructure challenges have been discussed in past literature and often arise simply because of the large population influx to small communities. This becomes even harder to manage when the influx of the population is transient and not considered in census data. Participant #10 considers this problem when she explains:

There are a lot of different factors that play a part when you go from a population 30,000 and all of a sudden because of the resource industry, the extraction, you've now gone up to 50,000...you're looking at 20,000 more people in your community and do you have the capacity to meet their needs while they're in your community?

The two areas in which participants raised concerns in regards to infrastructure were housing and strains on social services. In terms of housing, Participant #2 of B.C. notes that, “when its booming you can't access housing when its bust there is tons of housing”. At the peak of the boom, during the initial influx of the population, housing prices skyrocket due to the huge increase in demand. During the bust, people can be forced to leave the community due to the lack of work. At this

point, people often lose money on their homes. Participant #9 of B.C. discusses this specifically about boomtowns in their area. They note:

[There are] so many ups and downs and you know people went in there and paid 6-800k for a home and 2 years later it was worth 100k because the mine closed. And then two years later it opened again.

The instability and unpredictable work conditions create precarious housing markets, which can lead to unsafe housing. Participant #9 of B.C. notes that:

There's a lot of folks that take advantage of the housing shortage and have places that should really be condemned that they are renting out for ridiculous amounts of money because they can. Because there are no other options for people so some of the living conditions even now are pretty horrific...and that will only get worse when you have that higher demand.

There is often also a lack of affordable and subsidized housing because the influx of the shadow population is not counted in municipal data sources such as the census. This forces people into unfavourable living situations, and investments in affordable housing are often not considered. This also was a challenge to existing residents as the large spike in rent prices made their existing homes unaffordable, or often, they were displaced to make room for workers and executives. When discussing a potential new project in their community, Participant #9 raised concerns about displacements and evictions as she notes:

Those supervisors that are coming in for those companies...they aren't going to be living in those camps. They're going to be put up in houses somewhere so that's going to drive prices up because the landlords here are going to see that as an opportunity to make a ridiculous amount of money for the two years or whatever that that project is going to be here. So, we may see evictions as a result of it, that happened in Kitimat when they had a big project underway there a couple years ago. A lot of folks were being evicted and then the rents were going sky high.

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The boom means large social change, but so does the bust. Participant #2 discusses the contrast between the two and what that means for housing and services when she says:

I mean the oil boom came and rent prices and housing prices skyrocketed. So now you have people who have been living there for a long time, and you had a community who just didn't have the infrastructure for the amount of traffic and sheer amount of people and all that – so you saw a lot of new stores came up, restaurants, hotels, you know stuff like that - and now that we're kind of in this lull, now, like you've still got all this housing that is unaffordable, and you've got all these stores are now shutting down because there isn't enough traffic to keep them open. So that's really hard economically too, so for a while there were just so many people that there wasn't enough stuff there, and now, you know after trying to make up for that, now you've got this surplus, basically, of everything so now you know there are struggles that come with that too.

Aside from housing, there is often a considerable strain on services throughout the community. This can range from strained garbage disposal services to emergency services, such as police services and healthcare, to a lack in grocery stores. Participant #1 specifically referenced the gaps in police services in North Dakota. She explains how this could be extremely problematic when issues arise and there are not enough officers to deal with the traffic, especially if it's a smaller police force covering a large area that used to service fewer people. When working with police officers, she describes the situation they face:

I always ask, 'How many people are also on duty when you're working?' And they are like, 'oh it's just me.' Right? Or they have one other person or their backup is, you know, the person in the next county. Right? So, then I ask, 'ok, so if you're on one side of your service area or your county, how long does it take you to get to the opposite side of your service area?' And for some of them its hours. Or at least an hour. So, if you have a dangerous situation and somebody, you know a victim is actually able to call law enforcement, even if they take that call, it might take them an hour to get there.

These issues become more intense when it's a high-risk situation such as domestic assault. She notes:

Also, for domestic violence calls, I think protocol is you wait for backup because those incidents are so much more emotionally charged, and therefore, so much more dangerous. And so now you've got law enforcement saying, 'well I can't wait for backup because its serious, but also its serious so I should wait for backup', and it's really a toss-up of - they

have to really read the situation and figure out if that's an opportunity where you break protocol or not.

Participant #4 described her own experience while working as a housekeeper at a work camp. In her experience, she notes: “You can get very crazy people in there. When I was there we had some guy was on some kind of drugs and he flipped out and took a knife from the kitchen and was kicking in doors of the staff members, and, sometimes it can get crazy like that”. She notes that this erratic behaviour appeared to be an anomaly, but that the response time when contacting police was 90 minutes. Therefore, since the long response time, members of the camp had to act and confront and detain the individual themselves. It is extremely troubling to think that in situations of crisis, response times can be over an hour, especially if we consider situations involving women being assaulted and/or experiencing violence.

Therefore, with the large influx of people moving into boomtown areas, pre-existing services are strained. Along with this, we see a large housing crisis as prices skyrocket during the boom, but lose their value during the bust. This strain on police services is extremely problematic as most participants noted an increase in criminal activity.

4.2.2 Social Dynamic Shift

The two major themes discussed by participants when looking at the social change of extraction communities were an increase in community tensions, or an ‘us. vs. them’ divide and increased criminal activity. Most participants raised concerns of a social dynamics change due to the lack of cohesion between transient workers and existing residents. When discussing the climate in North Dakota, Participant #1 notes:

I think the concerns were there were so many different backgrounds of people, and I guess so many different experiences, you know people coming from much more urban areas to a very rural area... I think it's a real struggle for people to know how to interact then, and what that was going to be. Because ultimately, I mean, rural North Dakota people, we're very trusting.

Moreover, Participant #2 from B.C. notes that the transient work “creates a difficulty in the community to fully mesh” and that it creates a “big divide among those who have and those who have not” referring to transient workers earning large profits while old residents may be at risk of losing their homes because of the spike in rent. This tension is already created due to employment. Participant #3 notes that “there is a lot of tension between the locals and the people that get brought in because the locals - they almost feel entitled to have that job”, further creating the divide of haves and have nots.

Another crucial theme raised when discussing the social dynamic change in communities is the perceived increase of disorder and criminal activity. Participant #10 notes that this increase in disorder is “inevitable” and that you also see an increase in noise complaints and bylaw violations. Participant #1 discussed how the boom created and exacerbated existing issues within North Dakota, as she notes:

It brought a lot of drug and gang activity to the western side of the state, lots of increases in domestic violence and sexual assault and definitely it shines a light on the sex trafficking that was happening in the state. People always say it's the oil boom that created this human trafficking problem in the state, and that's not completely true. I mean it was happening already but the oil boom definitely shined a light on that.

Participants 2, 3 and 5 also discussed concerns regarding a rise in criminal activity in their communities:

You had all of these individuals working in the oil field who had a lot of money and a lot of time on their hands. But they'd be working shift work so like 12 hour shifts and what not, but they'd probably only work for 5 days a week so then they'd have a couple days off where you really saw human trafficking become a huge issue and then, uhm, the gang activity, drugs, lots of crime, like increased crime.

- Participant #3

What we've seen is when you're able to do short term stints with lots of money...it's great on one hand if you've got the life skills around the budgeting around it, however, a lot of that money gets disposed of in different places. Whether that's through drugs, gangs, casinos, you name it.

- Participant #2

The crime rate that year increased... armed robbery and personal property theft...like somebody stole the tire right off the back of my jeep right outside of my house... to me that is what it was. And I think a lot of people would tend to agree with that. People are losing everything they have and a lot of people turned to substances and it creates a really interesting dynamic in the community.

- Participant #5

This situation then becomes even more problematic when we know there are strains on police and emergency services within these communities. Under the category of general boomtown impacts, we see two emerging topics: issues relating to infrastructure challenges and a change in the social dynamic of the community, such as increased disorder and crime, that can be understood when examining the influx of workers. Importantly, themes in this topic included challenges with housing and strains on services such as police services. This is extremely problematic as one of the largest social dynamic changes in boomtown communities according to my participants is an increase in criminal activity.

4.3 Challenges to Women

After discussing industry culture and lifestyle, along with general boomtown impacts such as increased crime and housing, it allows us to better understand the challenges women face in boomtown environments. Because this is where my research questions focus most, a large majority of all interviews focused on these specific impacts. After collecting and analyzing my data, I found five major themes that discuss unique challenges faced by women. These themes are:

- *Financial challenges*, such as women's experience in the industry and financial dependency;
- *Infrastructure challenges*, including a lack of affordable housing and protection services;
- *Violence and safety concerns* including increases in domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking, and other safety concerns;

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- *Lifestyle challenges*, which include drug and alcohol dependency, impacts to the family unit, isolation and the ‘oil housewife’ identity, and;
- *Intersectional impacts*, including discussions of race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

Although some of these themes may have been discussed at the beginning of this chapter, such as housing and protection services, it is important to discuss these issues as they specifically relate to women to fill gaps in previous research.

4.3.1 Financial Challenges

Participants discussed the financial challenges women feel with the existence of a male-dominated industry taking up a large majority of a community’s workforce and employment prospects. Participant #10 notes that having a “work culture that is dominated by men” creates challenges for women to experience gainful employment. Firstly, women can be overlooked and kept out of the industry from the very beginning. Participant #4 had personal experience with this challenge, as she notes:

I’m actually a fully licensed, or fully certified I guess it would be, in oil and gas field operations. I’m a field operator so I work on leases and stuff like that, and I’ve been trained to. But when I finished that course actually nobody would hire me because I was a very green woman.

She continues to explain that both her lack of experience and the fact that “lots of people don’t think that a woman can hack it” often leaves women being overlooked for these lucrative positions. Furthermore, Participant #8 who worked in management in the oil fields in a management position and noted “a lot of the times qualified females also wouldn’t get hired” by their male colleagues. Even if a woman gets hired they note that “they would often get overlooked for the better positions that came up, like the higher-paying positions or the better jobs”.

Once a woman does make it into the industry she is faced with new challenges. One of the most talked about challenges for women in the industry is “the stigma that women are very girly and that they can’t do the same things that men can do” (Participant #4). This stigmatization often manifested itself through bullying and harassment. Participant #4 notes that “most of the time the guys will make fun of you” for being feminine at work, such as wearing makeup, etc., and that in order to fit in women need to “hide the fact that they are feminine when they are at work”. Women on the job can face challenges beyond stigma and bullying to the point where it reaches sexual harassment. Participant #8 explained their experience of witnessing harassment in the industry against women:

I used to employ quite a few women in the oil sands - and a lot of them did run into, at some point, if not all of them, some sexual harassment or misogynistic comments or made fun of or bullied for being female.

The work environment for women can sometimes be toxic, and women who work and live in camps also face challenges. Participant #3 who worked in hospitality at a work camp noted that there is a large men-to-women ratio disparity and that, in a “420 man camp I would say there was probably maybe 40 to 50 women” and that these women often work in hospitality services on the site itself rather than industry work. Participant #2 explains that working and living on site can be an enjoyable experience if you are mixed with the right people, but unfortunately, this is not always the case. When explaining the negative side of the camp experience, they note:

It can be very scary because if there are people who are using substances ...because there is no security. I mean there is security on site but there is no guarantee that somebody is watching you walk down the hallway to your room. I know of women who have had to make calls because there have been men knocking on their door trying to get in... and these are generally - in these towns you know everybody, right? So, it's more of a difficult - or some level you know who everybody is - you may not be personally good friends or, and sometimes you are right...it's a recipe for disaster honestly.

She notes that men too have reported being sexually assaulted in work camps and that “it can be very dangerous, and as much as people want to say there is security, the security is there to basically, like go to a big fight.” Therefore, women are vastly outnumbered in these sites and there is a lack of security services when they feel threatened or unsafe. Past literature has also noted that hospitality workers at camps are also at risk of harassment and assault, making this situation even more problematic (Nightingale et al., 2017).

Participant #2 notes that “in an industry that is very specific to trades... sometimes specific genders and the impact of unemployment in that community can rise substantially and then can cause further compounding challenges”. One of the most prevalent ‘further compounding challenges’ is dependence. Financial dependence for women in boomtowns seems to take on two forms. The first is that many women travel to the area with their partners, and the second is that they have been unable to gain employment in the industry. Participants often explained the situation of women following their boyfriends or husbands for work to find themselves 100% dependant on their partner’s housing perks and large industry salary. This can be a very dangerous position for women to be in, especially when they have moved to areas away from their traditional support systems. Participant #7 of Alberta notes that:

Women cannot be single and live here. They rely, pretty much, on having a partner and if a breakup or separation happens they’re at risk. They are at high risk of being taken advantage of because they have no choice, or of becoming street-involved, trying to access services at that point they’d have to.

Women often face challenges when trying to be financially dependent. Firstly, because of their lack of employment prospects in an industry that is extremely profitable and monopolizes most employment opportunities, they are left looking elsewhere for jobs that simply will not pay enough to keep up with the cost of living. In conversation with Participant #7 and #8, they explain:

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A lot of times the jobs in town, say serving or working at a grocery store, that's minimum wage and you will never be able to live on your own here working those jobs for that money...women either have to plan to break up and plan their getaway before they break up and have to save up money secretly and leave overnight type of thing or they have to contact family to help get them out basically.

Or they stay in bad relationships because they can't afford it. (Participant 8)

Participant #2 notes that, financial dependency coupled with a lack of affordable housing puts women in a very vulnerable position.

There is a lack of affordable housing in terms of if a woman who wants to leave her partner, who usually the partner is usually the male who is making the money. And if she leaves, she will not or generally won't have any money so women will stay in relationships in order to survive financially. Especially if they have children.

When asked if Participant #10 has seen these situations in which women follow their boyfriends down and become financially dependent, their response was:

I can absolutely say yes, we have. And what will happen is they'll access services for a little bit and get those supportive pieces and so forth, or work on that journey of healing and sometimes they'll go back again. And then we'll see them again - actually many times. We see a lot of that.

And that, it can be “pretty scary” when the male is the sole breadwinner. Therefore, financial dependency can leave women in extremely vulnerable positions. Due to their inability to become independent, they often feel stuck in the position and are deterred from leaving situations of violence. Therefore, financial dependency in boomtowns can often lead to further victimization of women.

Participant #5 and #6 both had personal experiences as single women trying to gain financial independence in boomtown environments, especially as single mothers. Participant #5

explains that her ex-husband was working in the oilfields but moved away during the recession and that, to keep food on the table and “live in an \$1800 a month townhouse” she was forced to work four jobs. Participant #6 says that she faced those challenges as a single mother because she came here with the promise of jobs, but to “survive here” and to move beyond living paycheque to paycheque she too was forced to work multiple jobs.

Financial dependency is one of the largest challenges impacting women in boomtown communities and often is a contributing factor to other challenges they face, specifically situations of vulnerability such as domestic violence, sex trafficking, etc. As mentioned, this dependency occurs mostly due to women being shut out of the industry and/or being dependant on their partner who works in the industry.

As mentioned above, it is difficult to gain full economic independence in boomtown situations which prevents them from being able to afford housing on their own. Concerns with a lack of affordable housing were raised by every participant. Many of them note that this brings further challenges for women. When asked about the biggest impact on women in extraction areas, Participant #9 says “it’s probably the same across a lot of the country and that would be housing. There just is no housing.” Similarly, Participant #5 states:

Housing for sure I think is always a thing - affordable housing. And again, that is why so many women stay right? Because they can't afford to live on their own...there is no way they would ever be able to afford it so they end up staying in these relationships, stay in these situations where, uhm, they are very unhealthy situations often times but what is the alternative?

The alternative most of the time includes women often turning to shelters or transition houses if they are trying to leave their current situation, but it also often results in them staying in dangerous situations simply out of survival. Participants note that many of these housing services are

overburdened. Moreover, when accessing social housing, women who are struggling with substance use or are single often find themselves further disenfranchised. Participant #2 stated they have “women who come to me that are so far into their substance use that it’s very difficult for them to be housed.” A large piece of that is that women who use substances are often not eligible for supportive housing as policies state they are not able to be under the influence to stay. Participant #5 comments on this when they note:

They have some pretty strict guidelines around who can stay there and that kind of thing. And that is one of the biggest issues, right? So even where, like, the women’s shelter of course they don’t, well they will let single women stay there if they’re not full and if a woman with children needs to come it will be the single women who will get the boot. And of course, women who come there cannot be under the influence of any substances.

4.3.2 Violence and Safety

One of the most prominent challenges women face in boomtown environments is an increase in victimization. Violence against women and increased concerns for their safety was a prominent theme throughout the interviews. Participants have reported increases in risk for victimization of women, domestic violence and that this is often tied to financial dependency and a lack in affordable housing. Participants also discussed increases in sexual assault and sex trafficking. Participant #1 North Dakota says increases in domestic violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking were seen throughout the state. These concerns were further discussed with other participants, and therefore, the topics under the theme of violence and safety are general feelings of safety, sexual assault and harassment, domestic abuse, and sex trafficking.

Participants themselves expressed an atmosphere shift in terms of feeling safe in the communities. Participant #1 explains her own personal experience as a young woman during the

beginning of the boom. Specifically, she discussed her experience with meeting and dating people from the oil field, but that she was cautioned about the climate for young women there. She notes people told her “[she] shouldn’t go to the western side of the state by yourself” and that “[she] was actually told by someone like ‘no you’re a, blonde haired white girl, you should not travel to the western side of the state by yourself - it’s not safe to do that’”. She notes there was a fear for “your physical safety and – you know your sexual safety”. She was even cautioned not to drive to the Western side of the state herself because it wasn’t safe. She remembered her Dad asking her,

What if your car broke down and you were on the side of the road, you know, who would be around to help you or to pick you up? And then, what kind of position are you then in’, and so I think that there were a lot of issues with, uhm, with the women who were working in these rural areas that were now huge oil communities and their safety because I think a lot of the scary typical oil field men who were working out there really didn’t hold women (pause) in a good- in a high regard.

These concerns regarding the safety of women in extraction communities are warranted as participants discussed increases in sexual assault and harassment. Participant #10 explains:

Some of the behaviors that arise from the influx of money and not being able to manage it, it then leads to those criminal pieces which then impact women. Because statistically, when you look at it, women are the most impacted by crimes that are committed during the influx of resource extraction industries.

When looking at the environment in which these activities increase, Participant #10 notes that, “whether you like it or not reported cases or unreported cases, what we see is an increase in sexual assault and sexual abuse,” and that these actions can be connected to the isolation. She explains:

When you have individuals, who have left their homes and they’re isolated and they’re all by themselves, and they are partying or whatever - it’s not an excuse - however, the contributing factors for them to be able to make wise decisions might not be there, and so that is going to impact women. That’s why the victimization and crime increase at those times.

As discussed previously, financial dependence is an important factor when looking and domestic abuse and interpersonal violence in boomtowns. When asked if financial dependency, in her opinion, increased the risk of sexual assault and domestic violence she notes:

It is enticing if you've got a person who is interested in you, who has a secure job...making lots of money, and comes across as a knight in shining armour, and then all of a sudden, those flags are going on but you're not seeing them. And for the individual with the offender or perpetrator, it's like grooming or coaching, right? I'm not saying it's that much easier for a younger woman to be coached and groomed but the situation where women are already facing some vulnerabilities and someone is showing them some trust and some safety they're actually more vulnerable at those moments. Because of the financial impacts, because of the housing, it's not an excuse however it's a compounding factor that will trigger further victimization.

A common situation discussed was women following their partners to these areas. Participants noted that they witness increased violence during 'down times' in the industry. For example, Participant #10 notes that "if there is a huge layoff in the community we see an increase. We see different seasons of the year where we'll see an increase as well, but when you look at resource extraction you will see a lot more women and children access [our services] and also single women who may have been victimized." Participant #2 also refers to an increase of violence partnered with the stress and instability of the industry and she notes:

It will impact women first because these are the women who are home with their kids and their husband comes home and he can't work. And he gets angry and he takes it out on her - I've seen that happen lots.

When asked about the same topic, Participant #7 and #8 explained:

I don't think it's related to the industry as much as it's forced to be because that industry draws a certain type of person. The population here isn't typical or indicative to a normal city of this size. It's a little bit different because the kinds of people that it draws here because of the lack of education required to get a decent paying job...I just think it's the kind of people (Participant #8)

...Yeah, the kind of people that are here for that industry (Participant #7)

Participants have also discussed the increasing demand in the sex trade and how that has led to an increase in sex work and sex trafficking in their communities. Participants also discuss “There’s a lot of sex work that takes place” (Participant #5), but that with shutdowns to Craigslist, etc., sex work has been “forced into darker places” where women “aren’t able to ensure their safety”. Participant #2 notes that sex workers are often scapegoated for issues in the community as she notes they “end up being scored as being the cause of, like ‘if the sex worker wasn’t there’...she becomes the pariah in many women’s eyes in the community which...pits women against each other”

Moreover, due to financial disparity, many women are pushed into sex work as a way of “making ends meet” (Participant #9). Participant #5 notes that with the lack of housing and financial stability, women are pushed into survival sex. She states:

A great deal of the people experiencing homelessness is women who engage in survival sex because of not having places to go. I know when I was working on outreach I worked with a lot of women who were engaged in this sex work and many of them were young women who had come from the North West Territories or places way up in the North and they’ve come to [town in AB] and that is where they find themselves... sex trafficking or human trafficking definitely takes place in this area.

When discussing women in the industry, Participant #2 notes:

I know women who have gone and had camp jobs and end up going into sex work because those camp jobs are gone [due to a substance use disorder]

Moreover, this position of financial disparity and the large demand for sex work creates increased sex and human trafficking in boomtown communities. When asked if she’s noticed an increase in her community, Participant #10 explains:

We’ve done a lot of work around human trafficking and sex trafficking...the thing is we

can't quantify it statistically because individuals don't feel safe to bring it forward, however have we worked with women where that is happening? Yes, we definitely have.

When asked about how women are valued in these communities, in lieu of the increased violence towards them, Participant #2 states that:

When there's lots of jobs going on women become more susceptible to a lot of the transient workers who come in and out because it's kind of seen as expendable - women are often kind of viewed as an expendable resource in terms of sex work or finding drugs, or things like that.

Similarly, Participant #5 notes:

I think [the belief] it's just that women are there for one thing, right? And there is a very strong male-dominant attitude that, like I said, that attitude of entitlement to take, take, take to make a living...they think 'I don't have to go to school, I don't have to get an education to create and establish a career because there is oil in the ground. There is gas in the ground, I can take it.' So, it's that same kind of mentality that's like, oh well look at this woman, she wants me I can take her and I can use her and dispose of her."

Therefore, one of the most prominent boomtown impacts is violence against women, which is often a result of other issues women face such as financial and housing challenges.

4.3.3 Lifestyle Challenges

Boomtown environments can also challenge women's previous way of life. For example, participants raised concerns about women's increased substance use, specifically the 'oil wives' category that will be elaborated on below. One of the largest discussed lifestyle challenges is the impact the boomtown lifestyle has on families and relationships and the mental health of women in these communities. Previous boomtown literature fails to focus on the severity of these lifestyle challenges for women.

Firstly, participants discussed the stereotypical identity of the 'oil housewife'. Participant #2 jokingly noted that they should create an *Oil Housewives* series of this group in her community. Participant #5 mentioned when she used to pick her children up from school, she would spot this 'Oil Housewife' group. She described it as: "these women pulling up in their Hummer or Mercedes

or whatever, in these really nice vehicles, right, and they'd jump out and they have big diamonds and their hair is all quaffed and they are faked and baked tanned and aerobic-sized". While Participant #7 discussed this identity as the "site wife", painting a picture of a "site wife that wants a new diamond ring or the top of the line juicer." The emergence of the site wife female identity echo's that of emphasized femininity in response to the hegemonic masculine environment.

Also, partners of industry workers are often under extreme stress. The distance and increased money can lead to breakdowns in relationships and severely impact the family unit. Participant #2 was very vocal about this specific issue, as she noted:

We're finding women who now have access to so much money and their husband is away at work so they are partying up a storm, and they're picking up whatever it is they, you know, they need in terms of substances or extramarital affairs.

Participant #3 furthers this point by saying:

I'd say it affects the work-life balance... I personally have friends who their husbands work 2-weeks in 2 weeks out, or 3 weeks in 1 week out, they come home and their husbands just want to rest and do their own thing because they've worked for 2 weeks or 3 weeks and the wife has been home dealing with the kids the whole time and working and this all by herself. And it's the stress and we see alcohol intake increase in women because of the stress factor, but we also see - it's a huge stressor of families and on life in general.

When their partners are away, all responsibilities fall on wives. As the participants above mentioned, they are burdened to take care of the kids alone, and even when their support returns, he is searching for a break also. Participant #2 notes that having such an absent partner, especially in such an unstable unit "impacts women and children in their emotional connections with their partner within their family structure". She personally has experiences and explains that:

It's hard...[the kids are] like 'Dad's home, yay!' and mom gets frustrated because she's been home the whole time doing all the work and then dad comes home and he's the hero and... I can say from personal experience there. It's one of those - it really does impact everyone.

This stress often drives women toward substances or affairs. Expanding on her point above,

Participant #2 notes that during these periods of family instability:

Men will turn to substances to have a good time - they will go and look for sex workers often to fill a physical need. They will meet individual - and women will do the same thing, but women will generally not look for a sex worker. Women will go find someone in a bar or a pub, and so that creates a whole other issue in the family. There is a potential for STIs, it's all the way down the chain.

When both parents are working, Participant #7 notes there are “nanny’s everywhere”, and that parents “try to fill the gap with giving their kids things instead of time”. There are also impacts on relationships when men return home from work. Participant #10 explain that she’s “heard from many women and families whose partners have gone away and the relationship breakdowns, that happen from transient workers when they return home because it’s a totally different environment.” From speaking to transient workers, Participant #10 explained:

Once they got home and down to their real life it just wasn't meeting it and...some of their relationships broke because of that. I mean they were more so complaining about how women don't understand that how 'when we're out there it's a totally different environment' and then coming home to a family, you know the time they had out there was very different than when they had to come home and then get back into the environment of 'there is structure, there are boundaries, there is that' right? And just a couple guys talked to me about their experiences with it but all in all, their end comment was 'we made a wack load of money but we lost our families at expense.

As mentioned, women also feel extreme stress when dealing with their partners being away for extended periods of time and being responsible for the kids and household most of the time. This pushes women to substances, but participants also raised concerns about the loneliness felt within this population. When discussing the realities of this ‘oil wife’ population, Participant #5 explains the situation of a family friend:

They live in this big huge house and she's been a stay at home mom and he's worked in the patch and I have sat there and listened and watched the way he dismisses and devalues his wife and she is now at the age where her kids are starting to leave home and she's scrambling to try and find out what and who she is - what is her identity outside of being a stay at home mom. And it's sad, right? I think about this collective, this group here...what that is like, oilfield wives ...and they get together and talk about how lonely they are and the challenges of having their man gone for however long and this deep sense of

loyalty...So therefore, it's like, you know, how much of their identity as a woman, a mother, or a partner, how much of that gets lost or never developed?

Isolation and loneliness are felt by women outside of this oil wife population as well. Participants described their own experiences of loneliness as women in extraction communities. Participant #7 notes that women are unable to go out and do things independently because of the lack of “women-friendly” things to do. She notes:

I would never ever, ever, ever go to a pub or a bar or even a late-night restaurant by myself because a lot of the younger men who are that population, uhm, they hang out in big groups, because on their shift work and stuff they are out together. It's not a very friendly space for women to do things independently.

Participant #6 says this deters her from going out and instead she isolates herself:

We rely on social media being in the house and just going on your phone and chatting with other people who may be family members or friends. That's also another kind of isolation because you tend to just be by yourself in your house. For me I find I don't socialize as much, like I finish work, get to my house, take my phone out and I chat. Like that's all I do.

Women's lifestyle changes is a topic that has not necessarily been focused on in past literature. We often look at increases in victimization but don't consider how these boomtown impacts can also change women's day-to-day experiences, such as their family or their social lives. The social environment of the boomtown and its impacts leads women to feel isolated, which can increase drug and alcohol use in women. Boomtowns also impact the family unit to the point where we see this new identity formed for women in these communities. Moreover, women simply do not feel safe engaging in social activities and instead, view it as a burden or something that is considered risky and dangerous.

4.3.4 Intersectional Impacts

Lastly, when examining the challenges women face, I asked participants about potential intersectional impacts. As this is one of my research questions, I asked participants directly if they

felt as though specific groups of women were impacted uniquely. Some participants focused on women with low socioeconomic status, women in rural locations, Indigenous women and impacts on the LGBTQ community. Although a few intersectional impacts were mentioned, most participants maintained that boomtown impacts “crosses every demographic” (Participant #10).

Almost half of the participants brought up challenges to Indigenous women. For example, Participant #2 brought up the impact on the Indigenous community by saying:

If you're First Nations women here you're even more likely to be victim to [boomtown effects because] ... there's already so many socio-economic issues impacting First nations women like intergenerational trauma, and violence, and so those are carried forth. Stigma, racism, those are perpetuated in the community. Literally [B.C. Boomtown] is the wild west sometimes in terms of the mentality of the community. The community that has been here for a long time - we're getting more and more new people in and that's changing, but, it's a huge - it's very redneck. And so that mentality really plays out and makes it very difficult on First Nations women in the community.

Participant #10 explained that “working with a lot of First Nation families where there is that legacy of residential school and trauma” is a large part of what she sees in her work. Moreover, Participant #5 explains how racism can play a large part in Indigenous women even finding housing. She notes:

We live in a community where everybody is in it to make money so when housing becomes sort of - people are capitalizing on it and it no longer becomes about providing shelter for people and people are going to pick and choose who they want to let live in their suites or whatever...I can guarantee you the majority of people experiencing homelessness is this community are Indigenous and so if you have a young, Indigenous women who comes and maybe they came for a relationship or to work, whatever it is...right?

Moreover, Participant #4 talks about the questioning of her own identity when it came to being unable to gain employment in the industry. She says:

None of them would hire me, and I didn't know if it was because I was a woman, or because I was so new to the industry, or anything like that - maybe it was something I said but my

brain went instantly to that because I'm green and I'm a woman, and I'm aboriginal. A lot of people don't like the aboriginal people up here.

Socioeconomic status is an important factor that has been discussed throughout all levels of challenges. When women are living in poverty or are unable to gain financial independence, they face unique impacts such as being unable to gain affordable housing or resorting to survival sex. Participant #10 explains a situation in which sex workers can often be stigmatized when reaching out for help. She notes:

Sometimes our systems without even knowing it, the judgements that are made when people go and seek medical attention...I can give you an example. Say if a woman has been out and she's been at a venue and she got sexually assaulted or sexually abused and add another layer on: she's a sex trade worker. So now she's showing up at the hospital. The pre-judgements that will happen for that women coming in prior to her even getting past triage because she's intoxicated, she might have - or somebody might have slipped some drugs into her drink as well, she belligerent, she's loud, however she's just been assaulted. I totally get the assistance personnel saying we shouldn't be exposed to violent behaviour from a person they're trying to serve, however, that supportive approach at that point - like there's a lot of educational awareness yet to be done between the health systems and our systems.

Amongst this lower socioeconomic group of women, women struggling with addiction are also extremely disenfranchised when attempting to find housing. As heard from multiple participants, being financially vulnerable is a huge “factor that will trigger further victimization” (Participant #10. Similarly, Participant #6 states that “women on the verge of homelessness or low income” are “more at risk because they are taken advantage of”.

Lastly, three participants discussed the intersectional impacts of LGBTQ+ women in their communities. Participant #10 stated that members of this community “face additional barriers of being able to speak about what's going on for them,” especially in a community that is largely influenced by hegemonic masculine culture. Similarly, Participant #6 notes that “if [women] are from the LGBTQ population or if they are from a different race they are more at risk” while

Participant #8 notes there are extremely limited services for LGBTQ+ women in her community, especially trans women.

In closing, the social environment for women in boomtown communities is extremely precarious. The existence of the boom impacts a wide range of factors in a women's life, from their financial stability, living situations, sexual health, to their family relationships. Moreover, women also face challenges during times of 'bust'. Although there are general boomtown effects that are seen, such as housing shortages and strains on services, these findings highlight how these issues are exacerbated for women and in-fact are multilayered. Not only are there housing shortages, but the financial disadvantage for women in boomtowns makes this housing shortage even more challenging. The main themes developed in these findings are that the largest challenges presented to women in boomtown communities are dependency, violence, and the breakdown of the family unit.

4.4 Social, Crisis and Anti-Violence Services

4.4.1 Strains and Gaps in Current Services

The fourth and final theme that emerged from my analysis was an evaluation of current social, crisis, and anti-violence services. This category focuses on current gaps or strains on certain services as well as what services are needed moving forward and for raising awareness. Most participants discussed large strains on social services in their community as a result of the boom, including their organizations. Participant #1 explains the large spike in demand for their services when she states:

One of the communities in one year before the oil boom provided 340 nights of shelter to people which cost - I think it cost them around \$31,000 right for that year. But then one year - or the next two years, that number was 1440, which cost \$150,000. So that's a 370% increase in the need for emergency shelter services because people weren't feeling safe in their homes or they didn't feel like they had a place to go, so they have to do to emergency services and, you know - those are just crazy numbers and that was happening.

Participant #2 notes that there is a 3-6-month waitlist for women-specific counseling in her community and that her own organization is strained with 4 people serving nearly 600 people a month. Participant #3 explains that one of the shelters in her community was shut down due to overcapacity. She notes:

We used to have a day program [that was] open from 10 in the morning until 8 at night and basically the shelter would have a mat program but it basically got over capacity and over, uhm, we basically got a warning from the fire department and the province itself saying they needed to revamp things. So, they changed things and took away the fact that people can't sleep during the day in the warming shelter and stuff, and so the warming shelter actually just shut down. Because they are like, 'this is wrong we're not allowing people to have their rest' like these are drug addicts and users, they have mental health issues and they have nowhere to go. So now we have tents popping up sporadically around town.

Moreover, Participant #3 discusses the challenges of these strains on women who are in desperate need of support. She says:

I've had women go to detox treatments 5 times, 10 times, 20 times, but where do they go when they are done? They go right back to where they were. There are no halfway houses, there are no - well there are shelters but they are full. Like we have a women's shelter and it's jammed to the rafters. We have all these resources but we don't have enough.

Similarly, Participant #5 explains that her organization's "women's shelter here is always at max capacity". Participant #9 notes that B.C. transition houses are to house people for 30 days, but knows of communities "where they are having women in transition houses for sometimes up to a year" because there is simply no affordable safe housing. Therefore, the largest issues are the lack of space in shelters, overcrowding in shelters, and a strain on existing services and resource centers. Moreover, the lack of safe affordable housing puts even more pressure on transition houses and shelters as there is often an extremely long wait to find women permanent housing.

Not only are there strains on existing services, but in some situations, specifically rehab and services for female (and male) drug users, there are concerning gaps. When looking at current

gaps in services, Participant #1 noted that “rehab facilities or for substance use services” lack in North Dakota. Participant #2 also raised concerns with the lack of support for individuals experiencing addiction. She notes:

There is a lack of support in the community for people because you don't or you can't talk about it. Men and women can't say 'hey I'm taking this drug or that drug or this substance or that substance and I need help' because if that happens, then there is a good chance they will lose their jobs. So, the policy is very, hush hush and kind of the expectation here is that you keep everything very quiet and as long as everyone is working things are ok. But they're not.

Moreover, she notes that in a situation where they do lose their jobs and become “vulnerable members of our community...there is no supports. There is nothing.” She further explains that within the industry and work environment itself, “there’s no mental health or substance use support in any aspect.” She stresses that providing support for men who are suffering in this environment is one of the ways to tackle boomtown issues at the source, that is, before these feelings are manifested in ways that could impact women.

Not only are women and crisis services suffering, but Participant #10 also notes that strains are felt throughout the community’s law enforcement, education, and health systems. As previously discussed by Participant #1, the police’s long response time to domestic abuse situations is concerning. In addition, industry workers often bring their families to nearby towns which leave schools overcapacity. However, investments in development is often not considered as the instability of the industry means the population could easily be cut in half at any time.

4.4.2 Moving Forward

Looking forward, all participants suggested practical and necessary methods of moving forward and remedying the gaps in service they had experienced in their communities. Firstly, many participants believed focusing on prevention efforts is in everyone’s best interest. Participant #1 notes that her organization is “working on growing our prevention efforts across the state

because we do recognize that prevention is a better investment than intervention”. Similarly, Participant #10 suggests focusing on prevention and emergency planning to prepare for prospective impacts. Specifically, she notes that “when we’re doing emergency planning and disaster planning we need to plan for that crisis intervention when it comes to domestic violence, sexual assault and sexual abuse.” She compares this to planning for the Olympics and notes that, prevention models should have everyone “getting together, your cities and municipalities and different systems personnel to try to create an emergency disaster plan” but notes that victim services and counseling services are often missing from those conversations because people had the idea that “it’s not going to happen in my backyard.” Therefore, more consideration should be put into preventative measures, especially in areas that are expecting the introduction or development of the resource extraction industry.

Participants also push for an increase in education throughout multiple sectors. When Participant #10 explained the situation of a sex worker being judged within the healthcare sector, she notes that “there is a lot of education awareness that needs to be done”. Educating and preparing health care professionals about potential increases in sexual assault cases that may include extremely vulnerable populations of women would be a key first step. Moreover, educating them about the rise of sex work and sex trafficking and perhaps partnering with organizations to provide support after that medical care would also be important. Participant #1 suggests educating and providing training to “hairdressers and beautifications” to train them to look for certain cues. She notes “who do you tell everything to? Your hair stylist, right? So, getting some information and some training to those groups because they might be the first person to recognize some of those weird behaviours, or that weird things are happening”.

Participant #10 seconds this as she suggests not only educating but also collaborating with

other sectors. For example, she suggests:

I'm saying its police services its corrections its prosecution service its health services its education services, the transportation industry, income services, you've got your city personnel you've got your immigrant and multicultural services, you've got your Aboriginal based services, so we look at them, we look at the anti-violence sector. The thing is we don't know it all either so it's about coordinating and collaborating and having those challenging discussions and saying you know what - this could happen and what are we going to do to prevent it, or if it does happen, how are we going to support everyone involved here.

Therefore, through collaboration with multiple agencies, along with increased education, communities can be better prepared for potential impacts or changes they might see.

Participant #2 urges action on behalf of the industry itself. She raises serious concerns with policies within the industry, and that this “hush hush” mentality and trying to ignore problems are just making these issues worse. She notes that funding is needed, and “policies that pertain to the North and remote, rural communities, not southern B.C.” She also says that “we need to bring in people who will stay in the community - which means creating opportunities in the community like education, for recreation, for shopping, for things like that”. She hopes to see corporations investing in social services for their workers and families in the community as at the moment, “in small ways it is happening, but it needs to be happening on a large scale.” She notes hosting BBQ’s and building parks, but says that “if you’re going to be taking this much from the area, and there are so many people contributing to your profit, your profit should impact the community in meaningful ways.” For example, she suggests:

Let's get some supportive housing, let's get some family supports in terms of what we can do for families that are impacted, for workers that are impacted by the effects of working these hours, and going away on these jobs.... there is a construction industry trades rehabilitation organization in B.C. So, they can help people get into rehab and things like that but they are based out of Vancouver.

Participant #10 follows this point by noting that “long hours, easy access to alcohol and drugs, mental health and being away from your families – it’s a lot” and that we should provide

preventative pieces at the source in order to prevent the impacts to the community and women specifically. She also stressed that one of the most effective ways forward is to find champions and advocates within the industry. Having an advocate on the inside is extremely important in her opinion as she says:

It's those champions who are going to lead the journey of raising that awareness and so I think with the resource industry that is what you've got to find. You've got to find those champions that say, 'you know what, yeah buddy you might not think it happens but guess what it does and if you do this ahead of time it's going to save you a lot of heartache down the road' and I think that's what it's about.

By having an advocate and providing support to individuals in the industry working in the community, it is thought that this could mitigate some of the social impacts we see and interrupt some of the patterns that emerge.

Participant #7 notes there are no “women-friendly” activities. She explains:

I'm from B.C. where if its 9 pm and I don't want to be home by myself I can go to a café, to a, like jazz bar and I can sit down and feel safe to be there by myself with a book and just chill. But here, I would never.

To remedy this, Participant #6 suggests:

A pottery class every Friday that me and my friends can go hang out at or like, I want uhm, you know what I mean. A cooking class every Sunday at this place where you and your friends can go – where you can go do things that aren't drugs or alcohol or bars.

The lack of social activities for women in which they feel safe furthers feelings of isolation. By creating a safe space for women, perhaps some of these feelings would subside. Moreover, individuals running these programs can be trained to look out for specific factors as Participant #1 suggested and could partner with anti-violence organizations to educate women about their options and services they, or someone they know, can access.

In closing, a strain in social services is one of the biggest ‘boomtown’ impacts raised by participants. Many women-specific services, crisis centres, shelters, and transition houses are over

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capacity. Moreover, some women face 3-6-month delays in being able to obtain access to counselling services. Due to the lack of housing, women often find themselves residing in transition houses for as long as a year. Moreover, women struggling with substance abuse are further marginalized as they often cannot access these services. Apart from the social services sector, we also see strains on community services as well. Participants raised concerns about long wait times for emergency responses, such as the 90-minute response times to a work camps, or situations in which police have to decide whether to break or not break protocol when there are not enough officers to respond to domestic calls.

Participants also highlighted areas that were completely lacking any types of services. In the industry, there are often no supports, such as rehabilitation services or support for workers at camps. Moreover, there are gaps in terms of social activities for women in boomtown communities, such as social events and activities in which women can participate in while feeling safe. Moving forward, most participants focused on preventative measures. This includes participating in emergency planning to avoid some of the social impacts or, at the least, mitigate the severity of certain impacts. Participants also called upon the industry itself to provide better supports for their workers and the communities in which they take over.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings have provided a better understanding of the challenges that are presented to women in oil and gas boomtown settings. Specifically, these challenges include increased victimization and financial issues. My findings also suggest that all women do not feel these impacts identically. Instead, women of colour, women of low socioeconomic status, women with drug addiction, sex workers and the LGBTQ+ population experienced increased victimization in boomtowns, while also facing barriers to accessing services. Lastly, the findings indicate that there are gaps in vital services that would support women in boomtown communities. This includes anti-violence advocacy, housing resources, crisis prevention, and safe social spaces. In the following section, I discuss my findings in relation to my research questions and past boomtown literature. Also, I discuss the limitations of my research and make suggestions for future research.

5.1 The Industry and Women's Health: Financial Dependence, Violence, and Family Impacts

The existence of the resource extraction industry creates serious challenges in women's lives. Specifically, women face challenges to their financial dependence, their safety and wellbeing, and their family life and relationships. Past boomtown literature published by Amnesty International (2016), Carrington et al. (2016), Ennis et al. (2017), Nightingale et al. (2017), and The Firelight Group (2017), have experienced similar findings regarding financial and safety concerns, although the discussion of family impacts is mostly absent from previous boomtown literature.

According to participants in this study, financial dependence can be one of the most consequential challenges to women in boomtown communities. Women find themselves in positions of economic dependence in boomtown areas for multiple reasons. First, participants have

explained that women are often shut out, or not valued, in the oil and gas industry. They often describe the industry as ‘male dominated’. When examining this through a hegemonic masculinity lens, this would make women the ‘subordinated other’ in the workplace which would justify exclusionary practices against them (Connell, 1995). Although participants have explained that the female presence in the industry has slowly become more normal, people in management positions or individuals that have been part of the industry for many years still view it as a place for the manliest of men. Due to this belief in the industry, and especially in management, participants have said explicitly that women have been overlooked for positions in the industry, meaning they lose out on the lucrative benefits of industry work, such as high salaries and housing. These findings confirm Ennis et al.’s (2017) study where they found that men dominate extraction work and that there is an ingrained idea of masculinity.

Ennis et al.’s (2017) study also stated that the boomtown environment leads to sexual and verbal harassment for female workers. My findings build upon this based on my participants’ discussion of the environment for women in a hegemonic masculine workplace. Specifically, participants recalled women experiencing large amounts of verbal and sexual abuse. Participants often explained it as being bullied in the workforce, creating a hostile environment which could even drive a woman out of the industry. This confirms Nightingale et al.’s (2017) findings that report harassment and discrimination is the main factor for women leaving their positions in the industry. At a minimum, participants noted that to fit in women must leave their feminine identity behind and work to conform to the norms of the masculine work culture, as displaying femininity makes them a target. This is extremely problematic as it shows that not only is it difficult for women to enter the industry but if they do, they are faced with additional challenges in their workspace. Participants note that the financial disparity between men and women in boomtown

environments can push women into more dangerous ways of making money, such as survival sex, or could even push them into homelessness.

Dependency is a dangerous position for women as it creates vulnerability. Participants raised concerns regarding increases in interpersonal disputes and how dependence, paired with the lack of affordable housing, makes it difficult for women to leave situations of violence. They noted that women often follow their partners to boomtowns and due to the lack of gainful employment opportunities, they become dependent on their partner. This aligns with past literature by Jayasundara et al. (2016), Huey and Ricciardelli (2017), and Carrington and Scott, (2008) which raised concerns about increases in domestic violence. Carrington and Scott (2008) tie this increase to the hegemonic masculine culture in boomtown settings which normalizes gendered violence. Participants explained the increase of domestic violence as being closely related to the instability of the industry as it puts stress on the workers. Moreover, participants also equated it to the kind of people the industry attracts. Understanding the increase in domestic violence as a way men can exercise power over women is better understood once examining the ingrained hegemonic masculinity in the resource industry (Messerschmidt, 1993, pg. 73).

Participants raised concerns about the high risk of victimization of women in boomtowns. Some participants were warned as women not to travel to certain areas alone due to the unsafe environment created in boomtowns for women. Specifically, participants noted an increase in sexual assault and harassment. These findings align with past studies by Carrington et al. (2016), Ennis et al. (2017), Fernando and Cooley (2016), Nightingale et al. (2017), Ruddell, (2017) and The Firelight Group (2017) as they too discussed an increase in sexual violence against women. Ennis et al. (2017) argued increases in sexual attacks on women are due to the drug culture of the industry, paired with the loneliness felt by the transient population. Similarly, Taylor and Carson

(2014) attributed an increase in violence against women to the transient male population. My participants confirmed these findings, as they too often spoke about increases in violence in relation to the transient population. They noted that the isolation and loneliness faced by transient workers mixed with drug use and the ‘work hard play hard’ mentality lead to violence against women.

When examining the hegemonic masculine culture, violence against women is part of the ‘masculine’ identity which can use this violence, such as sexual assault, as a tool to assert dominance over women and reinforce the patriarchal status quo (Messerschmidt, 1993). Participants in my study also raised concerns regarding the view of women and the objectification of women in the masculine work culture as they said these beliefs could lead to sexual violence. As Messerschmidt (1993) explains, part of the hyper-masculine identity is the belief that a man’s sexual appetite is natural and therefore uncontrollable. Therefore, based on my participants’ understandings and past literature there is a better understanding as to why there is an increase in violence as it is viewed as a method of performing the culturally accepted masculine identity within the work culture, but also as a reaction to internal struggles of loneliness, isolation, and substance use.

One of the most unexpected findings from my research was the impact the industry had on families. Participants discussed the breakdown of relationships and families due to the work lifestyle and general dynamic of the work. When looking at the work structure and lifestyle of the industry, past literature had discussed the isolated working conditions, the lack of support and how the separation from family and friends can impact worker’s mental wellbeing (Amnesty International, 2016; The Firelight Group et al., 2017). The industry’s fly-in-fly-out structure often means men are away from their families for weeks at a time, if not longer (Carrington et al., 2010;

Ennis et al., 2017; Ruddell, 2011). Specifically, Ennis et al. (2017), Angell & Parkins (2011), and Sharma (2010) discuss how this separation strained workers relationships and how this impacted workers themselves, but studies often have failed to further examine how this impacts women on the other side of the relationship.

Participants confirmed the surface level analysis seen in past literature that says industry work can impact family life through the lens of the male worker, but also gave further insights on the experience for women. Since industry work removes men from their homes and often requires relocation for long periods at a time, participants explained that the burden of home life falls on to women who remain at home. This puts a large amount of stress on women as they are forced to be solely responsible for the house and kids, while some engage in fulltime employment themselves. This connects to Sharma's (2010) work which notes women often faced increased stress because of the burden placed on them to take care of everything at home.

Beyond this literature, participants discussed specific challenges that women face in regards to the breakdown of the family unit. As briefly mentioned in the literature, participants explained that women experience increased stress levels when their partners are away due to them being overloaded and overworked. This created increased stress which pushed women towards alcohol and substance abuse. This distance also has damaging effects on emotional connections between families. Participants raised concerns regarding how emotional connections between children and industry parents creates a relationship with children that is superficial and material because meaningful relationships with children are substituted for gifts and tangible items. This has also left women with feelings of isolation as they are often disconnected from their partners for extended periods of time.

Participants explain that there is often tension when men return home. Men can have a hard time readjusting to home life due to the lifestyle they become accustomed to when on jobs. Specifically, the ‘blowing off steam’ and ‘play hard’ aspect of industry work as discussed previously (Amnesty International, 2016; Carrington et al., 2010; Goldenberg et. al, 2010). One participant compared the experience of returning home from industry work and work camps with returning home from war. Men sometimes feel disconnected to the world they return to and have a hard time trying to adapt back to home life consisting of structure and boundaries, and this disconnection can lead to the breakdown of relationships. Moreover, when returning they often want to relax, meaning that women remain responsible for caring for kids and maintaining the home.

In closing, my first research question was answered by participants and my findings support past literature which has discussed a relationship between the existence of oil and gas industries within communities and challenges to women. These challenges discussed include financial dependence, increased victimization, and impacts on family relationships. The industry furthers victimization of women due to its culture and lifestyle which is understood in this thesis through a hegemonic masculinity theoretical lens. Specifically, impacts on women found in this thesis are increased sexual assault, domestic violence, increased financial dependency, financial inequity, damaging impacts on the family unit, and mental health impacts. One of the unexpected findings that resulted from this research question is the impact of the industry on families, as this to my knowledge was not discussed in depth in past literature. Overall, it is clear that the nature of industry work has led to breakdowns of family life. Moreover, women have faced challenges at home as they are often left as the sole decision-maker and caretaker of the home and children. This

stress has pushed women towards alcohol and drug use, mental health issues and feelings of social isolation.

5.2 Impacts Through an Intersectional Lens: Poverty, Substance Use, and the Indigenous Identity

The second research question aimed to explore the intersectional impacts associated with women in boomtown environments. Multiple identities were referenced by participants when the question regarding how different groups of women were impacted. Women experiencing poverty, often referred to synonymously as ‘rural women’ were said to be at a high risk of victimization. Due to their lack of experience and educational qualifications, rural women were pushed into financial dependence. Participants raised concerns women experiencing poverty in relation to interpersonal violence and noted that this often left women no choice but to return to their partner due to the lucrative salary gained from oil and gas work as they simply could not survive independently. This put women at extreme risk as it pushed women into survival sex because any other work would not suffice due to the high cost of living and lack of affordable housing. These findings align with Jayasundara et al.’s (2018) study as they too found that women experiencing poverty created extreme disadvantages and put them at risk of facing further victimization, specifically due to the lack of low-income housing. Moreover, my research built upon The Firelight Group et al. (2017) findings as participants noted that poverty for women in boomtowns can often lead to survival sex and or homelessness.

Indigenous women have experienced boomtown impacts differently, and in fact, more severely. Multiple participants explained that challenges to Indigenous women are heightened due to racism. Participants explained situations in which women would be unable to gain housing as landlords would opt-out of having an Indigenous woman tenant, or how employers would not

consider Indigenous women as serious candidates in the oil and gas field. This can push them into financial dependence. This confirms findings by Amnesty International (2016), the Firelight Group et al. (2017), Monchalin (2016), Nightingale et al. (2017) and Sweet (2014) which raised concerns regarding increased victimization of women in extraction communities. These studies note that the colonial legacy tied to Indigenous women's identity put them at risk of violence.

Intersectional impacts in boomtowns can be examined by looking at hegemonic masculinity. Being 'different' often designates you to the 'subordinate other' and 'inferior' in a community dominated by men who prescribe to the hegemonic masculine identity. The intersectional identities discussed by participants align with Nagy's (2018) understanding of the subordinated other, as she noted it could include women, Indigenous people, and members of the LGBTQ+ population. According to Connell and Messerschmidt, (2005) the 'subordinate other' position is dangerous as this group becomes targets in which men can assert their dominance over, especially through violence. This means that these groups are at a higher risk of victimization. Therefore, women are at risk in boomtowns, but women of colour or women in the LGBTQ+ population experience heightened risk due to their identity. This view of hegemonic masculinity and the subordinated other helps us understand Monchalin's (2016) explanation of increased violence against Indigenous women. She notes that violence against women is part of the colonial legacy which has aimed to dehumanize the Indigenous female identity, putting them at high risk for victimization. Moreover, these findings help us understand reports by Amnesty International (2016) and the Firelight Group et al. (2017) who note that Indigenous women are more at risk for specific gender-based crimes such as sexual violence and sex trafficking and that this increased victimization is because of their intersectional identity of being both female and Indigenous.

In short, the findings from my study suggest that intersectional identities are at play in boomtown communities. Specifically, Indigenous women are more likely to experience violence, according to participants and past literature, simply because of their identity. Moreover, women in the LGBTQ+ population are at a risk, along with women with lower socioeconomic status. Although my research question was addressed by participants, more exploration of this topic area is warranted as this study was unable to deeply examine intersectionality in boomtown settings.

5.3 A Strain on Services

Boomtown communities often experience an extreme strain on social and crisis services. My findings help demonstrate the work climate for service providers in these communities, and in particular, what is needed for women. Similar to Amnesty International's (2010) report, participants stated the need for their services increased when oil and gas entered their community. Moreover, some noted their services also increased when the community experienced economic downturns, often referred to as 'busts' or spring breakup. Amnesty (2016) found a similar result as they note services increased when economic troubles occurred in the industry. This means that both at the highs and lows of oil and gas in their community, their services are desperately required. The strained services discussed by my participants included: crisis and women-specific, housing, health care, and law enforcement services. Moreover, most participants raised concerns regarding the lack of services and support for industry workers and believe that this would be a large factor in mitigating many of the ripple effects that then impact women.

Most participants working in women-specific services noted that they have experienced an increased demand due to the introduction of the industry to their community. As noted in the findings, one organization experienced a 370% increase in the use of their services. Participants

also noted long wait times for counseling services in their community and that due to lack of funding and overcrowding, many day programs and shelter programs were shut down. This is extremely problematic given the increased violence against women coupled with inadequate, strained, unavailable, and underfunded services. Ruddell (2017) explains that many women found it difficult to leave situations of violence simply because of the sparse resources in their community.

This means that with a lack of services, women are more likely to cyclically experience violence. This becomes even more problematic for female substance users, single women, and women in situations of poverty. For women abusing substances, there is an additional barrier in accessing services as their options are often limited. For example, certain shelters are unable to provide a bed for women if they have used substances. For single women, beds in shelters often go to women with children and are, as one participant put it, ‘first to get the boot’. Moreover, one participant explained that to access the very limited subsidized housing services women needed to have a dependant with them 50% of the time. Therefore, this immediately eliminates women without children from accessing these services. Ultimately, this means that the lack of services in boomtown communities contributes to the cycle of violence.

The gap in low income and subsidized housing services within boomtowns is one of the largest contributors for women being unable to flee situations of violence. Specifically, participants noted that women will often stay because they feel as if they have nowhere to go. This aligns with Ruddell’s (2017) findings where he notes that it is difficult for women to leave situations of violence because of the sparse resources in the area. Participants explained that transition houses often house women way past the government regulated periods simply because there is nowhere for women to go that is more permanent and safer. These findings are parallel to

Fernando and Cooley (2016) and Jayasundara et al.'s (2018) concerns that the lack of affordable housing and overcapacity shelters and transition houses mean that victims of interpersonal violence face extreme disadvantages when it comes to accessing help.

Another barrier women face in boomtown communities is the strain on law enforcement and health services. Participants explained situations in which there are not enough officers to respond to a call, or that long wait times deter women from calling the police in the first place. This aligns with Ruddell's (2017) concerns that, especially in rural areas and reserves, police services are simply not prepared for the increased calls which can range from domestic disputes to increased traffic accidents and drug-related calls. Police also take on a social service role, as they receive increased calls for mental health crises. Amnesty (2016) notes that this happens due to the overburdened social service sector. Furthermore, my findings are similar to Amnesty's (2016) study in that participants raised concerns about access to healthcare, saying that in boomtown communities due to geographic location and economic makeup, family physicians are very rare. Moreover, there are barriers to healthcare for women in these communities as participants explained that if a woman needs to get other checks done, such as mammograms, they must travel several hours. This is difficult as they incur expenses to do so, such as taking time off, travel, and childcare. This is more difficult for women of lower socioeconomic status or those living in situations of abuse as access to transportation out of town is often scarce.

Lastly, the lack of services for men in boomtown communities must be addressed to mitigate the victimization of women. Participants explained that services need to 'start at the source', meaning we must address the gap in mental health and wellbeing services for male industry workers. Past literature and participants all explained how the work can be difficult, how men often get caught up in substances, and how they feel extreme social isolation. Mainly, aside

from performing their masculinity, these factors too can push men towards criminality. Past literature often talked about the isolation that workers feel, but does not address remedies for this (Angell & Parkins, 2011; Ennis et al., 2017; The Firelight Group, 2017; Sharma, 2010; Sweet, 2014). Participants explained that a change in culture is needed where people can discuss their troubles without fear of getting fired. They explained that the industry needs to acknowledge what is happening in their employment setting and should partner with agencies to provide proper support to their workers and community.

The support of men in boomtown communities must be translated into their work sphere as well. Filteau (2014) explains how the implementation of policies within organizations can have a drastic impact on the culture and behaviours of individuals within their organization. For example, Magna, a drilling company in oil and gas wells, implemented strict safety policies in their workplaces. In his interviews, participants explained a culture change from being reckless on site to instead prioritizing their own safety when on site. Therefore, this can be used as an example as to how policy changes and impact work culture. If the industry took on a more empathetic role that prioritized the wellness of workers, perhaps stronger mental health and substance use supports can be put in place to mitigate the damaging projections of these behaviours.

Participants stressed that efforts must be preventative and collaborative. They suggested partnering with other members in the community to educate people on the issues that women face in communities to create a more supportive community. Many said that collaboration between education, health, and government agencies would allow more large-scale changes that are realistic and would benefit their communities. They noted that increased funding, increased shelter space, and more affordable housing developments are necessary for their communities. Moreover, through research and collaboration, we can create pro-active strategies that can anticipate impacts

and assess a community's readiness to handle and respond to these challenges. Moreover, my participants suggested the resource companies themselves should provide better and more meaningful support in communities, and to look within to see what internal changes and support could be provided to make boomtown communities safer for women.

5.4 Limitations

Although this project ultimately added to the literature on women's experiences in boomtowns, this research project has limitations. Firstly, boomtowns are known for being isolated and small communities. Because of this, I was unable to locate social service organizations to contact in some of the most prominent communities, specifically in Northern Canada. This is extremely problematic because if I was unable to find them, I can only imagine how a woman facing a traumatic experience would access them. Aside from this, I believe the inclusion of these communities in my project could have provided further insight into boomtown impacts. Moreover, I faced resistance when trying to recruit participants from the US as many did not answer my request for an interview. This project was aimed to be comparative, although 1/10 of my participants were from the US. Therefore, the comparative aspect was unfortunately not examined in depth.

The geographical dispersions of boomtowns and logistical challenges of lodging, along with a lack of funds meant that I was unable to physically visit these communities and gain a first-hand understanding of their social environment. My location further limited my research as my connection to my participants was done online and over the phone. I was unable to visit these services and see what they face day-to-day and was left to learn about them simply through online

research. Being unable to conduct in-person interviews meant that I was unable to analyze social cues or body language which could be counted as important data in qualitative analysis.

Lastly, this thesis' timeline was pushed back due to extreme delays with ethics approval. I submitted my ethics application on July 19th, 2018 and due to staffing issues and shortages in the ethics office, I did not receive a response until October 4th, 2018 when I received conditional approval. After minor changes, my thesis ethics review was approved on January 14th, 2019. This meant that my interviews did not start until February even though they were originally planned to begin in October. Therefore, a process that should have taken six to eight weeks instead took four months. Overall, the lack of a timely ethics procedure limited what research could be completed for this project.

5.5 Future Research

Although I was able to critically examine my research questions, much more research is needed when examining gendered boomtown impacts. First, more research is needed to fully understand the intersectional impacts in boomtowns. Although my participants did address this question, it was not as in-depth as I had hoped. Past studies have done important work in developing an understanding of Indigenous women's' experience in these environments, although these studies really only consist of 2-3 case studies (Amnesty International, 2016; the Firelight Group et al., 2017; Jayasundara et al., 2016). Building upon my findings that Indigenous women are disproportionately victimized, future research should continue to investigate the relationship between victimization of Indigenous women and increased oil and gas work. Understanding how different women are impacted in these environments is the key to providing culturally appropriate services to better support impacted communities. Further, while the topic of sex trafficking was

discussed in past literature and my participants talked about it on a more surface level, future research should more closely examine the relationship between sex trafficking and boomtown settings.

Moreover, more research needs to be completed using more boomtown locations. As mentioned, a limitation of this study was that I was unable to reach all my desired communities. Building upon this research and expanding to other locations would allow us to examine if there is a pattern of impacts. This research would be extremely useful as being able to predict impacts would assist in prevention and emergency planning efforts, both domestically and internationally. We also need to critically examine services, or lack thereof, that are available for women. Building upon this using a social service lens would be beneficial, especially when looking at the extremely remote locations and reserves in which I was unable to locate any kind of service agency to contact. Lastly, future research should build upon my participants' push for collaboration between different community services and examine what that would look like. How would social service agencies work with the education system or the health care system to create a plan which supported women in boomtown communities? Ultimately, more work needs to be done to understand the social context of boomtowns and how we change the culture of boomtowns to make it a safer environment for women.

5.6 Research Implications and Conclusion

The findings in this thesis can help communities better prepare for gendered impacts in boomtown communities. My findings, paired with past research, help us anticipate what changes and challenges should be expected in these environments. For example, we could expect to see an increase in housing prices, and should, therefore, increase funding for affordable housing projects in these communities. Moreover, we should at least anticipate increased usage of crisis services

such as shelters and transition houses and could position these services to be prepared for longer stays. We could anticipate increases in the victimization of women and therefore should increase emergency services, moreover, we should consider mobile crisis services as many of these areas are isolated and women may not always have the means to drive to a hospital.

Aside from the practical implications of my research, this thesis has also helped to contribute to an under-researched area of boomtown literature. Specifically, key contributions include the discussion of how the industry impacts the family unit. It also examines the mental health of transient workers and the lack of support from the industry in this regard. It examined the intersectional impacts and asked not only if women feel impacts, but how each female identity specifically experiences challenges. Lastly, it highlighted that financial dependence and a lack of affordable housing in boomtowns is one of, if not the largest contributor to the victimization of women.

This thesis helped confirm concepts raised in previous literature such as the prevalence of hegemonic masculinity in the extraction industry. It also confirmed the increase of sexual assault and domestic violence in boomtown communities, along with an increase in sex work and sex trafficking to these areas. It added insights into the industry culture and the emphasis on the ‘work hard, play hard’ mentality while also looking at the mental health of workers as one of the main contributors for unfavourable behaviour. Ultimately, this project provided an important perspective on what happens in boomtowns during the booms and the busts, and how those impacts are felt by women. It gives a holistic view of the social context of the boomtown, general boomtown impacts, gendered challenges, and challenges to the social service sector that tries to support the community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.

A1. Interview Guide

Thesis Interview Question Outline:

Before interview starts: Remind participant that the interview is being recorded and go over the informed consent form including plans for transcription and the de-identification of this recorded data.

Questions:

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
 - a. *Probe: Job description? How long you've been situated in the community in question?*
2. What resource extraction is in your community? Can you tell me about your experience of this industry?
 - a. *Probe: When did this get introduced? How long has it been around?*
3. Could you tell me about the culture of this industry or what you know about people in this industry?
 - a. *Probe: Can you describe these workers based on personal experiences? Can you help me understand what it is like as a community member when these individuals move in and when they leave? Concerns about conduct? Types of jobs people are coming in for? Main company people work for?*
 - b. Purpose: To gain the demographic of workers that have moved into the community; start to discuss the influx of male workers [hypermasculinity's] and how locals perceive them
4. Do you think the community atmosphere has changed since the introduction of X (fracking, drilling, etc.)
 - a. *Probe: What are the biggest changes you've seen? How do you personally feel about the extraction? Any specific anecdotes or experiences that highlight or caused these feelings – perhaps interactions with workers. Increase in crime in the community?*
 - b. Purpose: After discussing workers, the hope is to understand how these workers impacted community dynamics more generally
5. Do you think that the resource extraction in your impacted male and female community members? How so? Has it impacted women the same or differently?
 - a. *Probe: Physical, sexual and mental wellbeing? Have they had any economic advantages or job opportunities?*
6. What has this meant for women in your community?

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7. Do you think that the existence of the oil and gas industry in your community has had the same impact on men or women? Or do you believe it has impacted women differently?
 - a. *Physical, sexual and mental wellbeing? Have they had any economic advantages or job opportunities?*
8. What women are most impacted? What impacts women the most, in your opinion?
 - a. *Do they feel unsafe?*
 - b. *What women are most at-risk of violence?*
 - c. *Race/Socioeconomic Status/Age/Occupation*
9. What kind of situations do you see women in when they approach you? Or do you have any situations that have stuck with you?
 - a. *Do you think women feel unsafe since the introduction of the industry or due to the existence of the industry? Have their everyday lives changed in anyway?*
10. What resources have been in demand? Is there a lack of resources for women or men in your community?
11. Do you believe there are enough resources within your community to handle potential impacts to women's health? Do you or your organization collect data on impacts on women? How do you know that the boom impacted women?
 - a. *Probe: Do you see an increase in the need for your services since the extraction industry has moved in? Has the need for these services impacted a certain demographic of women?*
12. Where do you see the future of your community heading, mainly in regards to women's wellbeing? What do you think the first steps should be moving forward?
13. Do you have any questions for me? Anything you think I missed, or topics we didn't quite cover that you think are important? Do you have any advice for researchers, governments and policy makers moving forward?

Finally, I'd like to thank you very much for participating in this research project. Your responses were very helpful. If you would like a copy of the final report on this research project, please leave an email with me and I will send you a copy once the study is complete. This email will in no way be connected to your responses. If for some reason you change emails/jobs, feel free to send me your current contact info at any time or you can track me down online to obtain a copy of the final report.

A final transcript from our interview will be sent to you for revision. This will allow you to clarify any points and add or edit any comments made. After this is reviewed, it will be the last last opportunity to withdraw from the study. If you do not feel the need to review your transcript, I will move forward and take this as your last opportunity to withdraw from the study. Just a reminder, the information you provided will be anonymized so as not to be traced back to you.

Also, I wanted to give you my contact information again should you have any questions:

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Madison Charman

Email: Madison.Charman@uoit.ca

If you have any concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, please contact:

Compliance Officer, Office of Research Services Email: compliance@uoit.ca

Phone: 905-721-8668 ext. 3693

Thanks for all of your help and insights. It's much appreciated.

Appendix B.

B1. Informed Consent Document

Research Study:

An Exploration of Women’s Experiences Living and Working in Extraction Communities

You have been invited to participate in this study, which has been reviewed the University of Ontario Institute of Technology Research Ethics Board #14998 and originally approved on **[insert date]**. Please read this consent form carefully, and feel free to ask the Researcher any questions that you might have about the study. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the Research Ethics Coordinator at 905 721 8668 ext. 3693 or researchethics@uoit.ca.

Student Lead	Principal Investigator (Supervisor)
<p>Madison Charman, MA Candidate Faculty of Social Science and Humanities University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) Email: madison.charman@uoit.net Phone: 476-418-2595</p>	<p>Christopher D. O'Connor, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Criminology Faculty of Social Science and Humanities University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) Email: christopher.o'connor@uoit.ca;</p>

Purpose:

This study aims to examine how resource extraction within a community effects women’s wellbeing, feelings of safety, and overall experience. It will do so by interviewing social service professionals and community leaders that can speak about their observations and opinions on how these industries have changed the social climate for women in their communities. The goal of this research project is to examine the possible gendered impacts that extraction industries may have in communities.

Procedure (What you’ll be asked to do):

You will be asked to take part in a telephone interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. You will be asked about your experiences with, and thoughts on how, the extraction industry has impacted women in your community in a general sense. We will not ask you about specific instances to ensure confidentiality. More specifically, you will be asked if any trends have emerged regarding women's wellbeing in your communities, and if these are related to the existence of the extraction industry in your community.

Confidentiality and Right to Withdrawal:

Your participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate and/or answer questions at any given time before the conclusion of the interview. If you withdraw from the research project at any time, any data that you have contributed will be removed from the study and you need not offer any reason for making this request. Once the interview is complete any information you have provided will be anonymized. This means that of the information you provide cannot be traced back to you or your community. We will remove any identifiers so that it is impossible to trace this project back to you.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with answering. The information that is shared will be held in strict confidence and discussed only with the research team. Your privacy shall be respected. No information about your identity will be shared or published without your permission, unless required by law. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law, professional practice, and ethical codes of conduct. Please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while data are in transit over the Internet.

Potential Benefits and Risks:

The risks involved in participating in this research project are minimal and similar to what you would expect to encounter in everyday life. You may feel some emotional discomfort due to the nature of the questions being asked. There also may be some psychological or emotional discomfort, such as additional stress, loss of confidence, regret for disclosing personal information, etc.

Although it is not your personal experiences, it may be emotional to describe certain negative impacts effecting women in your own community. This being said, this is most likely the same level of discomfort that is attached to the nature of your employment as a front-line social services worker. Therefore, it is important to reemphasize that participation is completely voluntary and no one will know, other than myself, whether you participated or not. Therefore, any write-ups of this research will not contain any identifying information including names or organizations thus minimizing the risk of participation.

Although there are no direct benefits for participating, you are able to raise important impacts (positive and negative) that extraction industries may have on women in your

community. Also, you'll be able to make recommendations as to what you think can be done to better this environment for women as well as the opportunities that exist for women in your community. The information you provide will help enhance our understanding of women's experiences within these communities and will raise awareness in the academic community that more research is needed in this area.

Storage of Data and Dissemination of Results:

Interview transcripts and recordings will be stored through a password protected Google drive and computer that only my supervisor and I will have access to. Recordings of our interview will be destroyed once they have been transcribed and the transcripts will be password protected and will be anonymized. The results of your participation will be strictly confidential and no names or individual identifying information will be maintained. Your responses will be combined with many others and reported in a generalized group form. Once the final project is completed, I will send it to you if you so choose. This will be done through email. The results of this study will be published as my Master's thesis, and data collected may be used in my articles in the future.

Agreement to participate means:

Once you have read the above and understand the nature of this study and agree to participate through an interview, this will be understood as your consent. You understand that by agreeing to participate in this study you have not waived any legal or human rights. You also understand that you have the right to refuse to participate and that your right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study (up until the conclusion of the interview) will be respected with no coercion or prejudice.

Participant Concerns and Reporting:

If you have any questions concerning the research study or experience any discomfort related to the study, please contact the researcher Madison Charman at 416-418-2595 or through email at: madison.charman@uoit.net. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant, complaints or adverse events may be addressed to the Research Ethics Board through the Research Ethics Coordinator – researchethics@uoit.ca or 905.721.8668 x. 3693.