Well-being and Mining in Baker Lake, Nunavut: Inuit Values, Practices and Strategies in the Transition to an Industrial Economy

by

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ABSTRACT

WELL-BEING AND MINING IN BAKER LAKE, NUNAVUT: INUIT VALUES, PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES IN THE TRANSITION TO AN INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY

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University of Guelph, 2014

Rapid expansion of mining across Northern Canada carries huge implications for Aboriginal communities that have limited prior experience with development on this scale. The Hamlet of Baker Lake, Nunavut has experienced unprecedented development with the construction and opening of Agnico-Eagle’s Meadowbank gold mine, located 100 km away by all-weather road. This research explores the values, practices and conditions that shape individual, family and community well-being in the context of mining in Baker Lake. Findings from 45 semi-structured interviews and 2 focus groups reveal that Inuit well-being is primarily defined through relationships to the land, family and community and shaped by historical processes of colonization and socioeconomic transition. Baker Lake’s mineral economy significantly shapes Inuit relationships and hence well-being as defined by and through these relationships. This research further reveals individual and community responses to this transition, as defined through practices and strategies of cultural continuity, moderation, adaptation, and self-determination. Living well in Baker Lake today requires the maintenance of traditional practices but also a transition of values in coping with rapid changes from ongoing processes of modernity.
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V
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Research Context

On a global scale, indigenous peoples are experiencing rapid development on their traditional territories with broad implications for health and well-being. Technological innovations and rising mineral prices since the 1970s have enabled mineral production in “greenfield” areas primarily inhabited by indigenous communities (Ballard and Banks 2003). The effects of mining upon the health of indigenous communities with extremely diverse cultures, histories of colonization, and experiences of socioeconomic change are extremely divergent and cannot be generalized. In the face of rapid mineral exploration and development in these remote communities, researchers are attempting to document the ways in which individual, family and community health are affected by local mineral development (Gibson and Klinck 2005).

Rapid expansion of mining in Northern Canada carries huge implications for Aboriginal communities that have limited prior experience with large-scale industrial development. Approximately 1,200 Aboriginal communities in Canada are located within 200 km of mineral developments (Mining Association of Canada 2012). In Nunavut, real GDP increased 7.7% in 2011, which followed an 11.3% increase in 2010 (NBS 2012). This regional economic growth is directly attributable to mineral production, exploration and associated business and service expansion to support industry needs. In light of this growth, globalization and industrial development have been identified as the most significant sources of change affecting Arctic populations today (Larsen 2010).

The Hamlet of Baker Lake has experienced unprecedented development with the construction and opening of Agnico-Eagle’s Meadowbank gold mine, located 100 km away by all-weather road. Mine exploration and development over the past decade has brought substantial growth coupled with large inflows of money, goods and workers to
the remote community of 1,800. While other mines in the territory have been and are in
the process of being approved, Meadowbank remains the only currently operating mine
in Nunavut since the territory’s creation in 1999. Given the recent experience of Baker
Lake Inuit with permanent settlement during the 1960s, the creation of Inuit institutional
governance structures in the 1990s, and rapid transition to an industrial economy since
the early 2000s, there are numerous uncertainties regarding how mineral development
coupled with these other transitions will shape individual, family and community well-
being.

There is an identified knowledge gap concerning how Aboriginal peoples, and
specifically Inuit, define and perceive their well-being (Richmond 2009; Kirmayer et al.
2009). Within the last decade primarily, the health of indigenous peoples around the
world has become a priority within academic research. Aboriginal peoples in Canada in
both urban and remote communities experience poorer overall health than other
Canadian. These health inequities are a result of colonialism, assimilationist policies and
practices, and the continued social, cultural, economic and political disenfranchisement
of Aboriginal peoples within the broader nation state.

Both government and scholarly examinations of Aboriginal well-being in Canada
typically take a statistical, aggregated approach and fail to incorporate local
conceptualizations of well-being (PIWC, Rasmussen and Guillou 2012; Duhaine et al.
2004). There are very few well-being indicator frameworks that incorporate Inuit values,
and limited measurements of such indicators exist at the community level (Jeffrey et al.
2006; PIWC 2006). For example, the Community Well-being Index and the Kivalliq
Socio-economic Monitoring Committee largely account for quantitative measures of
employment, education, housing and crime rates. These measurements are typically
generalized at the level of an Aboriginal community or region, and in some cases,
encapsulate the entire Canadian Aboriginal population of First Nations, Inuit and Metis
peoples (PIWC, Rasmussen and Guillou 2012; NTI 2008; Smylie 2000). Quantitative
approaches to the examination of mining impacts (Stedman et al. 2004; Hipwell et al.
2002; Petkova et al. 2009; Frickel and Freudenburg 1996) fail to account for the complex ways in which development affects health as locally defined.

Anthropology in particular has overlooked the intersections between resource development, indigenous peoples and health. Ballard and Banks (2003: 287) contend that “the anthropology of mining remains a largely under-researched and under-theorized” area of research. Anthropology has produced a substantive record of Inuit ethnographic accounts over the last 150 years of relevance to historical and ongoing transitions affecting well-being in Nunavut today (Boas 1888; Jenness 1928; 1970; Birket-Smith 1929; 1959; Graburn 1969; Balikci 1970; Briggs 1970; Matthiason 1992; Dorais 1997). However, there remains a lack of Inuit and more broadly Aboriginal ethnographies that examine local cultural conceptions of well-being (Richmond and Ross 2009; Adelson 2000) or community health and resource development (Heil 2010; Izquierdo 2010, Adelson 2010; Samon 2009). Given the territory of Nunavut’s limited experience with mining since the early 2000s, there is even less that has been written on Inuit health concerns from the development of extractive industries.

**Research Aim and Questions**

In an attempt to fill these practice and knowledge gaps, this research has captured conceptualizations of well-being held by community members in Baker Lake, Nunavut in the context of ongoing mineral development in the Kivalliq region. This research was guided by the following questions:

1. How do Inuit in Baker Lake conceptualize individual, family and community well-being? What are the values, practices and conditions that shape well-being and how have these changed over time?
2. In what ways does the recent introduction of mineral development to Baker Lake affect individual, family and community well-being, with reference to these values, practices and conditions?
3. What are individual, family and community needs and strategies to mitigate negative impacts to well-being from ongoing mine development?
For the purposes of this thesis, the term “health” is used synonymously with the terms “well-being” and “wellness”, which enables conceptualizations that extend beyond physical health and material well-being to incorporate holistic understandings of cultural, physical, mental, emotional, social, and economic health.

In this thesis I argue that well-being in Baker Lake is conceptualized through relationships to family, land and community and the values and practices that constitute these relationships. This thesis takes an historical and agentive approach towards resource development on Aboriginal lands within the context of colonialism and also through the strategies of individuals in resisting these impositions and negotiating between “old” and “new” ways towards living well. Aboriginal self-determination is a vital determinant of well-being in the context of historical and ongoing transitions, including the transition to mining.

**Outline of Thesis**

This thesis contains seven additional chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the scholarly context with regards to the Anthropology of health and well-being, social determinants of health from an Aboriginal perspective, studies of indigenous health and industrial development, and Canadian Aboriginal experiences with mining. Chapter 3 describes the field site and provides an historical background to contextualize mining in Baker Lake and the community’s past experiences with colonization, settlement and social and economic development. Chapter 4 outlines the research design and methods. Chapter 5 addresses the first research question, presenting Inuit conceptualizations of well-being with reference to Inuit values and identity practices through relationships to land, family and community and how these have changed over time. Chapter 6 addresses the second research question, detailing the ways in which impacts from mining and associated developments upon Inuit well-being are largely experienced through alterations within these relationships. Chapter 7 addresses the third research question, contextualizing these documented impacts with reference to ongoing historical transitions, and presenting needs and strategies for well-being discussed by participants. Chapter 8 summarizes the
main findings of this research, and identifies scholarly contributions, limitations and opportunities for future research.
CHAPTER 2

SCHOLARLY CONTEXT

Introduction

As this research examines Inuit conceptualizations of well-being in the context of mineral development, a number of relevant themes within the anthropological and broader social science literatures will be reviewed. These include the anthropology of health and well-being, social determinants of health from an Aboriginal perspective, studies of indigenous health and (industrial) development, and case studies on Aboriginal health and mining with a specific focus on Canadian experiences.

The first research question requires a thorough overview of historical and contemporary studies on how the well-being of Aboriginal peoples has been affected through historical processes of colonization, settlement, modernization and now, mineral development on their traditional lands. There is a long history of ethnographic accounts concerning Inuit peoples’ experiences with processes of tradition and modernity. However, anthropology, in comparison to other disciplines such as geography, has been less engaged in more recent explorations of industrial development in the Arctic.

Given the holistic and exploratory dynamic of this thesis, several theoretical frameworks are explored. These include the anthropology of well-being, medical anthropology and social determinants of health from an Aboriginal perspective. These frameworks identify well-being as a social, cultural and historical construct. In the context of the colonial encounter and rapid mineral development on Aboriginal lands, self-determination is also employed as a significant determinant of well-being, revealing the significance of historical processes in conditioning contemporary realities, with reference to natural resource development and mining.

The relative strengths and weaknesses of these frameworks as they relate to mining and well-being will be examined. The majority of theoretical studies on well-being privilege
the level of the individual in the construction of well-being, often excluding relational conceptualizations of well-being to land, family and community. In conceiving of health as a cultural construct, medical anthropology offers a starting point for analysis, but also presents limitations through framing the body as the site through which health is primarily experienced. Delving into studies of well-being, socioeconomic development and mining in remote and Aboriginal communities, a strong emphasis has been placed on community impacts. Through an examination of numerous studies, the role of community control, cultural continuity and relationships are revealed as important value concepts requiring further exploration with ongoing mineral development in Canada’s North.

**Anthropology of Well-being and Medical Anthropology**

Until recently, anthropologists have been largely silent on the topic of well-being (Matthews and Izquierdo 2010). Most studies of well-being stem from the disciplines of psychology, economics, and to a lesser extent, sociology and human geography (Conradson 2012). For example, there is a field of psychology that examines human happiness and the role of cultural and social norms and values in shaping subjective well-being as individually defined (Diener and Suh 2000; Salee 2006). Well-being can be grounded in both cultural and individual ontologies of happiness and what living ‘the good life’ entails. However, well-being as a concept of study is complicated by its abstraction. In the social sciences, well-being can be defined most basically as “a state of ‘being well”’ (Oishi 2010: 34). This includes objective indicators such as quality of health and economic status, but also subjective values and experiences of what it means for an individual to live well (Atkinson et al. 2012; Salee 2006). Further, these component categories that comprise well-being are culturally constructed (Matthews and Izquierdo 2010; Panelli and Tipa 2007).

There is a definitive lack of anthropological engagement on the study of well-being, despite the suitability of the ethnographic method of inquiry in framing a subject as holistic as well-being. The majority of anthropological studies on the topic of well-being have described social and mental illness in predominately small-scale societies (Thin 2010). Part of anthropology’s inattention towards well-being stems from its theory and
methodology. Well-being – like culture - has been treated within anthropology as an abstract part of the “superorganic” that can never truly be known within a cultural relativist framework. On the other hand, well-being has also been seen as biologically determined, and thus too dependent upon human universal emotions such as happiness to be examined with reference to cultural systems (Thin 2010; Colby 2010; Waldram 2009). However, well-being as subjectively experienced is largely shaped by socio-cultural norms and values.

Most anthropological studies of indigenous health have taken a biocultural approach to understanding the ways in which biological and cultural factors together shape human well-being (McElroy 1990). Since the 1980s, Medical Anthropology has contributed to an anthropological understanding of health, revealing the ways in which physical and mental health and illness are culturally constructed, situated and experienced. As Lock and Scheper-Hughes (1996: 43) state, medical anthropology studies “the way in which all knowledge relating to the body, health, and illness is culturally constructed, negotiated, and renegotiated in a dynamic process through time and space”. In this, health is a cultural construct - one which is dynamic and changing - shaped by categories of thought and practice and not confined to bodily biomedical conceptions of disease and illness (Helman 1994; Morsy 1996; Parlee et al. 2007). Western medical compartmentalizations of the body and the mind as separate entities excludes non-Western constructions and experiences of health and well-being. Rather, conceiving experiences of health and well-being as cultural constructs allow us to see past Western Cartesian dualisms of mind/body, nature/society to incorporate other ontological conceptions of the self (Lock and Scheper-Hughes 1996; Fletcher and Denham 2008; McCormick 1997; Panelli and Tipa 2007; Heil and MacDonald 2008). For Inuit peoples for example, there is a strong connection between mental well-being, consuming food from the land, and having strong blood or physical vitality, countering separations of mind, body, culture, and environment (Kirmayer et al. 2009b: 295).

However, neither health nor well-being are the products of cultural or biological systems alone, but of complex interactions within changing political, social, economic and
ecological structures (Waldram 2009; Dyck 2009; Williams 2003). Well-being is highly contextual, and “largely arises from and is influenced by various structural arrangements in which individuals are imbedded” (Pearlin 1989 cited in Matthews and Izquierdo 2010: 6-7; White et al. 2008). Hollan (2010: 224) has situated well-being within individual “selfscapes” of self-world interaction and experience through which “well-being is a contingent, dynamic state of being that is related to fluctuating states of body and world and the interaction between the two.” Similarly, Colby (2010: 57) discusses a theoretical framework of well-being negotiated through the self-world in which culture is a process negotiated by the individual through “an interacting tandem of schemas in the mind and patterns in the outside world”. He identifies three self-world realms that shape well-being: the ecological or material world encompassing all subsistence, the social world of social structures and relationships and the interpretive world of thought and symbolic systems (Colby 1987; 2010). In emphasizing the role of human structures in shaping well-being, these frameworks are useful in the context of socioeconomic and cultural change, and understanding the impacts disruption of self-world connections carry for individual experiences of well-being. However, these frameworks of the self-world are limited by their conceptualization of well-being as the outcome of primarily individual-led (as opposed to relationally situated) constructions and adaptations within these realms.

Aboriginal Conceptualizations of Health and Well-being

While there is much literature on Aboriginal health disparities in Canada, there is a dearth of literature addressing “how contemporary Aboriginal Peoples understand and define health, address their health concerns, and perceive barriers to obtaining optimal health” (Graham and Stamler 2010: 6; Loppie Reading and Wien 2009; Wilson and Rosenberg 2002; Newbold 1998). There is even less literature on Inuit perceptions of health in Arctic communities (Richmond 2009). In comparing a large body of journal articles on the topic of Aboriginal health, Wilson and Young (2008) found that a majority of social science studies have explored health and healing as biomedical concepts without reference to culture or other social determinants of health. For many Aboriginal peoples, the medicine wheel is used to represent the balance between emotional, mental, physical
and spiritual health for the individual and the community (Parlee et al. 2007: 129; King et al. 2009; Kryzanowski and McIntyre 2011; Leech, Lickers and Haas 2002; Lavallee and Poole 2010; Salee 2006). However, the meanings of health and well-being are contextually shaped and vary widely across and within Aboriginal communities in Canada, defying most attempts towards homogenization. While often used as a framework for Aboriginal health in Canada, the concept of the medicine wheel is to foreign to Inuit culture.

Aboriginal conceptions of health and well-being are holistic and relational rather than individualistic and need to be situated within local indigenous definitions and frameworks (Dyck 2009; Stephens 2005; Newbold 1998; Panelli and Tipa 2007; Kryzanowski and McIntyre 2011; Loppie Reading and Wien 2009). Relationship to the family, community, the land and one’s culture are key determinants for example (Kryzanowski and McIntyre 2011; Riecken et al. 2006). The health of individuals cannot be conceived of without the context of the health of the community and broader Aboriginal nation to which they belong (Lavallee and Poole 2010; Bartlett 2003; McCormick 1997; Salee 2006). Bartlett (2003) found that adult and elder Metis women’s conceptions of health and well-being included caring for others, collective belonging and support, and balancing various dimensions – mental, spiritual, emotional, physical – of one’s individual health. McCormick’s (1997) study on healing in a B.C. First Nation community reveals the significant interconnectedness of the individual to family, community, nature and culture for support and belonging.

The health and overall balance of relationships between cultural, physical, social, environmental and economic realms are of vital importance for wellbeing. For Inuit, the self is defined and “ordered” through one’s relationship to family and community (Fletcher and Denham 2008). Aboriginal perspectives of health and healing similarly consider components of the self: spirit, mind and the body as interdependent, requiring balance between all parts in order for an individual to be well (Graham and Stamler 2010; Shah 2004; Lavallee and Poole 2010). The separation of these component parts of the self becomes like a “puzzle” requiring “unification of the separated facets of self […] to
properly locate or position misplaced experiences” (Fletcher and Denham 2008: 102).

For many Aboriginal peoples, neither nature and society nor the individual and their social and physical environment represent dichotomous categories. Aboriginal landscapes are cultured and experienced; they are “[l]iving landscapes that indigenous people identify as fundamentally important to their cultural heritage, areas that embody their relationship with the land” (Andrews and Buggey 2008: 65; Panelli and Tipa 2007; Richmond et al. 2005; Izquierdo 2010; Wilson 2003; Munn 1992). Aboriginal culture is practiced through spatio-temporally land-based experiences, infused with past, present and future relationships. Tłı̨chǫ Dene of the Northwest Territories view the land as the source of survival, spirituality, and cultural values and identity through knowledge learnt from elders (Andrews and Buggey 2008). For the Tłı̨chǫ, “travel through a cultural landscape today is seen as a component of nation building, reflecting traditional ways that continue to be valued in a modern world” (ibid: 66). In these ways, Aboriginal peoples “dwell” in places as these places represent the nature of their existence and embodied epistemologies (Basso 1996; Goulet 1998: Ingold 2000; McIlwraith 2012; Richmond et al. 2005). The land thus represents both “an extension of the self and collective cultural being” (Panelli and Tipa 2007: 452; Giblett 2011; Palmer 2005)

The interconnectedness of all aspects of the natural world, of humans, landscapes and animals is a strong ontological value, and determinant of Aboriginal wellbeing. Disruptions of these relationships have the potential to perpetuate ill-health due to feelings of loss and alienation (Parlee et al. 2007: 114-15).

**Structural Determinants of Aboriginal Health and Well-being**

Over the last decade primarily, the lower levels of health and well-being experienced by indigenous peoples around the world has become prioritized within academic research (Richmond and Ross 2009; Stephens 2005; Bartlett et al. 2007). Key determinants of indigenous health and well-being are tied to the historic experiences of colonization, assimilation and marginalization of indigenous peoples around the world. The social determinants of health encompasses a body of literature that identifies and examines
social, political, economic and cultural factors which condition experiences of health and the inequitable distribution of health conditions within and across populations (Marmot 2005).

Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Inuit, First Nation and Metis) experience a poorer overall quality of health and well-being than the average Canadian (Parlee et al. 2007; King et al. 2009; Cameron 2011; Shah 2004; Salee 2006). The situation of Aboriginal health in Canada is one that has largely been shaped by the structural forces of colonialism, globalization and the assimilationist policies of the state (Bartlett 2003; King et al. 2009; Adelson 2005; Waldrum, Herring and Young 1995; Kirmayer et al. 2009a). This diseased relationship itself and the systematic disenfranchisement of Aboriginal peoples in Canada is a major determinant of Aboriginal health (Jacklin 2009: 988; Shah 2004). Further, the institutional acceptance of racialized health inequalities by the state has been achieved through the tools of cultural ideology, the disempowerment of indigenous peoples and the devaluing of their own cultural traditions and institutions (King et al. 2009). This ongoing history of neglect and inequality is important to contextualize any investigation of Aboriginal well-being in Canada.

The attempted assimilation of Aboriginal nations into a dominant culture denigrated and denied Aboriginal people’s their cultural practices (Galabuzi 2004; Wilson, Rosenberg and Abonyi 2011; Lavallee and Poole 2010). Widespread experiences of trauma from residential schools negatively impacted the health and well-being of survivors and their families, with implications for future generations (AFN 1994; IRSSS 2006; TRC 2012). Further, colonialism caused the dispossession and displacement of Aboriginal peoples from their culture and traditional lands, with impacts on cultural continuity, indigenous livelihoods, health and well-being. (Wilson, Rosenberg and Abonyi 2011; WHO 2007).

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1 Geographic location and proximity to urban centres also acts as a determinant of health shaping individual access to health-related services and programs. However, there is a lack of knowledge concerning health disparities amongst Aboriginal Canadians and within urban populations in particular (Lavallee and Clearskey 2006; Iwasaki and Bartlett 2006).
For example, Wingert’s (2008) comparison of Community Well-Being (CWB)\(^2\) Index scores of First Nation reserves demonstrated that communities with lower CWB index scores were less likely to have participated in traditional or cultural activities within the past year compared to communities with higher scores.

Self-determination is arguably the most significant determinant of Aboriginal health because of the multiple ways in which colonialism has undermined Aboriginal individual and collective autonomy (Boyer 2006; Chandler and Lalonde 1998; Loppie Reading and Wien 2009; Canada 1996; Salee 2006; Kryzanowski and McIntyre 2011). A challenge in many Aboriginal communities for well-being today are government structures that are based upon European systems of power which undermine consensus-based decision making values (Samson 2009; Kral and Idlout 2009). Samson (2009: 113) argues that current political structures in the Innu territory of Northern Labrador-Quebec are “a direct consequence of colonial policies designed to extract the consent of Aboriginal peoples for Euro-Canadian occupation and ‘development’ of land”.

Collectively experienced cultural and historical trauma continues to affect the health and well-being of Aboriginal peoples through perpetuated disadvantages and disruptions to and control within individual, family and community relationships (Loppie Reading and Wien 2009: 21; Nygaard 2012; McCormick 1997; Adelson 2005; Salee 2006; WHO 2007). Mignone (2003) and Salee (2006:12) refer to this as an “erosion of social capital brought on by various state policies, cultural disintegration, displacement and the wearing down of traditional knowledge”. For example, experiences of family abuse in Aboriginal communities are “socially and historically determined” through these colonial processes (de Leeuw et al. 2009: 291; Adelson 2005). Aboriginal youth experience feelings of alienation and low self-esteem stemming from these historic processes, resulting in increased rates of Aboriginal alcohol and drug use and suicide (Mignone 2003; Mignone and O’Neil 2005; Chandler and Lalonde 1998; Kirmayer et al. 2007; Nygaard 2012).

\(^2\) The CWB index reports socioeconomic measures of well-being, such as education, employment, income and housing, and is used as a tool for comparison of conditions for First Nation and non-First Nation communities in Canada (Wingert 2007).
These processes are contested however through the rebuilding of cultural and social capital and others steps towards healing initiated by Aboriginal peoples (Shah 2004; Canada 1996). Such healing entails collective self-determination not just individual autonomy (Panelli and Tipa 2007; Kirmayer, Brass and Tait 2000). Rebuilding and strengthening relationships to family, land, and community which have been greatly disrupted through colonialism is an essential component for healing and well-being (Salee 2006).

**Arctic Anthropology and Inuit Well-being**

Anthropological methods of semi-structured interviews, ethnohistorical analysis, and participant observation can make a significant contribution to the study of well-being. There is a substantive record of accounts from the last 150 years that have informed anthropology’s understanding of Inuit peoples, especially those of the central Arctic (Damas 1998; 2002; Boas 1888; Jenness 1928; 1970; Birket-Smith 1929; 1959; Graburn 1964; Balikci 1970; Briggs 1970; Matthiason 1992; Dorais 1997). Anthropologists in particular have produced a wide breadth of indigenous ethnographies that span from Boas’ (1888) early account of Inuit subsistence systems and material culture to political and historical ethnographic accounts of Aboriginal rights and sovereignty, socioeconomic development, cultural identity and colonial legacies (Turner Strong 2005). While some previous studies discuss Inuit health (Kral et al. 2011; McGhee 1994), there has been a heavy focus within Inuit anthropology on subsistence production systems, kinship organization, and cultural perceptions of traditional foods (Wenzel 1995; O’Neil et al. 1997; Poirier and Brooke 2000). There is limited literature on Inuit perceptions of health or the determinants of Inuit wellbeing (Richmond 2009; Kirmayer et al. 2009b).

Since the latter half of the 20th Century, Arctic anthropologists have identified Inuit communities as prime examples of human adaptation in the face of changing environmental, socioeconomic and cultural conditions (Graburn 1964; Matthiason 1992; Dorais 1997; Damas 2002). Settlement from extended-family camps into communities during the 1950s resulted in rapid sociocultural change and stress amongst Inuit, and was
particularly upsetting towards kinship structures and social organization (Graburn 1964; Dorais 1997; Kral and Idlout 2009). Those who took jobs in town working for *Qallunaat* (White Southern) administrators and whose children were sent to residential schools were instructed to adhere to *Qallunaat* values and expectations (Kirmayer 2009b).

These “changes in the scale and configuration of the community, the family, and the economic and educational systems” profoundly impacted Inuit social, mental and cultural health (Waldrum 2008: 306). Through the transition to settlement and processes of cultural displacement, health issues such as diabetes, cancer and addiction have affected Inuit communities. According to Waldrum, Herring and Young (1995: 88), “Aboriginal peoples have little previous collective experience of them and the cultural response [to cope with these diseases] is still evolving”. Resource development represents a newly recent phase in a long history of Arctic socioeconomic transition. The extent to which such development may exacerbate impacts from colonization and settlement processes, and subsequently affect community well-being requires further consideration in current research.

**Resource Development and Well-being in Remote Communities**

While community impacts from mining is a small but growing area of research, existent literature has highlighted “the volatile and often problematic relationship between resource extraction and community well-being” (Lawrie, Tonts and Plummer 2011: 140). One of the most significant impacts of mining on communities is income from employment (Gibson and Klinck 2005). A lack of experience with managing incomes on this scale contributes to social issues such as drug and alcohol, sexually transmitted diseases, consumption and family stress and dysfunction, exacerbated by rotational work schedules (Gibson and Klinck 2005; Tsetta et al 2005; Goldenberg et al. 2010). Mine incomes also have the potential to increase socioeconomic stratification in small and remote communities as the income disparity between unemployed or low-wage earners and high mine salaries contributes to inequality (Gibson and Klinck 2005; O'Faircheallaigh 1998). Those in unskilled positions are particularly vulnerable to
economic fluctuations in global commodities and associated economic “boom and bust” cycles. Mining work can limit traditional subsistence economies and increase reliance upon nutritionally inferior store bought foods will implications for physical and cultural well-being and autonomy (Rasmussen 2009; Lambden et al 2007; Gibson and Klinck 2005; Tsetta et al 2005; Collings et al. 1998).

As a determinant of well-being, gender carries implications for mine impacts to family and individual health (Graham and Stamler 2010; Ballard and Banks 2003: 302). Regardless of whether mine employment opportunities are accessible to women in many remote communities, its effects are extensive (Coumans 2005: 10). These range from the rotational work structure and stress this places on family structures, to the socioeconomic insecurity and associated risks of the cyclical boom-bust nature of natural resource economies, and mining in particular (Shandro et al. 2011). A great deal of these impacts are experienced within the household through increased childcare burdens and the feminization of subsistence activities as male participation becomes limited, but they can also translate to women’s diminished access to land, resources, and decision-making powers. Important gendered health impacts for women in the context of mining include unwanted pregnancies along with increased rates of substance abuse, STI transmission, and domestic violence (Shandro et al. 2011: 182). However, limited research has been done to uncover the ways in which women experience and cope with these changes (Kuyek 2004: 121). These health experiences are clearly interlinked. Many can be associated with the rapid inflows of cash and workers into mining communities and their effects on community structures like the family, in which women play a central role (Ballard and Banks 2003: 302; Gibson and Klinck 2005: 133; Rasmussen 2009).

According to Angell and Parkins (2011) there has been a shift in the research of Aboriginal community mining impacts from an approach that focused almost exclusively upon community impacts towards recognition of community continuity. Early research from the 1970s to mid-1990s on the impacts of resource development in remote communities predominately adhered to a Durkheimian thesis of “social disruption” in which changing norms undermine individual control and predictability through the
erosion of established social patterns (Freudenburg 1984). This view of “social
disruption” has “pointed to a plethora of social problems in boomtown communities,
including high rates of crime and violence, mental health issues, suicide, drug and alcohol
abuse, marital breakdown and a reduced sense of community” from altered work
schedules and the advent of a fly-in-fly-out labour force (Lawrie, Tonts, and Plummer
2011: 142). However, this approach masked the diversity of Aboriginal communities and
both community and industry-led responses to variable impacts from local resource
extraction. The community continuity phase from the mid-1990s to present highlights the
self-determination of Aboriginal communities in particular and the importance of
maintaining cultural values and practices while adapting to mining and associated
socioeconomic changes (Angell and Parkins 2011). In the context of Canada’s recent
mining boom, it is important that new research examine the ways in which community
members respond to mine impacts through continuity of cultural and other well-being-
related practices and values.

Aboriginal Well-being and Mining

Anthropology in particular has overlooked the intersections between resource
development, indigenous peoples and health. Ballard and Banks (2003: 287) contend that
“the anthropology of mining remains a largely under-researched and under-theorized”
area of research. The majority of anthropological literature on mining has looked at
small-scale mining in the Global South, and has particularly examined community
socioeconomic impacts, migration, social organization, rituals, beliefs and ideologies
within mining communities (Frickel and Freudenburg 1996; Godoy 1985; Ballard and
Banks 2003). Numerous anthropological studies over the last thirty years have examined
the effects of globalization on local communities through various lenses, such as human
rights, gender and development, capitalist discourses, marginalization, identity politics,
and local resistance. However, an holistic understanding of local impacts to health and
well-being from mining remains a significant area requiring further study.
According to Ballard and Banks (2003: 298-99) a fundamental concern with economic development for indigenous communities is the ability to control their own destinies, and to play a key role in managing projects, the flow of benefits and mitigation of impacts. In the context of Aboriginal peoples’ experiences with colonialism, socially determined health inequalities and mining, self-determination is a significant indicator through which impacts of mine development upon well-being can be assessed and requires further examination.

While there has been recognition of the historical and embodied processes that have shaped Aboriginal well-being, there has been “relatively little focus on the more immediate social or political contexts through which people’s concepts of a balanced well-being shifts or changes” (Adelson 2009: 109; Bartlett 2004; Wilson 2004). There is a growing but underdeveloped understanding of how Aboriginal communities are impacted through natural resource development (Parlee et al. 2007: 115; Shandro et al. 2011; Kuyek 2004; Gibson and Klinck 2005), and social determinants of health from an Aboriginal community perspective (Richmond et al. 2005). However, these bodies of scholarship are fairly discrete. It is important to gain a better understanding of changes in well-being from resource development using local conceptualizations of well-being to frame these investigations.

Given the territory of Nunavut’s limited experience with mining since the early 2000s, there is even less that has been written on Inuit health concerns from the development of extractive industries (Richmond 2009). Some previous studies on Inuit employment in mining through the Nanisivik mine on Baffin Island which closed in 2002 did not find extensive impacts to family or social relationships nor subsistence practices (Hobart 1982a; 1982b; Bowes-Lyon, Richards and McGhee 2009) However, Wenzel (1983) noted the extent to which rotational employment altered spatiotemporal relations within families and thus had broader implications for social and environmental relations and the cultural practices that sustain them.
Gibson and Klinck (2005) offer a thorough overview of potential mining impacts to well-being in the Northwest Territories (NWT), where nearly half the population is Aboriginal. They employ a framework of resilience, which they define as “the quality in individuals or communities that helps them to recover from impacts, or mediates whether they are even felt” (Gibson and Klinck 2005). They develop common characteristics of large-scale mining from overviews of nearly a dozen mining operations in the NWT. These characteristics encompass the impacts on individuals, households and communities given the cyclical nature of mining, from exploration, development, and operation to shut-down and remediation. Gibson and Klinck find that individual and community resiliency to mine impacts is affected by equity factors such as self-determination, socioeconomic status, age, gender and distance from mine.

Dene peoples of the Northwest Territories have experienced rapid mineral development since the latter 1990s. Paci and Villebrun’s (2005) study of Dene Nation perspectives on community health and impacts of mining encompasses a Dene definition of health which entails “living a good life”: continued practice of subsistence activities and traditional cultural and economic systems, particularly around cultural foods. A need for a more holistic approach to conceptualizing health is voiced in this study, as are Dene concerns about the sustainability of these systems in the face of such intensive, large-scale developments.

There is need for more community-based qualitative research to understand the complex ways in which mining affects well-being and to overcome the limitations of socioeconomic statistics. Quantitative surveys comprised of externally developed measures often fail to account for the complexities of community values, experiences and practices. For example, Tsetta et al. (2005: 62-63) found that surveys could not easily capture the interconnectedness between two weeks on-two weeks off mining schedules, family dynamics, time spent on the land and the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge within a Dene First Nation diamond economy. In this context, community narratives and stories are an effective means to better understand these interconnections (Tsetta et al. 2005).
Conclusion

Despite a lack of engagement on the topic, anthropological investigations of well-being reveal the strong role that identity, sociocultural change and other processes play in constructing Aboriginal and specifically Inuit well-being. Beyond physical and environmental structures, well-being is a “function not only of place, but of underlying social-structural, political processes” (Richmond et al. 2005: 362). Aboriginal well-being is both culturally constructed and shaped through historical processes. Given a shared history of colonization, individual and community control over social, political, economic and cultural relationships remains an integral determinant for Aboriginal well-being.

Aboriginal social determinants of health from and Aboriginal community experiences with mining represent small but growing fields of scholarship. However, there remains a lack of knowledge concerning how aboriginal people define their health using local conceptions, and this is especially true for Inuit (Richmond 2009; Kirmayer et al 2009b). In the context of the current mining boom in northern Canada, this knowledge gap presents an opportunity to bridge these two areas of research and examine community impacts from development using local conceptualizations of well-being as guide. It is necessary to better understand interconnections between impacts to local individual, family and community well-being from mining in more meaningful ways which quantitative indicators are incapable of capturing. Qualitative and community-based research can reveal not only these impacts; such research can also examine locally determined values and strategies which help individuals and communities cope with the transition to mining.
CHAPTER 3

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH SITE

Hamlet of Baker Lake, Nunavut

Since its recent settlement, Baker Lake, like many Aboriginal communities in Canada, has been experiencing the transition from a subsistence-based economy to a mixed wage-subsistence economy. Baker Lake was chosen as a field site because it is the only community in Nunavut at this time to host an active mine. Within the span of three generations, Inuit have gone from living nomadically on the land to an industrial economy. Numerous elders in Baker Lake today were born and raised their families in camps on the land, and their grandchildren are now working at the Meadowbank gold mine. The nature of this region’s transition from a nomadic to a wage labour economy carries implications for the ways mining will affect community well-being, and so this chapter serves to outline key historical events and their outcomes on community well-being.

The Hamlet of Baker Lake is located in the central Kivalliq Region of Nunavut, which is bordered by Hudson’s Bay to the East, Manitoba to the South, and the Northwest Territories to the West, from which Nunavut was carved out as a distinct territory in 1999. The territory is sparsely populated and the majority of the population is Inuit (NBS 2012). Baker Lake is the only non-coastal community in Nunavut, located at the geographic centre of Canada in the barren lands of the Arctic tundra. The community is remote, over 1,500 km north of Winnipeg and accessible by plane and supply barge during July and August when the water route between Hudson’s Bay and Baker Lake is free of ice.
History of Baker Lake

While the site at Baker Lake (Qamani’tuaq, “where the river widens”) did not exist as a community until Arctic colonization, it was a historic gathering place for Inuit. Nine distinct Inuit groups lived nomadically on the lands between Hudson’s Bay and Cambridge Bay before settlement. Seven groups occupied the lands north and northeast of Baker Lake and alternated between hunting caribou and marine animals: the Iluiliqmiut, Qairnirmiut, Hanningayuqmiut, Kihlimirmiut, Hauniqturmiut, Ukkuhiksalingmiut and Aklinirmiut. The Harvagtuarumiut and Paalirmiut groups were primarily inland caribou hunters south of Baker Lake near the Kazan River (Webster 2001). While distinctions continue to be made between these groups and their unique heritage, Inuit in Baker Lake today are referred to collectively as Qamani’tuaqmiiut.

For centuries, Inuit lived a nomadic lifestyle within predominately kinship-based alliances, and the family household unit and the relationships which encompass it continues to be an integral part of community structure (Kral et al. 2011: 427; Kirmayer et al. 2009). Living in a relatively inhospitable environment, land-based Inuit had to prioritize physical survival: food, shelter and clothing above all other concerns (Minor 1992). Inuit lived in cooperative groups of extended family on the land. Respect and trust are integral Inuit values essential to survival, along with the maintenance of other social taboos that enabled Inuit control and group security in an environment renowned for its unpredictability (Minor 1992).

Living on the land, Inuit had to work together communally in all aspects of life and adhere strongly to these values through which individuals strengthened themselves by taking on new challenges that would enhance the well-being of the group. Kinship-based relations of sharing and helping structured all individual action and well-being (Kirmayer et al. 2009b: 302; Wenzel 1995; Collings et al. 1998). In this way, “the self [was] embedded in and expressive of the community” as individual accomplishments and goals were meaningless unless the group benefited (Lafromboise 1988 in Minor 1992: 41). Inuit Quajimajatuqangit (IQ; traditional Inuit knowledge) plays an important role in well-
being beyond basic subsistence practices through the extension to cultural systems of mental and emotional support (Duhaine et al. 2004: 312-313; Kral et al. 2011: 430). IQ principles are incorporated within all realms of life to maintain healthy, dynamic relationships between one’s self and the social and natural world. IQ encompasses the concept values of serving (Pijitsiramiq), consensus-based decision-making (Aajiqatiqiingniq), skills and knowledge acquisition (Pilimmaksarniq), resourcefulness to solve problems (Qanuqtuurmgnaruiq), collaborative relationships and working together (Piliriqatiqiingniq), and environmental stewardship (Avtimikkamattiarniq) (Tagalik 2010; Arnakak 2000; 2002).

The Baker Lake area was visited by European traders as early as 1762, and the site was named after then governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company, Sir William Baker (History of Baker Lake 2011). During the 19th Century, the whaling industry employed Inuit engaged in coastal subsistence practices and established the trade in European manufactured goods between Inuit camps throughout the central Arctic (Fossett 2001). The first HBC trade post was established at Baker Lake in 1914 followed by Catholic and Anglican missions and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) by the late 1920s (Damas 2002; Vallee 1967). Fur trapping became a regular part of Inuit subsistence activities in the area with the high demand for fox fur (Damas 2002; Brody 1975). Most Inuit remained nomadic during the first few decades of this economic shift, incorporating Qallunaat technologies and culture such as rifles, boats and canvas tents allowing greater efficiencies in subsistence and trade economies (Oosten, Laugrand and Remie 2006).

Changes over the following decades as a result of European contact and dependencies on external supplies, welfare and national governance and economic structures permitted the sedentarization of Inuit peoples in the region. (History of Baker Lake 2011; Tester and Kulchyski 1994). After World War II, low demand and prices for fox pelts weakened the ability of Inuit to remain on the land trading and families became increasingly dependent upon government food rations and Southern manufactured goods (Vallee 1967). The famine of 1958 resulted in the death of many Inuit in the Garry Lake area northwest of Baker Lake, where mission supplies became lost in a fire (Tester and Kulchyski 1994).
The RCMP, having established a permanent post in Baker Lake by 1931, were primarily put in charge of administering government welfare (Vallee 1967). This famine contributed to a shift in government policy from dispersal towards centralization (Damas 2002). The government had previously been ambivalent towards Inuit settlement and the contradictions between missionary relief provision that encouraged Inuit centralization and RCMP attempts to promote Inuit dispersal in land-based camps (Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Mitchell 1996). Availability of wage labour jobs, establishment of a Federal Day School at Baker Lake in 1957, and distribution of family allowance payments (often dependent upon the enrolment of children at the school) attracted more families towards the Baker Lake settlement (Webster 2001; Vallee 1967). During this time, famine survivors from various land camps around Garry Lake and the Back River were redistributed to settlements including Rankin Inlet and Baker Lake (Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Waldram, Herring and Young 1995). The RCMP along with newly introduced social service, health and school institutions were tasked with controlling these settlements, Inuit subsistence activities, and other realms over which Inuit had previously had sole autonomy (Brody 1975; Tester and Kulchyski 1994).

By the mid-1960s, nearly all Inuit in the area had moved to the Baker Lake settlement and resided year-round in government-built houses (Damas 2002). This settlement period had the effect of spreading formerly unknown diseases such as tuberculosis amongst the in-town populations, causing high numbers of infected Inuit to be relocated to southern treatment centres for extended periods (Waldram, Herring and Young 1995; Brody 1975). Some residents in Baker Lake today recall spending over a year as children in these centres, in some cases forgetting their Inuktitut language. Settlement life created a dependency upon wage labour and welfare payments due to a decline in subsistence activities during this period. Inequalities in health and well-being persist today among Arctic Inuit peoples, who experience higher rates of poverty, substance abuse, obesity, and diabetes relative to Southern Canadians (Adelson 2005; Waldram, Herring and Young 1995).
Government policy from the 1960s on encouraged the assimilation of Inuit peoples through dominant Canadian educational, religious and political institutions (Vallee 1967). The majority view of Qallunaat towards Inuit peoples in Baker Lake during the 1960s entailed the need to “socialize” Inuit into Western society so as to speed along their integration into mainstream society (Vallee 1967). Pressures of centralization made it increasingly difficult for Inuit to practice subsistence-based cultural practices on the land with their families. Until the 1980s, high school students were sent from Baker Lake to residential schools in Churchill and Yellowknife for eight to ten months of the year to learn English and other skills required to participate in the wage economy. This temporal-spatial separation of young people from their families had negative implications for the transmission of cultural knowledge, skills and values learned across the various seasons to younger generations. There is also a considerable amount of emotional, physical and sexual abuse Aboriginal children across Canada experienced through the residential school system.

For decades, series of Qallunaat from the South exercised administrative control over Baker Lake. Northern Service Officers (NSOs), teachers, and health and social workers were in charge of making decisions concerning the day-to-day lives of Inuit (Tester and Kulchyski 1994). According to Vallee (1967: 197) a “role system” was put in place to enforce Kabloona (Qallunaat) control over Inuit:

The role system in the Baker Lake region accentuates the difference between the Kabloona and the Eskimos in terms of the distribution of power. No Eskimo is in a position to give orders to a Kabloona. No Kabloona needs to get the sanction of an Eskimo in order to receive purchasing power in the form of wages, relief, or credit. Hiring, firing, giving, teaching, commanding – all of the functions which put a person or a group ‘one-up’ over another person or group in the power market are Kabloona prerogatives.

Brody (1975) describes Inuit experiences of systematic disempowerment through the development and enforcement of policies by Qallunaat in the context of the Inuktitut term for fear: ilira. Ilira refers to a “feeling of nervous awe that comes from being at an irreversible disadvantage, a situation in which one cannot modify or control the actions of
another; it can also describe unpredictability - one is *ilira* of a person whose actions
cannot be predicted, nor understood” (Brody 1975: 35). Given the inconsistent policies of
*Qallunaat* during this colonial period, Inuit were uncertain over how they would continue
to be affected by *Qallunaat* presence in the Arctic and the consequences lack of
compliance with these authorities might have for themselves (ibid). The relationship
between Inuit and *Qallunaat* today has been shaped by this history of attempted
assimilation and control over all matters of Inuit life (Brody 1975; Vallee 1967).

Given the collapse of the fur trade and the created dependency on welfare, attempts were
made by government to establish niche industries such as animal husbandry, but proved
largely unsuccessful (Mitchell 1996). Inuit arts and crafts became one successful venture
and soapstone carvings in particular, the creation of which was an Inuit pastime
transformed by Southern demand into a commodity for export (Mitchell 1996). However,
the territorial and federal governments have long viewed the extraction of natural
resources in the Canadian Arctic as a primary solution for Northern economic
development, providing jobs and improving living conditions for Inuit residents (Mitchell
1996).

**Mining in the Kivalliq Region and Baker Lake**

The first Nunavut mine was constructed in Rankin Inlet in 1956, and produced nickel
until its closure in 1962. Establishment of this mine and the generation of jobs for
Kivalliq Inuit created the town of Rankin Inlet, and some Inuit from Baker Lake
relocated their families to this site seeking employment (McPherson 2003). While the
mine operated for a few short years, it had a wide impact on the socioeconomic
development of the region as it reinforced a dependency upon wage labour and imported
goods (ibid).

Baker Lake has been experiencing mineral exploration on the lands surrounding the
community since the late 1960s (McPherson 2003). Inuit have been sporadically
employed by mining companies through exploration projects, primarily as labourers.
Inuit of Baker Lake have also historically been involved in political battles to block
uranium development on their lands. At this time, there was no Inuit land claim in place and Inuit were not adequately consulted regarding these proposed developments (Kulchyski and Tester 2007; McPherson 2003). Concerns of environmental degradation from waste left on the land and disturbance of wildlife by transportation and drilling were the most significant concerns. Resistance by a group known as the Baker Lake Concerned Citizens Committee resulted in a 1979 court case and a 1990 plebiscite against a mine proposed by the company Uranorschelschaft at the proposed Kiggavik mine site (McPherson 2003). Much like today, there was division on both sides with some community members pushing for the uranium mine’s approval in light of the economic development it would bring to the area.

Actual mine development did not occur in the area until the 2000s. Specifically, the Meadowbank project of Agnico Eagle was approved by the Nunavut Impact Review Board in 2006 and construction began in 2008, with gold production beginning in 2010 (Agnico Eagle 2013). The Meadowbank mine is located 100 km from the community, accessible by an all-weather road, and projected to continue production until 2018 (ibid). Meadowbank remains the only operating mine in Nunavut, though there are several sites under review across Nunavut, including another AEM gold mine near Rankin Inlet (the Meliadine Project) and a proposed uranium mine 80 kilometres west of Baker Lake (Kiggavik), around which a Final Environmental Impact Assessment is currently being conducted (NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines 2012).

**Nunavut Governance Structures**

There exist a number of governance structures in Nunavut that serve to manage the development of Inuit lands. The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) was created in 1971 (then called the Inuit Tarpirisat of Canada (ITC)) to represent the interests of Inuit across Canada in Nunavut, the Inuvialuit Settlement Area (NWT), Nunavik (Quebec) and Nunatsiavut (Labrador). In 1976, the ITC put forward a land claim proposal for Nunavut. The Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) took over the negotiation of this land claim from the ITC by 1982 (McPherson 2003). These negotiations took place in the context of ongoing exploration by mining companies on Inuit lands and Justice Thomas Berger’s
federal inquiry into the proposed Mackenzie Valley Pipeline project. Justice Berger’s recommendations for a moratorium on development until the settlement of land claims with affected Dene First Nations set an historical precedent for Aboriginal rights concerning development on their traditional lands (Berger 1988). This is the political environment in which Inuit during this time were seeking to determine their own respective future.

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) was passed in 1993, which provided a transfer of funds to Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) in exchange for title to Inuit lands. NTI replaced the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut and was made responsible for administering the NLCA and upholding the rights of Inuit beneficiaries, including Inuit ownership of 18 per cent of Nunavut lands, and mineral rights to two per cent of these Inuit Owned Lands (NLCA 2009). Under the NLCA, royalties from mining are collected by NTI and subsidiary Regional Inuit Associations that operate in each of the three regions of Nunavut: Kivalliq (central), Kitikmeot (north-western), and Qikiqtani (Baffin Island). The Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA) represents the community of Baker Lake, with it’s main office located in Rankin Inlet and a Community Liaison Officer and IIBA Coordinator in Baker Lake (KIA 2013).

Proposed developments are subject to regulation by the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) upon the generation of an Environmental Impact Statement, after which NIRB assesses a proposed project’s impact and whether it should go forward. While under review, community participation is required in this regulatory process (NLCA 2009). Inuit Impact Benefit Agreements (IIBAs) are mandated mechanisms under the NLCA (Article 26) for mine projects on Inuit land (NLCA 2009). An IIBA is negotiated between a Regional Inuit Association and mining company, outlining measures both parties will take to maximize benefits to Inuit beneficiaries such as employment and to minimize negative impacts.

At the community level, a Hamlet council of eight elected councillors and mayor take precedence over municipal issues. Other community organizations such as the Hunters
and Trappers Organization (HTO) exist in Nunavut communities to represent the interests of and provide support to hunters and trappers through funding from NTI. The NLCA does not enable a community or representing Hamlet government to act as party to an IIBA concerning development projects. The Government of Nunavut (GN) is also not party to negotiations of these agreements, though the final agreement of an IIBA must be shared with the GN (NLCA 2009). The terms of the IIBA signed between the KIA and AEM over the Meadowbank Mine was released as a public document in 2011, excluding financial details.

**Socioeconomic Indicators of Well-being and Mining in Baker Lake**

Much of the existing data indicating Inuit wellness in Baker Lake are aggregated at the territorial level to represent Nunavut; for reasons such as possible community stigmatization, some community-level statistics are not publicly available. Existing data presented in this section provide some context to impacts upon well-being from mining discussed in chapter 6, and needs and strategies to improve well-being with relevance to mining discussed in chapter 7. These data are largely drawn from annual Kivalliq Socio-economic Monitoring Committee reports, annual Development Partnership Agreement (DPA) reports from AEM, and the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics.

The Kivalliq Socio-Economic Monitoring Committee (SEMC) produces annual reports on population, income, education, housing, crime and small business in the region’s communities. This committee reports on statistical measures of community and regional change and developments and thus can offer a foundational picture of community social and economic wellness.

**Demographics**

Data exist at the community level that pertain to demographic details, but do not easily reveal the impact of mine development on key demographic issues like in-migration. Inuit and non-Inuit population fluctuations since 2006 show a 30% increase of non-Inuit in Baker Lake compared to a 1% increase in the Inuit population (NBS 2013). It is presumable that this increase in the non-Inuit population is related to the economic boom
in mineral exploration and mine development, which has generated work at mine sites and in mine-related trades and services in the community. Like most communities in Nunavut, Baker Lake comprises a very young population. In 2012, over 50% of the population was 24 years of age or under (NBS 2013). The youth are a strong priority for the community and it is important that they are prepared for the future, be it around mining or other economic ventures.

**Employment and training**

Since 2009, Inuit employment as a percentage of the workforce at the Meadowbank Gold Mine has been increasing. As of December 2009, during the mine’s construction phase, Nunavut-based workers comprised 21% of the workforce at Meadowbank with 258 employees – 141 of whom were from Baker Lake (SEMC 2009). The shift from construction to production involved the loss of some jobs (SEMC 2010). Most of the Inuit beneficiary employees at Meadowbank have been from Baker Lake; at the end of 2012, there were 154 employees from the Hamlet (AEM DPA 2012). As of the end of August 2011, 37.2% of new permanent hires for the year were Inuit beneficiaries, representing an increase of 57 individuals since 2010. Most of these new Inuit beneficiary hires in 2011 were men – 229 men compared with 60 women (SEMC 2011). Overall the percentage of Inuit female employees was 20.8% in 2011, which increased to 35.1% in 2012, demonstrating a relatively low but growing representation of women (SEMC 2011; AEM DPA 2012). In 2012, 31% of the Baker Lake Inuit workforce was female and 69% was male. Of the contract workforce in 2011, a small number (5.4%) were Inuit beneficiaries, equal to 25 of 457 workers (AEM DPA 2012).

The majority of the Nunavummiut workforce is in unskilled and semi-skilled positions at the mine. At the end of August 2010, there were 8 Inuit working in skilled positions. At the end of August 2011, 58% of training offered by AEM was provided to Inuit employees, an increase of 3,740 hours since 2010 (AEM DPA 2011). For 2012, 46% of training offered was provided to Inuit employees, and 85% of this training offered was general and specific job training (i.e., for career advancement) (AEM DPA 2012). There are a number of Inuit employees who started their employment with AEM in unskilled positions and have since advanced through training to skilled level positions.
Some training initiatives are offered at Meadowbank, such as the on-site haul-truck simulator purchased in 2010 and a “Career Path” program for driver advancement (SEMC 2011; DPA 2011). Given the relatively unskilled level of the Kivalliq workforce and the ongoing development of the Meliadine Mine site, more attention is being directed to education and training by AEM and the GN to meet employment needs with Inuit beneficiaries (AEM DPA 2012).

**Experiences with the two-week schedule**

According to the 2011 AEM DPA Report, Inuit employee absenteeism and turnover rates are high, resulting in lost employee income and the continued reliance on employees from outside of the territory. The fact that Agnico-Eagle imported 62% of its labour force in 2011 demonstrates excessive “economic leakage” outside the territory, and the opportunity for greater local benefit capture through mining trades training initiatives (SEMC 2011).

Notwithstanding improvements, Inuit employee retention has remained sporadic since 2009, when it stood at about 60% with an average length of employment of 93.3 days (SEMC 2009). In 2010, there were 88 resignations of Inuit employees, down from 118 in 2009, and the average length of employment improved to 194 days (SEMC 2010). In 2011, this number increased to 229 employee voluntary and involuntary terminations, the majority of which were unskilled and temporary positions (AEM DPA 2011). The average length of employment for Inuit employees in 2011 decreased sharply to 74 days (AEM DPA 2011). However, in 2012, the Inuit employee turnover rate was only 16%, demonstrating a “stable core of Inuit employees who have managed to adapt and cope” with the two-week work schedule (AEM DPA 2012: 19). In 2012, a total of 210 Inuit employees resigned (voluntarily or were terminated with cause) but the majority of these employees (174) were on a temporary or contract basis (AEM DPA 2012). Based upon on-site exit interviews and focus groups, AEM’s DPA Report (2011: 26) summarizes a variety of reasons for voluntary resignation:

- spousal relationships issues;
- did not like the work or too tired to continue working;
• too much gossip amongst co-workers;
• no babysitter or daycare;
• found a new job in town;
• home sick – need to go home;
• family wanted them to come home;
• work was too hard or did not like the work; and
• increase in rent for social service housing (i.e., an increase from $30 to $880 per month).

Making money is not the only concern for Inuit working at Meadowbank; for many Inuit, other responsibilities, such as family, take priority over employment and income. Problematically, when incomes grow, an employee’s rent in Baker Lake can increase substantially (e.g. upwards of 25 times the cost before employment). This has created a disincentive for some to continue employment, given that the majority of Kivalliq Inuit are home renters (SEMC 2011). It has also been acknowledged that the two-week rotation has contributed to spousal stress in Baker Lake, and that gossip and rumours of infidelity are causing relationship problems. While no previous data appear to exist, marital status rates for ages 15+ indicate 20 cases of separation and 15 cases of divorce in Baker Lake during 2011 (NBS 2011). If these statistics continue to be collected, they could serve as an indicator of family stability. Equally important are childcare responsibilities and lack of community childcare facilities that can prevent Inuit, and particularly single mothers, from accessing or maintaining a job at Meadowbank. The relationship between supervisors and workers, and amongst workers was also discussed at the 2011 meeting as an area of concern, with issues of gossip and miscommunication creating tension between employees.

**Income and spending**

The 2009 SEMC Report (p. 1) stated that “[t]he Kivalliq has not seen economic growth in the wage economy of [this] magnitude since first contact.” A need for Kivalliqmiut to adapt to these rapid changes in order to benefit from regional economic growth is recognized. In 2009, Inuit worked 40% of the hours on site and took in 24% of income earned, while in 2010, Inuit represented 33% of the hours worked and took in 25% of the income earned (SEMC 2010). These data represent a gap, which appears to be closing with increased training and opportunities to earn higher wages. Median annual
employment income in Baker Lake has increased since construction began for the Meadowbank Mine: from $12,600 in 2004 to $22,020 in 2009 (based on tax-filers with employment; NBS 2013). Consistent with this, the number of households collecting social assistance has decreased in recent years. In 2006, the monthly average social assistance caseload was 239 households, representing 706 individuals, compared with 124 households and 537 individuals in 2010 (NBS 2011). The main attributable factor for these lower levels is the more than 150 residents of Baker Lake working at the Meadowbank camp, and new job opportunities in town (SEMC 2011). The same trend is occurring in Rankin Inlet, while other communities in Kivalliq are experiencing a rising number of social assistance cases (SEMC 2010).

With an increased standard of living, there are concerns associated with spending. Across Nunavut, sales of alcoholic beverages have been increasing. The total income and revenue from legal alcohol sales between 2010 and 2011 increased 55.4% across the territory (NBS 2012). While regional or community-specific data on alcohol sales are not publically available, the proportion of newly earned monies spent towards alcohol, drugs and gambling is of concern to Baker Lake residents.

**Crime**

“A complex area associated with the millions in new employment income that Agnico provides to Inuit employees are the apparent social issues that come with having a job” (AEM DPA 2012: 7). This excerpt from the 2012 AEM DPA Report indicates a strong need for community support to address these social issues associated with rapid growth and economic development from mining. Across the territory of Nunavut, crime rates have been increasing over the last decade. However, crime rates have been rising in Kivalliq over the last several years at a rate faster than the territory of Nunavut is experiencing on average. In Baker Lake, the number of criminal code violations (including traffic violations) has increased from 316 in 2006 to 753 in 2011 (NBS 2012). The majority of these criminal violations are incidents of mischief, disturbing the peace and assault.
Crimes against persons, including acts and threats of violence, have been on the rise as well (NBS 2012). In Baker Lake, the rate of crimes against the person (calculated as crimes per 1,000 residents) increased from 66 in 2006 to 85 in 2010 (SEMC 2011). Rates of suicide, violence and sexual assault, have been also increasing in recent years, some of which can be attributed to overcrowded housing and associated stressors (SEMC 2011).

Within the Kivalliq, the rate of crimes against property - generally thefts and possession of stolen property - have experienced the most rapid increase in Baker Lake. The rate of increase within the Kivalliq region as a whole is also significantly greater than the increase at the territory level (SEMC 2011). This greater increase has been explained by the RCMP as a result of increasing consumer goods, gambling, alcohol, and drugs in Kivalliq, enabling a comparable rise in incidents of disturbing the peace and mischief charges, such as the destruction and theft of property (SEMC 2011). The RCMP indicated that alcohol is involved in the majority of criminal offences in which an individual is taken into Nunavut’s correctional services. They discussed the need to strengthen conflict resolution skills in communities and to overcome shortages of police and social and mental health workers (SEMC 2011).

In sum, as the 2011 SEMC Report states (p. 2), “it is not clear to what extent resource development is impacting crime, but regardless, it is clear that the region is experiencing higher rates of crime than ever before. Further study and discussion on this topic will be needed as we move forward and especially as a second major resource development project comes on stream”.

Health
There are data that reveal less strain on Baker Lake’s health centre, but a perception exists that the Meadowbank labour force is placing an increased demand on these services. Community health centre visits have been decreasing per annum since 2006 when there were 12,903 visits to 2011 with 9,652 visits recorded (in 2007: 11,262; 2008: 9,595; 2009: 8,076; 2010: 9,839; NBS 2013). According to AEM’s records, during 2011 there were 54 instances in which an employee at Meadowbank with an injury or illness was referred by the on-site medical clinic to a GN community health centre or a
provincial health facility to receive further medical care (AEM DPA 2011). This number decreased to 37 in 2012, of which 10 involved a referral to a GN Community Health Centre (AEM DPA 2012).

There are public data at the territory-level to represent other health-related trends occurring across Nunavut. One of relevance to mining and related processes of globalization that intensify individual mobility in the region is the rising rates of STI infections. In Nunavut in 2008, chlamydia and gonorrhea rates, respectively, were more than 17 and 18 times higher than Canadian rates (GN 2011). Tuberculosis rates, related to overcrowded housing, in 2008 were 30 times the national rate (ibid). Data for these indicators are collected at the community-level, but to avoid stigmatization, are not released to the public.

**Education and training**

Throughout Kivalliq, the rate of high school graduates has been increasing, and this can be attributed partly to population growth. Indeed, Nunavut and the Kivalliq region have an extremely young population in comparison to the rest of Canada. Regional economic growth and development must be sustained in order to meet future employment needs as these youth enter the labour force in the coming years.

In order to work at the mine in any skilled position, an individual must have a high school diploma (SEMC 2009). Currently, the Kivalliq population aged 35 to 64 has relatively low levels of education, and the age 20 to 24 cohort reveals even lower levels. In Baker Lake in 2006, 12% of the population held a high school diploma or equivalent, and less than 10% of the population had a university certificate or degree (NBS 2008). However, the increasing high school graduation rates in Kivalliq and Baker Lake specifically will help to offset this trend in the future.

While the rising number of high school graduates is promising, graduation rates further demonstrate an increase in the percentage of 17 to 18 year-olds in Kivalliq graduating from high school, with a high of 44% in 2010, more than double the 21% graduation rate in 2001. Furthermore, a comparison of the population of 17 and 18 year-olds in Kivalliq
and grade 12 enrolment rates demonstrates a rather apparent but lessening gap. In 2010, this gap had almost completely closed.

School attendance rates also serve as a viable indicator of community wellness, and can be compared with trends in high school graduation rates. It is problematic that school attendance rate trends across Kivalliq show a peak in grade 4, with a successive decline beginning in grade 10 (SEMC 2011). Overall school attendance rates for both the elementary and secondary schools in Baker Lake have fluctuated over the last number of years, but overall have declined with slight improvement in 2010/2011 (NBS 2012). Data for the 2010/11 school year demonstrate an overall 69.3% attendance rate and 27.3% truancy rate for both the RA and JA schools (NBS 2013). As a reflection of school attendance, truancy rates for both schools are high and have been increasing over the last several years, with slight improvement in the 2010/2011 school year (NBS 2012). In spite of increasing high school graduation rates in the region, Kivalliq high school students have low levels of attendance. These data raise concern for the next generation of employees to capture benefits from industry-led economic growth in the region, and add to concerns about growing economic inequality as some will be unable to access these higher-paying job opportunities.

In 2006, 9% of the population in Baker Lake held an apprenticeship, trades certificate, or diploma (NBS 2008). A barrier for students entering trades programs is their inability to pass the trades entrance exam because of lower literacy levels and numeracy skills. There is a need for more programs and services such as tutorial and study aids to address these shortfalls so that future graduates are better prepared to enter into careers and capture the benefits of mineral development. In recent years, more trades-based apprenticeships and education programs, such as the high school Mining Matters courses, are being offered across Kivalliq and Nunavut (SEMC 2009; DPA 2011). The push for trades-based initiatives is only likely to increase in the face of Nunavut’s current mining-led economic boom.
**Language**

In Baker Lake in 2011, 1,170 of 1,865 local residents reported Inuktitut as their mother tongue, or first language learned and still understood (NBS 2012). This can be compared with 645 residents who indicated English to be their mother tongue (ibid). In terms of the language spoken most often at home in 2011, 525 Baker Lake residents indicated this to be Inuktitut, compared with 1,320 who speak English most often at home (NBS 2012). The more frequent use of English at home over Inuktitut has been increasing over the past decade. In 2001, 61.3% of Baker Lake residents reported English to be the main language spoken at home compared to 36.1% who spoke Inuktitut most frequently. In 2011, 70.8% indicated English to be the main home language and 28.2% spoke Inuktitut predominately (NBS 2012). The levels of Inuktitut speaking and number of residents who claim Inuktitut to be their mother tongue is lower in Baker Lake than in several other Kivalliq and Nunavut communities. Community and school-based language initiatives are hoping to reverse these trends while promoting literacy in both English and Inuktitut.

**Housing**

A government housing survey was conducted in each Nunavut community between November 2009 and June 2010 (NBS 2011). At the time, Baker Lake had a total of 550 dwellings of which approximately 80% were rented and 20% owned. About two-thirds of occupied dwellings were public housing units. Residents indicated that 22% of their homes (120) were in need of major repair. About 41% of homes (210) were reported to be overcrowded with a lack of bedrooms, and approximately 1 in 5 houses were reported to be accommodating 6 people or more. In Baker Lake, 53% of homes (270) were classified as below housing standards – either in need of major repairs, overcrowded or both. Public housing units represented the majority of homes below housing standards (58% of unfit homes). This implies that approximately 1,500 people - the majority of Baker Lake’s population – live in a dwelling that is below housing standards. The survey also indicated that approximately 60 residents of Baker Lake (3% of the population) did not have a permanent home and were living temporarily at another person’s house. About 25% of homes in the community had temporarily housed individuals without a permanent home within the last 12 months.
This lack of sufficient and adequate housing contributes to household stress. About 300 Baker Lake residents over the age of 15 reported being on the waiting list for public housing at the time of this survey. Of these individuals, 100 had been on the waiting list for between one and three years, and about 50 others indicated being on the waiting list for five years or longer (NBS 2011). These housing data, while merely a snapshot from a one-year period, provide an indication of community wellness as Baker Lake continues to grow and more demand is placed on community housing and infrastructure.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter has provided a historical context to the Hamlet of Baker Lake and its transition from a nomadic to an industrial economy. Arctic colonization and subsequent government policies have undermined Inuit self-determination and cultural continuity. Inuit centralization further created a dependency upon wage labour with limited sustainable employment opportunities. Socioeconomic conditions and well-being in Baker Lake today have been strongly affected through these historical processes.

Data from the SEMC and the NBS are important to consider in the context of research findings presented in later chapters. In the advent of mine development, Baker Lake comprises a young and relatively inexperienced workforce. In the midst of this recent transition, there are concerns related to health issues, inadequate housing, rising crime rates and income misspending that carry negative implications for community well-being. There is also a demonstrated need for further education and training for mine employment to provide greater benefits to workers.

However, these available indicators are incapable of representing the complexities of well-being in Baker Lake and the ways in which individual, family and community well-being is affected through mining. Critically missing are data that reflect local and qualitative conceptions of well-being, such as cultural values, identity and the health of relationships. For example, while statistics on Inuktitut language use are useful, this indicator alone is not adequate to assess the impacts of development upon the prevalence
of Inuit cultural practices or what these practices mean for Inuit. This qualitative research in Baker Lake addresses these limitations, demonstrating the ways in which Inuit well-being as defined by local values, practices and conditions is affected through mining.
CHAPTER 4

METHODS

As stated in the introduction to this thesis, the aim of this research is to document conceptualizations of well-being held by community members in Baker Lake, Nunavut in the context of ongoing mineral development in the Kivalliq region. To achieve this aim, qualitative research methods of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups were utilized over three months of community fieldwork. Following a brief discussion concerning the relevance of Aboriginal methodologies in conducting research with Aboriginal communities, this chapter will outline the research design and methods employed to address the three primary research questions outlined in chapter one.

Methodology

Conducting research with Aboriginal peoples, one must be cognizant of the history of scientific research as a tool in the colonization of indigenous peoples and appropriation of indigenous knowledge. There is still research to this day that concerns Aboriginal peoples yet fails to consider their perspectives or methodologies, which are subsumed under Western empiricist ideologies (Pidgeon and Hardy Cox 2002). Research with Aboriginal peoples should ideally be led by the Aboriginal community and designed to address a specific knowledge gap identified by the community or group. The Hamlet Council of Baker Lake indicated a need for research to document community experiences with mining, which was initiated in the summer of 2011 by a University of Guelph graduate student, Kelsey Peterson (Peterson 2012). Community control and ownership are integral components in these research partnerships (Schnarch 2004). Specifications for community control and ownership of data for this research are outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the University of Guelph, the Hamlet Council of Baker Lake and Agnico Eagle Mines in June 2012.
While indigenous groups and cultures are extremely diverse, they share a number of commonalities that have generated indigenous methodologies and ways of seeing and knowing the world that ought to inform research by and with indigenous peoples (Smith 1999). Menzies (2001) noted an essential component of an indigenous methodology to be the relationship between a researcher and the community with whom they are working. Researchers must be aware of the history and social, cultural and political contexts and realities of the peoples with whom they are working and provide a space for their voices, values and experiences (Absolon 2011, Smith 1999; Martin 2003). A researcher must also be conscious and reflexive of their own values, background and position of power as researcher collecting knowledge from an Aboriginal community (Absolon 2011). As such, establishing shared trust and respect between researcher and community are integral to anthropological research (Menzies 2001).

Smith (1999) writes that an indigenous methodology of gathering and applying knowledge is imperative because indigenous peoples have historically been denied a space to tell their stories, which have been subject to the control and misinterpretation of non-indigenous scholars (Wilson 2008; Smith 1999). A large focus of indigenous scholars in more contemporary research is on decolonizing these methodologies and integrating indigenous epistemologies into research with indigenous peoples (Smith 1999; Wilson 2008). Such a methodology ought to “address social issues within the wider framework of self-determination, decolonization and social justice” (Smith 1999: 4).

Further, research with a colonized and historically marginalized indigenous group must recognize the heterogeneity of experiences and interests within these groups and disembark from the tradition in research, which has been to describe these communities as homogenous. Uncovering diverse experiences, values and needs is significant to this qualitative research. While mining development in a remote community brings the promise of socioeconomic development, community members experience the benefits and impacts of mining in diverse ways (Peterson 2012). Though members of a small Aboriginal community share a common geographic place and identity they also hold different conceptualizations and experiences of health and healing (Jacklin 2009; Paci...
and Villebrun 2005). It is important to recognize this diversity and the ways in which mineral development variably shapes perceptions and experiences of health. This dynamic was definitely present in this research with Baker Lake, which necessitated a wider scope be used to obtain a diverse sample from the community and prevent bias in the research findings. Towards this end, 60 participants were engaged in this research to achieve a point of high data saturation and ensure that analyses were drawn from a reasonable data sample.

**Research Design**

Research for this thesis was conducted in Baker Lake between July 25 and October 1, 2012. During this time, I resided in the community of Baker Lake at the Agnico-Eagle Guesthouse where employees of AEM, predominately from Quebec, reside on a rotational two-week schedule. My Research Assistant and I also travelled to the Meadowbank site for four days where interviews were held with Inuit mine employees. This research has employed the qualitative methods of individual semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observation. These methods allowed for a thorough exploration of the research questions as interview and focus group questions asked participants to describe values, conditions, and practices that affect well-being in the context of mineral development. No quantitative methodology is capable of capturing narrative description of individual, family and community well-being which participants provided. Participant observation contextualized data gathered from participants, grounding their narratives through observed practices. This method was also used to build relationships with community members.

**Community Wellness Indicators Project**

Research findings for this thesis have also contributed to a complimentary project with AEM and the Hamlet of Baker Lake. Community well-being indicators were synthesized from this qualitative research for the long-term monitoring of changing wellness conditions in Baker Lake. These indicators can be used to inform the implementation of health-related programming to mitigate negative impacts from mining development. The
Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement (IIBA) signed in 2011 between the mining company, Agnico-Eagle Mines (AEM), and the regional Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA) requires such yearly monitoring of changes to the well-being of Inuit residents in Baker Lake.

A follow-up trip was made to the community in March 2013. Project findings were summarized in a March 2013 report: Developing Community Wellness Indicators in the Hamlet of Baker Lake, and presented to the Baker Lake Hamlet Council, community organizations and Agnico Eagle Mines. This report provided an exhaustive list of community wellness indicators based upon the values, conditions and strategies for well-being which participants had described. A report was also completed for Agnico-Eagle Mines and the Kivalliq Inuit Association in August 2013 (the Agnico-Eagle Mines Ltd. Wellness Report and Implementation Plan). This report summarized existing knowledge on mining impacts to community wellness in Baker Lake, highlighted key findings from qualitative research conducted in 2011 and 2012, and presented opportunities for ongoing impact mitigation.

**Participant Recruitment and Data Collection**

Interview participants were recruited upon preliminary meetings with key contacts developed by Professor Ben Bradshaw, his research assistant, Zoe Barrett-Wood, and a University of Guelph graduate student, Kelsey Peterson, who worked with Professor Bradshaw. Professor Bradshaw is my advisory committee member. He connected me to this research opportunity with Baker Lake and secured funding for its execution. Professor Bradshaw supervised both my research in the field and the development of community wellness indicators and the 2013 Wellness Report delivered to AEM and the KIA.

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3 Kelsey Peterson’s 2011 research in Baker Lake documented community experiences with mining through the use of semi-structured interviews and focus group sessions (see Peterson 2012).

4 ibid
Upon my arrival in the community, I put up posters in public places and advertisements on the local radio and community Facebook page with information about the research and my contact information. I initially contacted participants at various organizations and government offices, providing them with an information sheet on the research (see Appendix B). I used snowball sampling with early contacts in the community and through participants met at community organizations (such as the Health Centre, Social Services, Arctic College, and the elementary and high schools). Working with my Research Assistant, Britania Twyee was instrumental towards branching out into the wider community and connecting with community elders in particular. Britania was recruited to assist with this research through connection made with an MA student, Tara Cater, conducting research in Rankin Inlet during August 2012. Britania speaks fluent Inuktitut and provided interpretation during interviews with elders and transcription of interview recordings. She was present for the majority of interviews conducted and both of the focus groups.

This method of sampling out into the community from a few initial key contacts was effective. As an outsider to the community, the recommendations of these key informants and word-of-mouth helped to guide the research, particularly during its early stages when I was still a stranger in the community. As much of this research was conducted during the busy summer and fall months, individual interviews proved to be an effective means of gathering data where coordinating focus groups proved unsuccessful i.e., during a season when most community members choose to spend their free time with family and out on the land.

Initially it was challenging to conduct this research in the community due to a number of factors. First, the timing of my fieldwork during the summer months was not ideal as community members endeavour to spend much time on the land during the snow and ice-

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5 Using snowball sampling, new participants were obtained through the recommendations made by existing participants. As Baker Lake is a small community, this method proved effective in reaching across families and social networks. Specifically, participants were asked to suggest other community members who have strong knowledge and opinions on Inuit well-being and the well-being of the community, such as Inuit elders.
free months from July to September. Second, there is some well-founded mistrust of researchers given their history of appropriating Aboriginal knowledge, partly towards the establishment of assimilationist policies and practices. The 3-month length of my field season was beneficial in this regard, allowing time for community members to become more familiar with the purpose of the research and myself. Indeed, several participants who were initially hesitant later contacted Britania or myself to arrange an interview.

Community reactions to my research were highly varied. While there were sentiments expressed by a few community members that Baker Lake has been researched extensively and the benefit of this research was at times called into question, other community members and participants expressed a keen interest in the research objectives. A further challenge concerns the nature of the research topic. Mineral development is a political and at times rather contentious topic in Nunavut. While some Baker Lake residents are divided one way or another towards or against ongoing development, many are more ambivalent or reluctant to express an opinion that cannot be supported through their own personal experiences.

Having no direct affiliation in the community affected the research process and likely the results. Though other research studies conducted in the community have closely involved community activists or Inuit organizations, at times guided by an anti-mining ideology, this research was not. The fact that this research was not associated with any particular interest group in the community was a determining factor for participation of some community members, though I cannot say how many chose to abstain or participate for this reason. The broad scope of this research and my association with the Hamlet and AEM raised some suspicions, though these were generally not directly expressed to me. My research assistant and I were able to answer direct questions and inquiries from community members and participants though we could have further addressed these concerns through more public radio announcements and workshops explaining the research.
**Individual interviews**

In order to capture local conceptualizations of well-being and impacts from mining, 45 semi-structured interviews were conducted with community members in Baker Lake and employees at the Meadowbank mine site while residing in the community during August and September 2012. Nine interviews were conducted with elders in the Inuktitut language with the assistance of a local Research Assistant, Britania Twyee. A local translator provided interpretation during three interviews with elders conducted in Inuktitut when Britania was unavailable. Britania later transcribed interviews with elders into English.

A varied sample of participants was obtained to collect a data sample capable of capturing the diverse ways in which Inuit values, practices and conditions are affected by mining. For example, community educators (at the elementary and high schools and the local Arctic College), artists, students, elders, business owners, government employees, mine employees and their family members were among those interviewed. This varied representation is essential because factors such as cultural identity, gender, age and socio-economic status shape experiences with mining and its potential impacts on well-being.

After briefly discussing the participant’s background and experience (for the purposes of informing the dialogue between researcher and participant), subsequent questions were open-ended and asked participants to describe the values, practices and conditions that shape Inuit well-being in Baker Lake. Later questions asked participants to reflect upon their experiences with mining and well-being, including community needs to mitigate impacts from mining. See Appendix A for a list of interview questions. Interviews ranged in length between 30 minutes to 2 hours, though the majority of interviews were 45 minutes to 1 hour in length.

Interviews were conducted at the most convenient time for the participants, and thus my schedule was very flexible. Most interviews were recorded with a digital recording device, upon obtaining participant permission, and supplemented by hand-written notes.
Before engaging in an interview, participants were asked to review a consent form (see Appendix C) – available both in English and Inuktitut, and sign off or give oral consent. Participants were compensated $20 for their time and elders were provided $150 in accordance with local honourarium guidelines.

**Focus groups**

I conducted 2 focus groups with 8-12 members in each towards the end of the field season. Focus group members were residents of the community: women and high school youth. The focus group with youth lasted for 45 minutes while the focus group with women was held for approximately one and a half hours. The women’s focus group was not audio recorded, though I took detailed notes while Britania facilitated. Ethics clearance was granted for engagement with this group of youth under 18 while in the field. Though initially I had planned to gather and refine most of my research through focus groups, individual interviews proved much easier to organize and arrange time for with participants during the busy summer months in Baker Lake.

**Participant observation**

Participant observation was a supplementary method used to contextualize participant responses in individual and group interviews, build relationships with community members and to establish rapport with participants. Rapport was established through being present in the community, attending community events, volunteering, and engaging with organizations and individuals. Baker Lake is an extremely friendly community; I was often approached by strangers and would introduce myself and the research project. In fact, I became known as a researcher and “that girl who’s always walking around town”. While such relationship building occurred over the course of fieldwork, the first two weeks were solely dedicated to this purpose. I am extremely grateful for the relationships I made over the course of this research and the kindness shown to me by Baker Lake community members.

My ability to participate in the daily life of the community and people I met allowed for a
richer understanding of the conditions, values and practices participants described. While in the field I kept a journal in which I recorded my field notes, reflecting on my daily life in the community and residing at the Agnico-Eagle Guesthouse, my observations at community events, and experiences conducting this research. During my three months of fieldwork, I attended weekly square dances, engaged in trips to the land with community members, and participated in community workshops including 3 events, a feast for elders, an educational movie night for youth, and a local music performance, which my Research Assistant and I took part in organizing. After attending these events, I recorded notes (30 pages in total) with my impressions and observations still fresh in my memory. These handwritten journal notes were later compiled into an eleven-page summary, categorized according to theme and topic and helped to contextualize research findings and analysis.

Data Analysis

Interview recordings and notes were transcribed using Nuance’s Dragon Dictate Software. All identifying information such as names and references made during the interview were removed or changed to ensure the anonymity of participants. An initial analysis, reading through interview notes, identified some major themes: Inuit identity and cultural continuity, family values and parenting, community social dynamics, community services and program capacity, strategies for living well (balance, adaptation) and self-determination. Data was coded according to the presence and prevalence of numerous sub-topics within each interview and focus group. This initial coding was very specific and used towards the drafting of Community Wellness Indicators, submitted in a March 2013 report to the Hamlet Council.

Given the breadth of the topic of well-being and mining and the high number of research participants (60), I re-coded the transcripts numerically tracking the presence of themes and subthemes according to the number of participants who discussed a specific theme or sub-topic of that theme. This was done for the purposes of cross-checking my initial analysis for the indicator development. Both analyses generated the same major themes. Given the open-ended nature of my interview questions, I did not have any preconceptions of themes in which participant responses could be sorted. Rather, a great
deal of copy and pasting of transcript notes and participant quotations was done both
digitally and using hard copies sorted into piles to create a more complete picture of the
connections between these topics. To the fullest extent possible, I have used direct quotes
from participants to present the findings of this research. I believe that sharing their
stories and offering as much context as possible while protecting their confidentiality has
contributed to the rigour of my analysis.

**Ethics**

Due to the historic betrayal of respect and trust between Aboriginal communities and
researchers, both internal and external ethical guidelines have been established and must
be followed that delineate the rights and obligations of participants and researcher
(Menzies 2001). This research was approved in June 2012 by the University of Guelph’s
Research Ethics Board, following chapter 9 of the Tri-Council Research guidelines
involving research with Aboriginal Peoples (TCPS2 2010). This Ethics Board consists of
Aboriginal members from the academic and broader community in Guelph. A Research
Certificate was also obtained from the Nunavut Research Institute in July 2012 for
approval to carry out this research in Baker Lake.

Interview and focus group participants were provided with information letters and
consent forms, in either English or Inuktitut (see Appendix B and C). These forms
explained the nature of the research, their rights as a participant within the research
process (including their right to withdraw), measures taken to achieve their
confidentiality, and the intentional use of the data. Any given form was verbally
explained, with the assistance of a translator if required. Anonymity was a significant risk
to consider conducting this research as the community is small and relatively close-knit.
Furthermore, confidentiality was not possible to achieve within public focus group
settings in a small community such as Baker Lake.

Lastly, I followed-up with participants to let them know they are able to contact me at my
place of residence within the community or by phone or email if they have any further
questions or concerns. I was unable to deliver transcripts to all participants, though I did
supply copies of audio recordings to elders interviewed and made interview and focus group transcripts available when requested. All data stored on my computer was encrypted along with the recording device, and any written notes were kept in a locked cabinet to which only I had access.
CHAPTER 5

INUIT PERCEPTIONS OF WELL-BEING: VALUES, EXPERIENCES AND IDENTITY AS GROUNDED IN RELATIONSHIPS TO LAND, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

In this chapter, I argue that well-being in Baker Lake is defined and experienced through relationships to land, family and community. Well-being is dependent upon experiences that shape cultural identity, living the values for a good life. All 45 interview participants discussed the importance of practicing and experiencing Inuit values and ways of life for wellbeing, particularly within families and on the land. These values involve working together, sharing supporting one another, social togetherness, strong parenting, respect, and open communication. Further, these values extend to the community of Baker Lake through their incorporation into daily life.

I asked elders what wellness meant in the past, living on the land. A few elders shrugged, most described their day-to-day family life, and all 9 directly stated or implied that living well was simply an outcome of survival, living on the land together as Inuit. Experiences from living on the land have formulated Inuit values on how to live well and these values in turn have become incorporated into cultural ways of doing and knowing – Inuit identity – within the context of land-based skills and family relationships.

Historical transitions and their lasting impacts upon these Inuit relationships must be considered in the context of effects mining has on well-being. Processes of colonization, settlement and modernity have created gaps between generations and existing time and space structures, causing some cultural values to be misplaced with implications for identity and well-being. Many participants, and particularly elders, discussed valuing and respect for the “old ways” in a nostalgic sense, recognizing the dramatic changes to Inuit ways of life since the latter 20th Century. Other participants discussed these values in a daily experienced or normative way; the way they are or strive to be in their family, their workplace and in their community.
This chapter follows in three further parts. Part I describes land-based practices and experiences that contribute towards Inuit identity and well-being. Part II presents family and community values and practices that further shape well-being. Part III discusses ongoing transitions in Baker Lake since colonialism that have affected Inuit relationships to land, family and community and thus well-being.

I. RELATIONAL WELLNESS: LAND-BASED SKILLS, EXPERIENCES AND IDENTITY AS A SOURCE OF INUIT WELL-BEING

Experiential knowledge as a foundation for cultural values, identity and well-being

“We didn’t have to label these things because we lived them.” – young woman

Acquiring and sharing knowledge and skills of the land through experience is an important part of wellness in Baker Lake today, as discussed by approximately 25 participants. One mine employee expressed the significance of experience to Inuit ways of knowing, stating: “Inuit are very observant; everything we do is from the environment.” An elder similarly expressed the importance of observation: “We taught in silence because body language spoke out louder than words.” Inuit culture has been created around land-based experiences over the span of generations, and the knowledge and values for living well within a family and within a group – within a community – is strongly guided by these principles. An elder described the foundation for living well in his life, acquiring these skills: “People older than me know a lot more than me. I do it physically to find out if it’s really right or wrong.”

Survival on the land depended upon younger generations acquiring these land-based skills through observation and practice. Learning Inuit skills and values through experience from the time one is a young unreasoning child enables their self-actualization as Inuit, one’s identity as an Inuk (a genuine person). When I asked participants how Inuit culture promotes good health, they discussed the centrality of land-based experiences and
skills to well-being. I asked one young mine employee how or in what ways Inuit culture contributes to well-being and he responded:

I would say, learning some of their traditions like making the sleds and even doing some qamatiq [sleds], sled dogs, are one of the traditions I used to do when I was a kid and it brought me great experience wanting to teach others sleds and train to do dog-sledding.

It is through learning, practicing and imparting cultural skills to others that a sense of Inuit identity can be cultivated. Participants discussed the practice of these skills and values towards the construction of an Inuit identity as a necessary component for well-being.

The land as a source of survival, sustenance and well-being

“We depended on the land for everything, for all well-being.” – female elder

For community members, the lands of the Baker Lake area represent the places Inuit survived through adherence to Inuit cultural knowledge and practices. As a source of wellbeing, lands are inscribed with meaning from experiences gained through the collective harvesting of caribou, fish, plants and other necessary resources by families during the seasons. An elder born on the land illustrated the ways in which the lands have been inscribed culturally through experiences:

[Families] knew where places were and even with no GPS or maps they knew exactly where and whose family lives near where. If you went to a land and there was no one around, there were land markers to guide you. Like let’s say you are crossing someone’s area and you see an inukshuk [land marker] and it’s by a lake – that means that is a good fishing ground, and it’s different for caribou.

A female elder further expressed that the land is a source of well-being, saying: “In the old days we never thought about money. The fish, the birds, caribou – these were the
source of everything and all sustenance.” The land-based division of labour accorded to gender and age, with the primary task of harvesting caribou assigned to men. Caribou itself is a primary source of well-being for its physical and cultural nourishment. According to one mine employee: “Caribou makes me healthy – prevents me from getting sick, keeps me strong.”

**The land as a source of emotional, spiritual and social well-being**

“The land always calls my name.” – Meadowbank employee

As Inuit have always been dependent on the land for their survival, an emotional and spiritual connection to the land was discussed with reference to well-being. Over half of interviewees (23) directly spoke of spending time on the land as a source of well-being. An elder recalled the following experience when asked to describe how Inuit lived well on the land, demonstrating an emotional attachment to the land:

I was talking last night with another friend who grew up where I also did. We noticed the wind change direction and once we noticed I phoned him up to say all the caribou must be over there now crossing that river and wishing we were up there to see them cross and catch a bull. I was kindly joking around with him and asked him, “From which side of the river are they crossing from?” He replied, “They are crossing from the Native [Cree] side of that river!” I will never forget them crossing from that riverside.

Spending time on the land is a source of spiritual, social and cultural well-being, maintaining a connection to “traditional” Inuit culture and the lived experiences of Inuit in those places. As one woman stated in describing her family’s well-being: “We go out camping a lot. Spirituality does wonders for you: like going to church or going out on the land”. The land was discussed as a means of coping with stress from life in town. I asked a community educator how or in what ways families in Baker Lake stay healthy and well. She responded:
The traditional way of living. Everybody seems, I don’t know, the long cold winter where everybody just seems lost or just bored and I don’t know how else to look at it. But in the spring time, it’s like the life comes back into the community because everybody’s out there, wanting to do stuff like they’re striving to go and hunt. All winter long they can’t do that because they’re afraid of the blizzard or whatever, right? So they all seem, I don’t know, reserved throughout the winter. Like they’re just kind of sitting still and getting into other things; it’s not keeping them busy. But in the springtime you hear less of negative things going on in the community because everybody’s so busy wanting to go out and catch a fish, wanting to go out and catch a caribou or a goose, and even go and walk around and look for eggs. It’s like life comes back; it’s the way I see it.

The land is a place to maintain a connection to a cultural past and present through experiences shared with family and friends. The land enables Inuit to learn land-based skills that contribute to a sense of personal and collective identity and well-being as Inuit. In addition to maintaining cultural continuity and a sense of Inuit identity, going out on the land offers an expansive space away from the constraints and stress of life in the community.

II. RELATIONAL WELLNESS: THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY AND FAMILY VALUES AND PRACTICES TOWARDS LIVING WELL

Sociocultural values and practices for family and community well-being

Working together
“It takes a community as a whole to make it well.” – community educator

Helping one another and demonstrating to others how to live well are primary values discussed by participants of all ages and backgrounds. Approximately 40 participants related the importance of working together, cooperation and sharing as value practices for community well-being in Baker Lake today. These values were a necessary part of Inuit culture through survival, as complete dependency upon the land entailed periods of hardship and starvation when resources were unavailable.
An elder born in 1944 near the Thelon River related a story from his experience as a youth around the time of a famine that greatly affected this area in the 1950s. In reference to this difficult period, he recalled the importance of things like “making time” and families sharing limited company store provisions they had obtained on trips to Baker Lake to pick up necessary supplies with other families on the land. He said: “Living well means taking care of one another - that’s the way to stay healthy. The only way [the Inuit] made it today was with cooperation.” Another elder shared:

In the old days, to depend on one another, families used to get together and talk about the land and where everyone was at and share experiences with one another. Also when we would see some people or families need guidance in life or anything at all - hunting experience - families helped one another. They had a tight bond.

A community administrator similarly expressed this value, stating: “In my workplace, wellness is working together; teamwork and communication.”

**Sharing resources, social support and togetherness**

Sharing resources, food from the land, and caribou in particular is highly valued and practiced in the community, especially helping and sharing with elders. There is a strong socio-cultural value attached to caribou and other country foods for their nourishing qualities. An educator discussed the significance of sharing foods given the exorbitantly high costs of food available at grocery stores in the community. She said:

That’s why a lot of hunters will, when they can, will go hunting and share whatever they get, as much as they can. Because we have to rely on each other to be able to survive.

Numerous participants noted that whenever anyone in the community is in need, the community bands together to support them, to fundraise and offer their assistance. According to another community health worker:

If anybody needs help in the community, if anything should happen that people need help, the community bands together to say, collect money for
sending someone off to be with their loved one who is sick or passing away [outside the community] or even just for family visits. That is, it’s supportive that way.

The community comes together to not only help individual members, but also to support various causes and initiatives for the wellbeing of the community. Another participant defined community well-being as:

When the community members get together- like when something arises that involves the community members in a good way or in a bad way, that’s how I would see the community’s wellness, is to try and work together to solve problems.

Such contribution can stem from an individual’s desire to share their experiences and knowledge with others, such as through community radio shows and events. As one educator in the community expressed:

To be healthy, to be well means that you’re giving back. You’re giving back to the community that, you know, raised you, and had given you the opportunities to grow, to educate yourself. That’s one of the things that I try to do is to give back.

Over a third of interviewees (16) directly spoke of social togetherness as a determinant of wellbeing. Weekly events such as square dances (a popular social activity introduced to Inuit by whalers in the 18th and 19th Centuries), Inuit games, weddings, and feasts are hosted at the community hall. There is a high value attached to socializing in the community and spending time with family. A former program administrator in the community expressed the importance of community socializing and togetherness:

[T]hey would hold community feasts like, making uujuq, [boiled caribou] and they would get together at the community hall and that, I think that’s sort of, community get together; they would get together and talk and share. Community healing - even though we don’t say it… Socializing does wonders for you!
In the absence of more formalized channels for mental health counselling, community events offer an opportunity to come together to socialize and celebrate with other community members.

**Respect, open communication and coping skills**

In addition to these social supports, respect and open communication are values nearly two-thirds of participants (28) discussed as integral for family and community well-being. Maintaining social cohesion and harmony in Inuit groups was a necessary prerequisite for a healthy family and camp. As one male elder explained:

> In the old days when, say, someone lied, they would get everybody together and deal with it – they would not talk behind their backs. The elders would say, ‘Let’s deal with it.’ Then you would let it go. You deal with it, you are told something stronger would come in the future, and you drop what was causing your issues and move on.

Inuit survived on the land and endured great hardships through incredibly strong coping skills and perseverance. When nothing could be done about a situation, as in the case of a lack of food for example, one would simply accept these conditions and carry on. Silence was a coping skill upon which Inuit relied to maintain social harmony and cohesiveness. Such mental and emotional coping skills and endurance were acquired within families.

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6 The process of determining *ajurnarmat* (a “logical approach to problem-solving”) was essential to Inuit social and mental well-being living on the land. This entailed close consideration of a matter through consultation with an *issumatuq* – generally an elder with extensive wisdom gained through experience (Fletcher and Denham 2008). If there was no way of solving the matter, it was *ajurnarmat* and accepted, but if through the individual’s *issuma* (sound reasoning) a course of action could be proposed, it would be taken. If a dispute occurred, its resolution through this process was integral to maintaining social cooperation and survival. Both parties to the dispute would be heard and a resolution decided (Minor 1992). Often when faced with times of struggle, grief and stress, *ajurnarmat*, a silent acceptance and understanding was the way of coping together (Minor 1992).
**Family as the central site for shared experiences and learning values to live well**

The immediate and extended family is of central importance to Inuit culture and way of life, and parenting was one of the most widely discussed topics by participants. Over three-quarters of participants (36) discussed the importance of parenting and the instilling of values through parent-child relationships built on respect and strong communication. When asked about Inuit values or ways of life that contribute to well-being, one participant discussed the importance of demonstrating and living good values together as a family:

When you spoke of values I thought of like the family values, like what I was brought up, or how I was brought up. And actually, it was my grandmother that took a keen interest on me. And I think values are ones that you know, you show; you model them. You know, I don’t say to my kids, you know, ‘For me it’s very important that you value each other’. It’s something that you show them. You model it so that they, you know. And I know, from right when they were eight or ten, they didn’t know how to articulate, ‘Okay - mom says family is important’. But now that they’re older they understand it.

Participants described wellbeing as situated within family relationships and shared experiences. My research assistant and I asked an elder how living on the land contributed to wellbeing and he replied that it was: “the things we did together as a family” like preparing caribou meat and acquiring “the skills that came along while learning from your father or your guide.” Family-based relationships are of primary importance for Inuit identity and wellbeing as mutual support, kinship terms and Inuit naming practices enable closeness and bonding. In the words of one participant, this bonding requires “husband and wife working together to make their family feel like they’re a family.” Sharing time and resources within the family involves experiencing these values for wellbeing. These daily activities build and strengthen family bonds, and they extend to the community as families help each other, sharing Inuit foods and other resources. Time with family enables the acquisition of values and language skills. One adult community member recalled:
[As a child] at home, my parents would always be home by the end of the day, the end of the school day, or at least one of them, and maybe another family member or my grandparents or my aunts or uncles. So it reinforced my Inuktitut, understanding it and being comfortable enough to speak it. And then. whereas now a lot of families are not getting that support at home. Because I would hear stories, traditional stories - I don’t remember a lot of them because that was quite a while ago now - and I would learn.

Inuit values have also been imparted through the intergenerational telling of stories, like moral lessons and truths on the importance of sharing resources and maintaining cooperation. As one participant expressed: “The legends are truth: learning experiences passed down.” Participants, and in particular elders, related anecdotal stories to me from their experiences as examples of what it means to live well. One elder who moved to Baker Lake in the 1940s related to me a story from his memories as a child living on the land to exemplify the ways in which Inuit values are demonstrated:

When I was young, I was scared at the time being young. We used to try to catch quite a bit of caribou for winter. That was when we were out on the land all the time. Through dog teaming we made dried caribou to have throughout the whole year. My father and I went to get some dried caribou from our cache. The caribou was dried and we had buried it. People walking along our cache had stolen it. He got very mad, my father, he raised his voice and followed the footprints. We started following–we had 3 dogs. I held the dog team and my dad followed the prints. He didn’t know their iglu was close by, following the prints. That person went into the iglu and started putting up the dried caribou meat that was ours. After he had finished, the man who had stolen the meat went out of the iglu and my father yelled at him and told him not to steal, ever. He lectured him for about an hour. He told him not to steal or have that in you. Afterwards, my father shook his hand and said, ‘The caribou meat is yours.’ That’s how my dad showed the man how to live well. This is an example of living well, as I learned from my father. Inuit made sure things were all right at the end for someone, even after they did wrong.

A key informant told me that it is hard to get into specifics about values; they were a part of everyday life: experience, living, and learning. Living well on the land was a natural outcome of observation, experience and practicing the values for Inuit survival within families and groups. These cultural values were an intrinsic part of Inuit life and they continue to be practiced today in Baker Lake.
III. ONGOING TRANSITIONS IN BAKER LAKE THAT SHAPE EXPERIENCES WITH MINING: IMPACTS OF COLONIALISM AND PROCESSES OF MODERNITY ON INUIT RELATIONSHIPS, IDENTITY AND WELL-BEING

Intergenerational knowledge gaps: transitions between tradition and modernity

Approximately three-quarters of participants (35) expressed concern that Inuit values and relationships have been strained as a result of numerous ongoing transitions from living nomadically on the land to life in a modern settlement. According to one participant, “A lot of [the youth] are losing their culture. They don’t have parental teachings from their families.” Many participants said there has been a loss of respect, patience and understanding; a displacement of cultural values and meanings through the colonial imposition of southern rules, regulations and ways of life. In this way, numerous but not all participants spoke of a disjuncture between traditional Inuit culture and the way Inuit are today. This is not to say they believe Inuit culture is being lost but rather that there has been strain placed upon the continuity of cultural values and knowledge.

Some community members who were raised “traditionally” (who grew up on the land or were raised by parents from the land) feel at a loss for leading the community through these transitions. One elder spoke about changing values and coping with these changes: “They used to handle things in the old days. There are so many different ways today. Everything I know has changed.” This elder spoke of not knowing “where to begin” given the discrepancy between her experiences, the values she learned as an integral part of living on the land, and the vastly different experiences of younger generations today.
Ongoing challenges for Inuit value practices, identity and well-being

The alteration of family structures: impacts from colonialism, modernity and sociocultural change

“There’s been a change of time, like not in the way that we were brought up.” – mine employee

Given the centrality of family for Inuit well-being and in the context of this rapid transition to mining, parenting skills, discipline and structure was discussed by approximately three-quarters of participants (36) as a condition for community well-being. However, Inuit ways of parenting and raising a family have been negatively impacted by cultural displacement within settlement processes, the residential schools system and cycles of intergeneration trauma perpetuated by these policies. Early settlement policies encouraged families to give up subsistence-based ways of life and removed children from their families and communities to attend residential schools. Through such physical displacement, these schools caused a separation between family and education, between Inuit cultural knowledge and Southern Qallunaaq knowledge in an institutionalized environment.

If individuals did not experience values through strong parenting as a result of this displacement from their family and culture, it is very difficult for them to raise their own children with these values. One young man likened this trauma to a scar, inflicted upon a family and the implications this trauma has for Inuit identity and well-being for generations to come:

I mean westernization has really taken its toll and it stems back to even residential school. Like, back to way back then… If you can scar the people that are going to lead the generation, for the next century, you scar a parent, that parent is scarred for life and that parent creates a kid and brings that kid into the world. That world, it’s a harsh world for that kid, because the parent sees it as this horrible thing you know, and it might lead to drugs and alcohol, maybe abuse… So there’s a lot of stuff um, that caused like a lack of not even a lack, more even a loss of social well-being. People forget who they are, you know what I mean? Like not even a hundred years ago, we were a group of people that were living nomadically on the land and we didn’t even know,
nobody knew we were up here. That was our place. And then, the government came and you know, took these people and you know, whatever, the story’s so famous - to anyone up here anyways. But like, that really took people’s identity away.

The legacy of colonialism and ongoing transitions in Baker Lake continue to affect family relationships and well-being. Approximately half of participants (26) discussed a sense that families used to be more in control in the past than they are today with the influx of “new ways” and changes within Inuit relationships. As one elder articulated the challenges of coping with change in families: “From iglus to computers is a big transition. And parents say, ‘I don’t understand my child anymore!’ And children say they wouldn’t understand anyway.” According to one mother and former educator, community wellness necessarily involves the collective socialization of children. When asked to describe the qualities of a healthy community, she replied:

Yeah raising a child—it takes a whole community to raise a child, that’s how it used to be. Now, it’s not the same as when we were growing up. What I call a healthy community is everybody in the community raises a child, everybody looking out for each other, and it’s not that way anymore.

Expressing her disappointment that families in the community are less involved with one another today than they were in the past, this participant recognizes the ways in which some values have been harder to maintain in the context of community growth and the impacts of modernity on community social dynamics.

_The compartmentalization of time and space through technology and institutionalized learning_

Ongoing processes of modernity have impacted Inuit identity and well-being as realized primarily through impacts within relationships to the land and family. There has been a knowledge gap within some families through a separation of generational values and the ways in which settlement life has limited connection to the land as a vital space for cultural learning and self-development. Learning that took place within land-based family groups has in a sense been displaced by formal schooling and the institutional
restricting of time and space in modern life. A community member discussed this dislocation of land-based cultural skills:

So it’s something that’s usually passed on from mothers to daughters but since that has changed since, like the 80s maybe 70s, like the education system took over, or that’s how I see it - it’s not practiced that way anymore. So even I didn’t learn anything from my mom about traditional sewing, well I did the basics but I didn’t learn like to a point where I had to do it on a daily basis, but there’s people that are interested in that. Their mothers know how to do that but they don’t take the time to say, “Let’s sit down and do this”.

Inuit families get so busy with school and work, many do not get out on the land as often during the various seasons. One mine employee similarly expressed concerns for cultural continuity and passing on Inuit land-based knowledge given these disconnections:

I think [we need to strengthen traditional cultural practices] otherwise we’re losing them all! Pretty much even to speak for myself I, there's a certain way elders skin a caribou depending on the season – I really don’t know how. And I was even talking to an elder before. I hear the best time to get clothing skins is in August and there's a certain way to skin a caribou if you want to make pants out of it or make a coat out of it so that you don’t have to use so many skins, and then all that knowledge is going.

The acquisition of Inuit knowledge and skills for living well depends upon observation and experience, and modern values and technologies have effectively compartmentalized time and space and limited such opportunities for learning that were once an intrinsic part of everyday life. Participants spoke of the importance of taking youth out on the land where elders have “their full attention” because there are so many “distractions” in town that limit intergenerational knowledge transfer. According to one community member:

We’re so much into technology now, the youth, they’re losing their Inuit culture. They can understand their grandma, but not always. I think that is the reason why we’re losing our culture today. Like, culture is socializing.
Younger generations’ experiences growing up in Baker Lake are highly unique in comparison to those of their elders, and new circumstances from living in a settled community have impacted well-being through rapid changes over the past 50 years. Approximately two-thirds of participants (30) expressed concerns that a number of youth lack the skills and values to cope with these changes. In describing wellness, nearly half of participants (20) explained these issues stem from a lack of strong Inuit identity due to youth alienation from the values embedded in cultural practices and Inuit relationships for living well. A lack of value-driven direction was discussed as leading to youth confusion, anxiety, hopelessness and apathy. Further, these issues contribute to issues of substance abuse and suicide, particularly amongst youth. In the words of one participant, “the wellness of the town as a whole is definitely compromised because of it”. Youth identity loss and subsequent alienation represents a considerable challenge for well-being in Baker Lake.

**Intergenerational language barriers**

A lack of intergenerational understanding and shared experiences between younger and older generations was discussed as a barrier towards well-being, especially as participants expressed concern that knowledge and skills from the land may be lost as elders pass away. Participants were concerned that intergenerational knowledge transfer is limited through communication barriers between elders and youth. Most young people do not speak Inuktitut fluently and this limits social interaction and learning with elders. Many asserted that the use of Inuktitut and the pride of the youth in their heritage are critical for the continuation of Inuit cultural vitality and healthy self-identity in Baker Lake. Roughly one third of interview participants (17) directly raised concerns that Baker Lake is losing its language, with English being the predominant language spoken at home, according to the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics (NBS 2012). There is concern that with language loss, some Inuit values are being forgotten or not practiced. According to an elder:

> The descriptions of our words are being lost today and meanings are used in the wrong direction. There is not much order in talking to each other anymore
about having to live the right way of life. Few people today are up to being open to each other about assuring each other how to communicate properly now. In the old days we used to do that a lot with the Inuit, but too many things are happening now.

The community of Baker Lake’s experiences of colonization and the transition from a nomadic land-based culture cannot be isolated from the community’s experiences adjusting to an industrial economy. These historical and ongoing processes have impacted the cultural values, practices and relationships through which community members continue to ascribe their well-being.

**DISCUSSION**

This research fills an anthropological knowledge gap concerning how Aboriginal peoples, and specifically Inuit, define and perceive their well-being (Richmond 2009; Kirmayer et al. 2009). These findings confirm those of others on the centrality of cultural continuity and identity for Aboriginal well-being (Jacklin 2009; Parlee et al. 2007; Richmond 2009; Kral and Idlout 2009). Further, these findings reveal that Inuit well-being is primarily constructed through relationships to family, land and community which have been impacted through historical processes. Assimilationist policies such as residential schools contributed to social issues including Inuit identity loss and a lack of well-being through the dislocation of shared experiences and cultural practices in settlement life (Fletcher and Denham 2008; Richmond et al. 2005; Richmond and Ross 2009; Adelson 2010; Waldram 2008).

Shared cultural values and subsistence practices, primarily within family relationships, has been widely documented as a determinant of indigenous health and well-being in communities experiencing rapid socioeconomic change and disruption to a previously held way of life (Paci and Villebrun 2005; Adelson 2010; Izquierdo 2010; Heil 2010). Dorais (1997, 2005) and Adelson (2000) have described Aboriginal identity and well-being as bound within these relationships and also between processes of tradition and
modernity; between cultural values and practices and ongoing transitions towards settlement life. These changes have previously been documented in Arctic Inuit communities during periods of adjustment to new socioeconomic transitions and institutions of wage labour (Brody 1975, Matthiason 1992; Graburn 1969).

These findings contradict a Western individualistic conception of the disembodied self, which emphasizes individual emotional health and socio-economic status as determinants of well-being over social and environmental relationships. Inuit well-being is part of a collectively articulated and experienced identity. The actualization of the self within a shared cultural world of experience is an essential component of Inuit health (Minor 1992; Searles 2010). “Identity occurs within time, place and a web of social relationships and cultural perceptions that all contribute to and define it” (Dorais 1997: 6). Researchers have previously described Inuit identity as “ecocentric” insofar as it is created and maintained through relationships to one another and to the land (Dorais 1997; Stairs and Wenzel 1992; Kral and Idlout 2009; Kirmayer et al. 2009b). Dorais (1997: 103) describes this identity as ecocentric to the extent that “a person’s position within the universe cannot be dissociated from his or her active relations with the community, nature and the material world.” This is true in Baker Lake as experiences of historical and ongoing transitions are primarily situated within relationships to the land and family, and hence well-being as defined through these relationships.
CHAPTER 6

IMPACTS OF MINING AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT WITHIN INUIT RELATIONSHIPS TO LAND, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY: PRACTICES OF IDENTITY, VALUES AND SELF-DETERMINATION FOR WELL-BEING

This chapter argues that mining in Baker Lake significantly affects Inuit well-being as conceptualized through Inuit relationships to land, family and community, and the values and practices which connote the health of these relationships. This chapter addresses the second research question, demonstrating how rapid mine development impacts well-being through strain upon Inuit relationships, values and practices due to altered temporal-spatial dynamics and a perceived lack of local control over mine development.

Part I relates participant descriptions of strain upon land-based relationships due to rapid industrial development with implications for Inuit cultural knowledge transfer, identity and well-being. Inuit control over land-based relationships has been compromised through mine development as a result of uncertainties regarding contamination of land, a perceived lack of local control within mine consultation processes, and limited experience with development on this scale.

Part II discusses strain upon Inuit community and family relationships in the new mining economy. Specifically, participants highlighted the impact a lack of experience with employment and income on this scale has upon values and practices that promote individual and family well-being.
I. STRAIN UPON INUIT RELATIONSHIPS TO THE LAND AND WELL-BEING FROM RAPID INDUSTRIALIZATION

Availability of time, access to caribou and opportunities for cultural knowledge transfer, identity and well-being

“The land is all Inuit have ever known.” – young woman

Shifting modes of production have impacted the relationship between Inuit and the lands around Baker Lake since the arrival of missionaries and fur traders in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Changes brought by industrialization have presented some further challenges for the ability of Inuit to maintain and strengthen relationships with the land, and the values that are directly tied to land-based experiences. There was a shared perception that many do not have the time to harvest, or to harvest as much as they would prefer, and that caribou have been less abundant and less accessible in the past several years. Cultural knowledge transfer depends upon environmental factors like accessibility of caribou but also availability of time and resources to go out on the land during the various seasons. Participants expressed concern that these relationships might be changing in light of the altered structuring of time and space through processes of modernity, including mining, with less quantity and quality of family time spent on the land:

The younger people [are learning land-based skills] a lot now in the school but that’s an institutional thing, but it has to be done more in a personal level too. I just don’t have the time to go hunting and teach my son how to hunt and fish except in the summer. We are working, he’s going to school [during the year]. The weekends the weather is always bad. All summer we didn’t go boating; just three times all summer.

The mine operates on a two-week rotational basis of 12-hour days. With employment at the Meadowbank site, located 100 km away from Baker Lake, an employee stays on site and works each day for two weeks. After their shift, they are home for two weeks. Several participants described the two weeks off as a time for recovery from the 12-hour shifts at camp. According to one employee, “I never really go out in public or to the land, I just work.” A few participants reported that they themselves or other mine employees enjoy using this time off specifically for camping and harvesting, using the mine road to
access caribou grounds, and enjoying quality time with their family. However, if fewer families are having the time, energy and resources to go out on the land, they are limited from experiencing certain values for living well, which are imbedded within land-based relationships.

Approximately half of participants (23) expressed concerns about mining impacts on caribou availability, accessibility and quality in the context of mineral development. Some participants discussed that caribou migration routes are changing as a result of land-based impacts, while others noted that it is not unusual for caribou to change their migration routes about every 50 years. For safety reasons and environmental protection, caribou are prevented by physical and sound barriers from coming near the mine site, and in the summer of 2012 it appears the main herd did not pass through the land area between the community of Baker Lake and the Meadowbank Mine. There are a variety of explanations attributed to changes in caribou availability, as caribou herd sizes have also been decreasing across the Arctic in recent years. One participant discussed his experiences of impacts from mining on caribou:

I would say [mining] has a little impact in animals around Baker Lake. Like there would be less animals because there’s quite a bit of blasting going on every now and then. Since this is an open pit, other animals would hear that blast and it would frighten them and move them away to a place where it sounds a little bit safer. I guess they [the Hamlet and government] agreed to more money and less caribou. But as people say, caribou around Baker Lake is one of the best caribous around the north to have, to eat.

There is concern shared by a number of community members that changing ways of using the land because of the mine is affecting caribou availability and accessibility. When caribou are further away, greater time, energy and money is expended in harvesting. There is also greater risk that hunters may be stranded out on the land, and many unequipped with land-based survival skills and resources. Access to caribou has wider socio-cultural impacts in the community because of the significance of caribou towards maintaining Inuit values and identity. One participant expressed her concerns for Inuit well-being if caribou, as a primary foundation for maintaining Inuit well-being and
Identity, is compromised: “This is the main home for the caribou. We are the caribou people and now they are not here.” Another community member described the implications of caribou inaccessibility for intergenerational knowledge transfer as follows:

You know the elders’ group, they do organize caribou hunts for the youth. And a couple comments have been made – I haven’t seen it myself – but that road is used so much that they’re not seeing as much as they would have before. So if you don’t have, you know, the wildlife that you’re out, you know, to catch, then you’re going to have to travel a little further, but then there’s a risk to that. Like over the last month or so I have heard so many people that have been stranded out there because they had to travel further than they normally would have before that road. In the spring, in the winter, it’s fine because they’re all out on their snowmobile but it’s a little bit tougher to go out on your quad, right, like there’s not as many trails. But if they don’t catch what they’re out to catch then you really can’t teach that skill, like you know, to skin, butcher, learn all the parts.

Identity construction through time spent harvesting and learning other skills on the land has particular emphasis for youth, as previously discussed. Concern that ways of using the land are changing carries implications for cultural identity and maintaining Inuit cultural practices through which well-being in Baker Lake is conceptualized and experienced.

**Significance of caribou availability for food security and practicing social values around harvesting**

Without access to caribou, community feasts cannot be held. Similarly, community-based networks of sharing Inuit food are weakened, as is community food security. Approximately half of participants (24) discussed food security as a condition for well-being and defined food security in terms of access to healthy, traditional Inuit foods such as caribou. Elder’s food security in particular is affected by caribou deficits because elders have a very strong preference for caribou and looking after elders’ needs is a strong Inuit value. When caribou is unavailable, Baker Lake residents rely on expensive food flown from Southern distribution centres, available at the local grocery stores. Much
of this food is expensive, processed and high in refined carbohydrates and sugars. Vegetables, dairy and meat products are the most expensive, and several participants discussed a lack of knowledge on how to prepare some of these non-Inuit foods. A few respondents also expressed concern that some young people do not have a preference for caribou and other Inuit foods because they are accustomed to store-bought foods. As one health administrator stated:

Traditionally, Inuit didn’t really cook their food so a lot of people buy food already prepared. A lot of processed food like Quickstop7 [fast] food and frozen reheat and eat food, those kind of food... A lot of people go hungry because they buy those kind of food.

This health worker is equating hunger not with a lack of food but with a lack of access to healthy Inuit food from the land that is far more nourishing.

Another participant expressed her concerns regarding impacts of industrial development on land-based relationships, practices of sharing and food security as follows:

They end up being, eating unhealthy foods and it seems like especially this year that it’s because the caribou that we rely on so much has taken a different route… Because we do rely on caribou and fish a lot in this community and people do share as much as they can. Yeah [people are selling Inuit food] now and before we would just, the hunters would just go in and share with each other but because of the mining, it has really affected the animals - where, which way they go in. Because just last weekend I let a hunter take my UTV out and he said there were 30 or 40 hunters who had not gotten any, maybe a handful of caribou, but they had to go up really, really far too, to catch any meat. But those few hunters, they didn’t have enough to share with many people. Like usually we’ve had some caribou go even right close to town or some strays will even walk right through town but that hasn’t happened in years… Because we’re mostly in one area now, before Inuit would travel because that’s our only way to survive because if they run out of fresh food or whatever we need from the store, we have to be sure that we have something, some kind of country food at home to provide for our families.

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7 The Quickstop is a fast food restaurant serving Pizza Hut and KFC at the community Northern Store – a grocery franchise that operates in numerous Northern communities across Canada.
Sharing food from the land is a necessary part of survival, and an important value for people to live well. Today, many families struggle with the high costs of living in an Arctic community. Some hunters have to sell their excess meat rather than give it away to cope with the high inputs of fuel, time and energy required towards the harvesting of caribou.

**Spiritual relationships to the land and impacts from industrial development**

Respect for the land is also a prime concern with increased development and transportation that accompanies mining exploration and production. There have been some concerns, primarily from elders, of mine impacts on the spiritual health of the land, with reports of spirit disturbances at the Meadowbank site, and healing measures have been undertaken to address these concerns. In the words of one participant: “These are very important [issues] – the respect with the exploration and mining.” Impacts of mining upon spiritual and emotional connections to the land was strongly demonstrated in one interview:

Participant 1: And looking at the land up there [at the mine site]: it’s so beautiful. Like when you go and have your meal and you sit at the table and you look out the window and you see the beauty. When heading back home and you look to see where they’re doing, all the blasting and think, my goodness!

Participant 2: And I mean my sister cried ‘cause two of the qaituqs [hills] are gone from that road to the mine camp in Rankin [Inlet]. That’s where we - that was our playground.

Researcher: Do you feel a sentimental or an emotional attachment to that place?

Participant 2: Both – everything. It’s attached in our memory, in our joy.

Through generations, Inuit have formed deep relationships to the land and particular places known through experience. This emotional and spiritual attachment to the land is
affected by mine development, seeing these places forever changed and knowing the relationship to a particular place has been broken.

**Uncertainties regarding contamination of the land and implications for well-being: lack of perceived experience with and control over industrial development**

“A healthy environment is needed for a healthy community.” – community educator

Concerns regarding impacts to the land and land-based relationships stem not only from mining but from associated processes of growth and economic development in a remote, Arctic community in which all supplies are either flown in or shipped from Hudson’s Bay during the 2 months of ice free water. In the midst of so much growth, residents were concerned about oil and diesel spills, along with contaminant and pollution levels at the dump and the sewage lagoon, where waste is pumped out. Seepage of chemicals downstream from these two sites into Baker Lake, and possible contamination of drinking water was a perceived health concern raised by participants as the community continues to grow. A high level of dust caused by vehicle traffic in town and along the mine road during the summer months is another concern participants shared as this dust is contaminating the land and water, as well as causing or exacerbating respiratory conditions. Particularly in respect to increasing rates of cancer in the community, participants expressed a need for greater awareness of environmental contaminant levels, and impacts on physical health.

One elder was particularly concerned about caribou eating garbage and other contaminants out on the land, and reported during the last number of years finding strange things like tumours in harvested meat. He discussed these concerns in light of changing relationships with the land, and primarily a lack of respect for the land:

The meat is starting to be scary. You find things - little white balls appearing in the meat. They’re starting to eat garbage from the camps of some families and waste. Before you would always keep the land clean and free of all
waste. Caribou used to be able to smell your scent when you were walking. They can smell you. Now there’s so many things – vehicles - the caribou are thrown off. Even walking on roads now. As a hunter and fisher, the Inuit have to be cleaner now and show more respect for the land. There are caribous that come close by, but I would rather get the ones that are further away - they are healthier, the ones farther away. It takes longer now to hunt and it’s tiring on the body.

The majority of participants (32) discussed changes in physical health in terms of new diseases and illnesses that have been introduced through processes of modernity and changes to the environment and Inuit relationships with the land. For example, rising rates of diabetes and other lifestyle related diseases that result from a more sedentary way of life. One participant discussed concerns over these changes and the potential impacts of industrial development and mining on Inuit lands given a lack of prior experience or knowledge:

Because we’re not used to an environment like that too eh. We’re just getting used to these noises, these new ways. I know I might’ve been born in a town but my parents were still old-fashioned. I think the one main reason too why Inuit have a hard time telling between certain things is because in the old days, Inuit never let anything in the iglu that was a contaminant to you, and now today we can live in a place where there are so many contaminants in so many different things. And we’re still learning these little steps in between them, just being okay.

There is frustration over a lack of control and direct knowledge on the extent of impacts from industrial development because individual community members experience different lands in particular ways; not everyone has the same experiences and varying degrees of Inuit and non-Inuit knowledge of the land shape individual perceptions of impacts. One young participant expressed his frustration over these uncertainties: “I would like to see our caribou, you know, are they sick? How is their health? Is it bad for us [to eat them]? You know, these are things we don’t know!” These experienced changes and uncertainties limit Inuit control within land-based relationships and thus, well-being. One elder and hunter discussed challenges adapting to new rules and regulations in using the land along the 100 km mine road:
I don’t like the fact that you have to ask them [the mining company] to go hunting on the ground close by [the road] and there’s always somebody watching for those things, those flags on the Honda. Without those we can’t go hunting. We can’t just shoot from the road. We have to get off the road and there’s no other traffic so what’s the problem? We have to get down from the road and go towards herds. Being a hunter and having to experience these things, it’s heavy on you. It bothers you. It’s heavy on you. It’s not a free land anymore. It is a very big change to follow these rules. Inuit are used to just get up and go. I keep hearing of these things. You have to see the Hunters and Trappers Organization if you want to hunt and get a flag. I don’t want to go against it because there are families who work for the mine, but on the other hand this is Inuit land. Being from the old days it throws everything off, having to rethink your whole way of using the land. I hate to be complaining but these are the things hunters experience and think about.

Another elder and hunter expressed concerns regarding a lack of Inuit control as a result of institutional interventions and impositions of new rules and regulations:

A lot of us tend to follow southern laws and regulations these days. That’s the main big thing that changed the whole North. There were regulations in different roles in the camps; we were not a lawless people. In part of my years, elders were the main people. They would plan and tell us what to do because they were more experienced than younger people... Hunting from the road, you can’t hunt within 1 km [on either side]. It’s an issue respecting Southern laws and regulations, supporting them. I do not hunt from along the mine road. That’s how Inuit are: we respect what we are asked to do or have to do.

These hunters illustrate the ways through which institutional and industry-based rules and regulations have affected their relationships with the land. There is a sense that Inuit control within land-based relationships has been affected through colonialism and industrial development as current structures determining Inuit land use around the Meadowbank Mine have been determined largely by non-Inuit.
The land, Inuit control and mine consultation processes: incorporating Inuit knowledge and experiences

Inuit control over the land was an apparent theme through participants’ discussions of mining consultation processes. There are some concerns that mining consultation processes do not adequately incorporate Inuit experiences into baseline assessments. One participant expressed his concern over future mining, and particularly uranium mining, near Baker Lake in light of vast uncertainties over mining processes and the ways in which Inuit knowledge is incorporated within impact assessment and planning processes. He said there should be more communication of this kind between mine companies and the community:

Like [between] the mining company and community, there should be more open communication, more meetings. Yeah, lots of visits, getting a lot of visitors coming up and looking at the land first hand, the big shots from AREVA [the company proposing the Kiggavik uranium mine] so they’ll know how the lands and animals [are]. Before they start anything... More local control ‘cause we’re the ones that will be here when it happens, and somebody in the office in Toronto may not know what’s going on in the community here. That’s the way I see it anyways. Rather than just.. come up see the real picture, rather than learning it from the computer. I would like to see more involvement rather than, not just business, but really close relationships with the community members and with the land… The big shots, they should, before they start anything, they should go and see the land the way it is before they do anything with it. They might assume, okay this area for mining, we’ll start from there, but in a year or two, especially with the weather difference now, it could be really hard or it could be messed up or something.

This individual’s concerns stem from two divergent epistemologies: Western scientific environmental impact assessments and Inuit knowledge principles. Without experiencing the land, and incorporating experience-based knowledge of the land into environmental assessments, it is not possible to adequately predict and understand impacts to the land and Inuit relationships with the land from mining.
A few participants expressed frustrations over a lack of consultation of Inuit families from the Back River area where the Meadowbank Mine site is located. These are the families that are arguably the most touched by developments on their ancestral lands, and elders from these families have the most experience and knowledge of these lands as well. One participant, referring to AEM’s Meliadine Mine currently under construction in Rankin Inlet, discussed mining as a disempowering experience due to a lack of control and consultation of families from the particular lands upon which mine developments are located:

The way I see it is pretty much, taking another Inuit land and giving it to another person. Because I question: Whose land is that? Where did it come from? It came from these families, and these families were never told, or looked at like, no one’s going to care. My family was never consulted… NTI themselves is screwing over my dad and I have a cousin that’s passed away there, he’s an elderly man, and the NTI’s just handed over the land or whatever - however they’ve done it - with the NTI and KIA, but my dad was never consulted about it. NTI is supposed to be behind Inuit people and they never mentioned nothing to my dad. My dad’s been hunting there for 50 years... And they never even mentioned to my cousin, like, ‘You know your husband’s grave is going to be removed?’ Nobody mentioned nothing.

This frustration with Nunavut’s governing bodies is evident in Baker Lake. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) is the parent organization to the three Inuit Regional Associations that manage development on Inuit lands under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA). The Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA) is the regional association that oversees the interests and lands of the Kivalliq Region, in which Baker Lake and Rankin Inlet are situated. These institutions are Inuit managed and are to be made accountable to Inuit beneficiaries of the NLCA. However, as evident in the above quotation, some feel that these institutions are not doing enough to consult with community members over the development of Inuit lands and the impacts of such development.

Lastly, it is difficult to translate technical mining terms and processes into Inuktitut, and to account for Inuit ways of knowing and experiencing the environment in impact-assessment processes. As one community member expressed concern about uranium mining:
You cannot easily translate something into another language or another [cosmology]. There are thousands of terms we don’t have in Inuktitut. Ask an elder these terms, like ‘yellowcake’... Nothing can hold back poison. Most elders love their children and their grandchildren so much, they want them to gain a livelihood, but do they know the impacts on the environment? Are they able to understand? What about the caribou? How much money is worth destroying the environment?

Participants expressed that Inuit knowledge transmission is strongly tied to experience - through observation and direct participation. Several respondents felt that people should have access to more straightforward information geared to a low level of literacy, based on visual applications and examples, and written in terms specific to the Arctic and Inuktitut. More open communication along with on-site and hands-on explanations of mining and other participatory exercises were mentioned as methods to enhance meaningful Inuit participation in planning future mineral developments.

The land, self-determination and mining processes: implications for cultural continuity, identity and well-being

Concerns regarding impacts to the land are tied to the direct relationship of Inuit cultural identity and self-determination through the land. It is because of the high cultural value of caribou and the land that some community members feel no amount of money can justify compromising its integrity. These concerns of damage to the land from industrial development are heightened for many because of the rapidity of the current mining boom in Nunavut, and the lack of control some Inuit feel they have over the nature of these developments. According to one young man:

This place is, I don’t know. It almost feels like the Wild West, you know what I mean? Well for the most part it’s unexplored. I mean we’ve got mining happening here and it’s like Dawson’s Gold Rush, or it might as well be. We’ve got all sorts of prospectors coming up now trying to get a claim on the land… All it takes is one major incident and then this place is [ruined] forever.
There are uncertainties over the ways in which mining may affect an Arctic ecosystem already impacted by climate change and industrialization. As one participant noted concerns for rehabilitating the land around the mine site: “The tundra takes years for even a little growth.” Exploration projects are growing in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut, and these are situated near caribou calving grounds and migration routes. For example, AREVA’s proposed Kiggavik Project – an open-pit uranium mine and mill located 80 km west of Baker Lake for which a Environmental Impact Statement is being submitted to the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) (AREVA 2013). While some participants noted the adaptability of the environment and the caribou to changing conditions, every ecosystem has a threshold. For Baker Lake, caribou symbolizes Inuit cultural identity. It is a source of healthy food, an instrument through with cultural knowledge of the land is passed on, and a means to bring people together through sharing a valued resource from the land. Availability of and access to caribou is an essential component of well-being in Baker Lake.

II. STRAIN UPON INUIT COMMUNITY AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND WELL-BEING FROM RAPID INDUSTRIALIZATION

Mine income and spending: lack of precedential experience and impacts to community well-being

“In a way, the mine just maximizes everything, like it brings so much more to the positive side but it also maximizes the negative side, almost twice as fast I guess.” – young man

Baker Lake residents are working for Agnico-Eagle to enhance their own and their family’s material well-being. As one participant stated, “Before the mine opened, there was hardly any jobs and businesses were struggling. Although there was a lot of country food, like a lot of caribou around town for years, maybe at least 5 years [ago], but no jobs.” With employment at Meadowbank, salaries range between $20 and $40 per hour.
This source of employment has enabled community members to cope with the high costs of living in Nunavut today. According to one community educator:

It’s nice to see the influx of money for our community, for our families. You see people with much more than they had before, but just hoping that they are learning to spend the money wisely and putting it in the places that matter most to the health of their families… This mine’s not going to be there forever but while it’s there, they’re doing the best they can for their families and their kids are seeing their parents being productive and contributing.

However, the unstructured two weeks off combined with a lack of experience in employment on this scale and money management skills were discussed as a concern for well-being. As one community member expressed:

The mine came without educating younger people and making them aware of the consequences of their actions – demands of the job and stress from it and the two-week schedule.

A portion of mining income is being spent towards alcohol, drugs and gambling. Every respondent mentioned drug and alcohol use as a concern for well-being, exacerbated by rising incomes, the two-week rotation schedule, and community in-migration. The number and size of weekly community liquor orders has been greatly increasing in recent years due. The cash prizes for the local BINGO jackpots have also grown substantially in the last couple years.

*Mine incomes and community dynamics: perceptions of growing individualism and inequality*

Roughly a third of participants (15) discussed concerns over a growing sense of individualism and materialism with this period of economic growth. Relative to minimum wage jobs in town, mine salaries represent a large income gap that contributes to tensions and hostilities in the community due to feelings of jealousy, exacerbated by gossip and rumours. The wider issue of community gossip was mentioned by over two-thirds of participants (31) as limiting communication, sociability, self-esteem and well-being in the community. The majority of these participants discussed the mine as a significant source
for gossip and the spread of negative rumours within the community. According to one community member:

As soon as these two-week rotations comes in everything is set, okay and they’re talking about the last 2 weeks they had up there so it’s always usually blending in with the people that don’t go up there at all and there’s people that don’t work that’s where all the information is coming in-between, not from employees or anything, just all there - it’s turning into a faucet.

A young man working at the Meadowbank site related this issue of gossip or “drama” in discussing tensions attributable an increase in socioeconomic inequality:

It’s hard being back in Baker Lake because I get beat up. People give me attitude, because of the money [I make]. They can’t handle the two weeks off, [so they’re not working up here]… Baker Lake has too much drama. The young people and the drugs and alcohol are causing it… There’s no drama, fights, drugs or alcohol here. They don’t happen; people have money. There’s tension in town.

Participants expressed concerns over this growing materialism and “the luxury” brought by the mine, because “the mine and the money won’t always be there.” According to one elder, “[k]ids today want everything and so much” and at times material goods may be upheld over other values. Participants were concerned about being “bombarded with consumerism” and teaching kids the important coping skills and values needed in life.

**Impacts of rapid economic growth on perceptions of community safety**

Given that Baker Lake is a relatively small and isolated community, changes in the demographic composition of the community and rapid economic growth have impacted perceptions of community safety and family well-being as well. Roughly a third of participants (15 - not to mention the local RCMP) expressed direct concerns over an increase in community crime rates, and particularly thefts and home break-ins. Participants perceived that population growth and an increase in consumer goods, drugs,
alcohol and gambling are causing this increase. It is more common to hear of vehicle thefts now in the community, and participants were concerned by this lack of respect for personal property. According to one elder:

Back in the old days, if you stole it was scary because everything you used was to survive so if something was stolen it was scary. Now, today you hear of stolen Hondas and things and these issues are not being dealt with.

With more vehicles on the road as a result of mine salaries, several participants were concerned over increased traffic, noise, and drinking and driving, with reference to youth in particular. There is concern that growing individualism and materialism are displacing Inuit values and the influence of elders.

Several participants noted there are more incidents of public intoxication since the mine, making it less safe for families to let their children, especially girls, out without supervision. Respondents expressed a lack of trust in some instances, not knowing who their neighbours are anymore and locking their doors when home in the middle of the day. A few participants expressed a social reluctance in the community to report incidents such as disturbing the peace and domestic abuse to the authorities, but noted that this attitude is changing. There are social taboos that exist today against showing fear or too much pride. One participant discussed this social taboo or fear of reporting incidents of abuse or crime to authorities as doing so conflicts with traditional justice values. She said, “As Inuit, we don’t like to do that, but how else is the parent going to learn?” These changing perceptions of safety and trust in the community affected by changes brought through mining may have broader impacts upon other social values in the community as well.

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8 All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are called “Hondas”, irrespective of their actual brand. These vehicles are very common in the community given their dual purpose as both transportation and hunting equipment.
**Impacts of mine employment within community relationships: altered dimensions of time and space in the context of shifting value practices**

It was acknowledged that values are changing as the town is getting bigger and some say there is less of a spirit of everyone coming together. Roughly one-third of participants (14) expressed that there is less togetherness and sociability in Baker Lake today than there was even a decade ago, due to increased technology and a more fast-paced way of life; there are simply “too many distractions”. One participant shared: “People don’t go out and visit each other anymore. A separateness has been created – this happened over time with technology: TV, computers.” One community member similarly discussed changes in Baker Lake culminating over the past two decades:

> Maybe because it was a smaller community there was more of a closeness. People found ways of spending their time. There were a lot of family get-togethers – whole families going out and visiting each other. With the growth, that closeness has been lost a bit.

Participants discussed mine employment and industrial development contributing to these strains on social relationships. Some expressed concern that mine employees are too tired to participate in family or community events, such as community square dances, weddings, feasts or hunting trips during their two weeks off due to a lack of energy. Being involved in and contributing to your community is an important value but nearly a third of participants (15) feel a sense of volunteerism is lacking. According to one participant, “More people need to invest in the community.” Another participant expressed concerns that not enough people are willing to get involved with local committees or attend meetings at which decisions affecting the community are publically discussed.
Impacts of mine employment within family relationships: altered dimensions of time and space in the context of shifting value practices

“They are gaining material support but losing support in another way.”
– community educator

Because of changes and adaptations to wage labour and other institutions that manage time, several participants remarked that “families are not as close as they were in the past”. One participant remarked that men and women today “don’t respect each other anymore. Before they needed each other to survive. It’s not like that anymore.” Regardless of such perceived value strain, family relationships are of central importance to Inuit in Baker Lake. Through experiences with mining, impacts to family relationships and well-being were extensively discussed by approximately three-quarters of participants (30).

There are a number of factors limiting the abilities of families to improve their well-being through mine employment. These issues stem from the two-week mine schedule and a lack of any precedent experiencing employment on this scale. One woman discussed the issue of being unable to leave camp during one’s shift to attend a funeral for a non-immediate family member: “They don’t realize the extended family. They don’t see the close-knit relationships of the extended family. They don’t realize how family-oriented we are.” Challenges from this altered organization of time and space have impacted Inuit relationships, and this topic was a primary concern discussed by mine employees, parents, teachers, and community administrators.

Strain of mine employment, rumours and stress upon spousal relationships and well-being

Families experiencing mine employment are impacted by real or perceived rumours of infidelity at the mine site. A young man working at the mine indicated, “Some people don’t want their boyfriend or girlfriend working up here. They think they’re doing stuff
up here. They should come and see.” According to one community administrator, the mine has caused an increase in the number of housing applications as a result of immigration but also an increase in spousal and family separations. Issues of gossip, negativity and poor communication were widely mentioned as barriers to employment, and limiting employee job retention. There are also concerns for sexual health in light of the increased mobility of people from across the Kivalliq and Southern Canada traveling to the Meadowbank site for work. One health administrator said:

There’s a lot of good coming out of it; what the mine is doing for the region – employing and training Inuit, but there’s also the other side of it where, family, I don’t know, I can’t say family abuse, but relationships – marriages breaking down because of rumours or, affairs that are going on at the camp so I think that’s a big thing. You hear it all the time. And more people are talking about the affairs that are going on up there and the spread of STIs. And they all say it’s coming from the mine.

The impacts of mine schedules on families stems from the lack of experience with employment on this scale and the alterations to previously held structures of time and space. The uncertainty a partner or spouse in town has of what goes on at camp and what they hear causes domestic tension and stress, which can contribute to negative behaviours such as substance abuse or violence. As one community member expressed: “The mine cycle is conducive to binge drinking. It’s a cycle of rumours, cheating, stress, drinking and drugs.”

Strain of mine employment upon childcare and implications for child and family well-being

For some, leaving the community for two weeks at a time presents a huge challenge for childcare and other family obligations, resulting in increased stress through employment at the mine. A lack of community programs and services limits opportunities for some families to have a dual income and thus improve their socioeconomic wellbeing. Community social and family support fills a gap created by the inadequacy of the local daycare, which can only accept about 17 to 20 children (due to a lack of space) and is closed during the summer months. Given that Baker Lake has a very high population of
young children and over 150 Baker Lake residents are working at the mine, the daycare’s incapacity has a significant impact upon families. In addition, participants reported that babysitting can be unreliable, as with many lower-paying jobs in town, people quit to pursue a work opportunity elsewhere, including at the Meadowbank site. Single mothers in particular noted that they are unable to access job opportunities through the mine and elsewhere because of inadequate childcare in Baker Lake. This raises concerns of socio-economic and gender-based inequality given the high costs of living in Northern Canada.

In some families, both parents are working at the mine on the same or on opposite shifts, leaving children in the care of one parent or with one or numerous other caregivers. Several participants expressed concern that children are not receiving the kind of structure at home that they need as a result of mine employment. These respondents expressed concerns that because of opportunities for financial and material gain through mine employment, some children’s parenting and educational needs are not being prioritized. This lack of emphasis on formal school education relates back to residential school experiences as well. According to one mother and educator:

Some of the parents are uneducated. And part of that is also connected to the residential schools I see. Their parents or grandparents were attending residential school and they are survivors. They think something bad might happen to their children or child or grandchildren or grandchild... And the parents – if both parents are working up at the mine, it’s hard because the little ones are waking up their older siblings: “Is it time for school?”...They all want to work because they want things: MP3s, iPods iPads. My mother used to say, when we were young - back then to us a Walkman was something like an iPod - she said, “you can earn that. Right now we can’t [get it].” Because there was about 5 or 6 of us and we had to share something like a Walkman, but ... kids want everything right now, right now, so [parents are] all up at the camp working - what about education? Where is it going to? Who is responsible now to wake up your child, ‘Time for school’? You could be learning something different today than yesterday and what’s the point of having them check up on your child and saying, ‘You should be going to school?’

Teachers and administrators noted that they are often able to tell which children’s parents are up at camp, based on how students come dressed to school and how prepared they
are. In some cases, responsibility for a younger child falls upon older siblings or elderly grandparents, resulting in further stress for extended family members and the children as well. One community educator expressed concern for the youth’s education and the stress mining employment and this lack of stability places on families:

I find some of the youth that there just hanging around in public places in late hours sometimes, because the family that they’re left with, maybe they’re having trouble at that home or, so they’re not as comfortable to approach the guardians or who’s looking after them. Because it’s not their parent, it might be their aunt or uncle or cousin. But that’s one thing that I noticed about the youth. And I notice that a lot because I work with different classes. Like we can usually tell if their parents are in town or at the camp because some of them will come in not well rested or not eating properly or healthy foods… When they don’t have that support at home then is affects their schoolwork and their learning.

These experienced impacts from mining within community and family relationships are of high importance for Baker Lake in the context of future mine development in the region. While Inuit are working at the Meadowbank mine in order to benefit their families financially, managing income, changing structures of time and the spatial separation from family as a result of new work schedules remain challenges that require better resources for mitigation.

DISCUSSION

With recent mineral development, the community of Baker Lake is experiencing impacts to well-being. Transitions from a semi-nomadic to an industrial economy over the past few decades have presented challenges for cultural continuity and sociocultural value practices that define individual, family and community well-being. Recent changes from rapid industrial development and economic growth through mining have placed further strain upon Inuit value practices in Baker Lake, as manifest within relationships to the land, family and community.
The findings of this research in Baker Lake fill an identified knowledge gap in terms of how Aboriginal peoples in Canada perceive changes in their health and well-being through natural resource development on their traditional lands (Parlee et al. 2007; Shandro et al. 2011; Richmond and Ross 2009). As the Meadowbank Mine is the first and only mine operating in Nunavut since the territory’s creation in 1999, little has recently been written on Inuit concerns for well-being with the development of extractive industries (Richmond 2009).

The findings presented in this thesis contribute to research on mining impacts in Inuit communities by employing local conceptualizations – values, practices and conditions. Examining impacts through local constructions of well-being, these findings bridge a gap between two separate areas of research: Aboriginal perceptions of well-being and impacts to Aboriginal communities from mining. According to Ballard and Banks (2003), a fundamental concern with economic development for indigenous communities is the ability to control their own destinies, and to play a key role in managing projects, the flow of benefits and the mitigation of impacts. This research demonstrates that self-determination plays an integral role in the ways mining impacts conceptualizations of well-being in Baker Lake through the ability of Inuit to determine relationships to land, family and community. Further, in exploring changes to family, community and land-based relationships this research demonstrates dynamic interconnections between various types of mine impact. For example, connections are revealed between cultural continuity, control over land-use for hunting and access to caribou as a result of altered time and space dynamics with mine employment schedules. Quantitative measures of change are incapable of capturing these complexities, and the ways in which historical and ongoing transitions shape them.
CHAPTER 7

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING IN THE CONTEXT OF MINERAL DEVELOPMENT

This chapter extends discussion of mining and well-being beyond community impacts to examine Inuit strategies to strengthen well-being as mineral development continues in Baker Lake. An agentive approach is taken which demonstrates Inuit strategies of adaptation, moderation and cultural continuity through this most recent transition to an industrial economy. However, barriers towards stronger community participation in mining consultation processes remain. It is argued that historical transitions and lasting impacts upon Inuit relationships, values and practices must also be considered in the context of impacts mining has upon Inuit well-being today. Processes of colonization, settlement and modernity have created gaps between generations and existing time and space structures, causing some cultural values to become either strained or displaced with implications for identity and well-being. This chapter addresses the third research question identified in chapter one and follows in five further parts.

The first two sections discuss how colonial legacies and program, service and infrastructure incapacities can exacerbate impacts from mining. A third section of this chapter describes Inuit strategies and value shifts in coping with the transition to mining and impacts upon well-being. Fourth, barriers to individual and community control over mining are presented. A final section describes the significance of community self-determination and ongoing healing for well-being in Baker Lake.

**The Colonial Wound: Magnification of Mining Impacts on Well-being**

Baker Lake’s past lays an important foundation upon which Inuit experiences of mining and historical processes within land-based, family and community relationships for well-being can be understood. While social issues are exacerbated by mine incomes, causal factors stem from historical processes of colonization, and the loss of cultural identity,
self-determination and self-esteem attributed to residential schools and other assimilationist policies. Over the years, some people have given up hope because “they didn’t have a chance to heal. They never thought they were ever going to heal.” One participant explained that those who have not healed from pain are limiting their potential, and that of their children and those around them because they are so held back and closed off from the community. A community educator discussed the need for programs to bridge gaps caused by intergenerational trauma and the displacement of Inuit parenting values and skills as a result of these policies:

[S]ome parents don’t know how to discipline cause they’ve gone through the system, they’ve had family that went away to residential school and never saw proper, you know, didn’t ever experience proper disciplinary actions. So they don’t have that family structure or knowledge and they’re the children of those people.

Changes brought by mining have the capacity to exacerbate a number of pre-existing social and cultural issues in Baker Lake. As one participant expressing frustration over the rise in substance use, family break-ups, and crime affecting the community said, “you can’t throw money at these problems.” Poor self-identity and pain is both a cause and an outcome from substance misuse. Another participant shared, “Because Inuit feel so unhealthy and un-Inuk when they have a drink or do drugs, and they just get lost from there.” Challenges with social issues such as gambling or drinking are affected by the community’s capacity to cope with these stressors. In the words of a former front-line worker: “[i]f you’re going to take it [BINGO] away you have to replace it with something positive that the community likes to do.” Simply banning alcohol or gambling will not eradicate the underlying issues that contribute towards excessive behaviours.
**The Community’s Sense of Control and Capacity to Mitigate Mining Impacts: Infrastructure, Programs and Services**

“Right now I think we are struggling to keep up with the growth. Baker Lake is growing so fast that we feel like we’re not keeping up.”

Chapter 6 highlighted the relative concerns of participants as the community continues to experience rapid socioeconomic transition through the Meadowbank Mine and anticipates future changes through local exploration projects and mine development in the Kivalliq region. Given these experiences and concerns with mining and other ongoing transitions, there is a clear need for stronger support systems in town. Such programs and services would help mitigate negative impacts from mine development upon Inuit relationships to land, family and community as well as perceptions of local individual and community control over well-being within these relationships.

Approximately 20 participants discussed well-being as compromised through a lack of community programs, services and infrastructure capacity, particularly in the context of the current mine-led economic boom. As a small and remote community, Baker Lake has limited resources to implement and maintain programs and services community members would like to see. Employee retention is low in the community, and this lack of human resources contributes to employee burnout, limiting the provision of quality of community services. The Community Health Centre and Social Services are frequently understaffed. Some jobs are difficult to fill locally due to a lack of training or education, and a shortage of government housing required to hire a worker from outside the community results in these positions remaining unfilled for extended periods of time.

Several participants discussed how their wellbeing is limited by long wait times to receive the most rudimentary of medical care. For example, waiting three years for an eyeglass prescription to be filled or being supplied Tylenol while waiting for a child’s broken bone to be cast because there is no permanent doctor in the community. Other programs that would benefit the community are limited due to a lack of physical
programing space. Several participants wished there were more spaces in the community for socializing, such as shops and cafes.

This deficit of resources for well-being in the community is a significant limitation and source of stress, exacerbated by population growth and in-migration. According to one participant, discussing changes in the settlement since the 1960s:

As the town grew bigger, there were more people coming in from all over the place. Housing became tight. Employment - jobs - became hard to get. All those factors together sort of started causing a stress in the community.

Another community member expressed that: “Baker Lake would be healthier if it were better planned.” A shortage of adequate housing and lack of space at the community daycare, as mentioned in chapter 4, contribute to individual and family stress in the community given the increased demand mining has placed upon already limited programs, services and infrastructure.

Several participants noted that there are issues with program continuity, limiting the long-term gains from such initiatives. Whether it is due to a lack of leadership, human resources, facility space or time, some programs that are started tend to be short-lived. In some cases, lack of capacity limits continuation of community initiatives and they are shut down. For example, the community drug and alcohol counselling program *Tunganiq* (“a place to stand”), was closed down shortly after production began at the Meadowbank mine due to a combination of understaffing and a lack of renewed funding. In the summer of 2012, the community did not have a permanent mental health counsellor or high school guidance counsellor. Participants voiced that now is the time alcohol education and is needed most in the community, given the increase in alcohol consumption within the community.

Participants described these deficits of community programs and services to cope with changes from industrial growth and mining as a source of frustration, contributing to stress and a lack of control in their day-to-day lives. About one-third of participants (16)
discussed frustration that Baker Lake was not prepared enough to benefit from mining. Despite the fact both industry and government “knew the mine was coming for years” there was a lack of planning for programs and services that would help mitigate impacts to the community’s well-being.

Community Strategies and Values: Coping with the Transition to Mining and Impacts upon Individual, Family and Community Well-being

“How can people be better? There’s so many different ways we used to be and now.” - elder

Inuit relationships and well-being have been impacted by ongoing processes of tradition and modernity; the merging of “old ways” with “new ways” as discussed by participants. A main challenge for wellness in Baker Lake today involves bridging gaps between old ways and new ways. Nearly all participants (37) discussed conditions for well-being as shaped through changes in values and ways of life that can be traced through historical processes. These changing values represent not only colonial impositions from Southern institutions and values, but Inuit-led strategies as well. Inuit ways of living well in the context of this most recent transition entails integrated values of adaptation, moderation, cultural continuity, education and self-determination.

Adaptation:
“Everything is going to change. We won’t have the same values as we used to.”

Both Southern Qallunaat and Inuit values or “ways” exist in Baker Lake and after over 300 years of whaler, fur trader, missionary, government and industry involvement in the Arctic it is difficult to draw distinct boundaries between them. Inuit culture was developed over hundreds of years and Inuit lived on the land entirely during this time. The transition of Inuit moving from the land to living in settlements, and the associated changes to ways of living, occurred over a period of roughly 50 years, in contrast. One participant expressed the challenges of this transition in the following words:
With colonialism, social values have changed. Values were introduced from the outside to a closed society. We have a lot to learn about these new ways, many of which young people accept and the elders reject. People are moving away from their culture, accepting other values... **In a transition, how do we adapt?** How do you make a community well when you have very different societies mixed in?

There are new mental and social pressures that come from living in a community, and one that is rapidly industrializing at that. Another participant phrased the dilemmas of this transition and Inuit adaptations: “How can we balance these two things together without being left behind – the young generations and the elders?” The community of Baker Lake today encompasses very different worlds that appear to be converging and separating simultaneously. In many ways the knowledge and values of the past can transcend to the present, and the younger generations engage with these systems, but there are distractions and uncertainties. Baker Lake is adapting to a world in which technology, global economic markets and other incursions increasingly affect the day-to-day realities for community members. Balancing Inuit and non-Inuit ways is an ongoing process since colonialism and the introduction of non-Inuit values, institutions and ways of life through which Inuit have negotiated variable spaces for themselves, within practices of “tradition” and “modernity”. One elder discussed the importance of continuity with the past while adapting to the needs of the future:

Time passes by very fast. I think the future will be good because change is good... The town will be different in 30 years. 30 to 40 years from now Baker Lake will look like Yellowknife. We have to be prepared for that change and elders have to lead us, or people will be left behind and feel worthless, shamed and there will be more suicides. The leaders have to make sure we are prepared for mines opening up all around us. I have 23 grandchildren and I want them to be prepared. They’re not going to be living the life like me. I could do anything on the computer, or go out on the land and live in an iglu for a week in the cold. Now we’re living in the modern world, we pick and choose the good and incorporate it in. It’s like building iglus with doors.
Some participants referred to this most recent transition to an industrial-led economy as a shift in values needed from those of surviving to thriving. As one respondent told me, “You don’t need to struggle. Traditionally, life was a struggle for survival. It doesn’t have to be that way now; thriving is the key.” Another participant expressed the need for a home economics or money management program to enable a subsequent shift in values from those of day-to-day survival on the land:

We are from a culture where we really don’t care about the future. We just live day-to-day, be it because of the lack of provisions at the time, and so a lot of the middle-aged people were brought up like that. And because they were brought up like that, they pass it on to the next generation and so now we see young couples who really don’t know how to maintain a home. I mean, they struggle.

Participants were optimistic overall about working together to bridge gaps between new ways and old ways; maintaining a connection to the past but moving forward to adapt with change and create opportunities for the future. Nearly all participants, from youth to elders spoke of the importance of adaptation to change and embracing opportunities for education and economic development, including mining. One elder said the following regarding Inuit adaptability to changes the community is experiencing with mining development:

Our young people need jobs and Inuit are adaptable people. If something happens, we would change with it. Like with the gold mine – like again there’ll be mountains in front of us but we will have to walk through them again. Our elders have carried us so far–they endured hunger, pain, cold, death. Now the younger people must find a way to weave through the new ways and find good things and try and put aside what’s bad. There’s bad but there’s good; it’s about balance.

Cultural change and adaptation are inherent practices within processes of socioeconomic transition, which Inuit have been experiencing on an increasingly rapid scale since permanent settlement in arctic communities during the last 60 years.
Moderation through experience, individual choice and agency:

“Of course there’s always something helpful and something bad, wherever you go and whatever you’re doing. It depends on what you look for and what you get involved with.”

Because “everything is so available today”, nearly two-thirds of participants (30) discussed the need to balance between wants and needs and between “traditional” and “modern” values. Approximately one-third of participants (16) expressed that because younger generations today have so many opportunities, rights and freedoms, they are not as constrained by cultural values and norms. As a result of these gaps between the generations, youth in particular are challenged sometimes in making the right choices for themselves and balancing between “old” and “new” values and practices. One elder said the following:

There’s been so much change in the lifestyle. Everyone wants to try something new, something different. Today, young people, when told how to be healthier – they say today is different.

Of course, this is not to say all young people experience this, but rather that intergenerational struggles to make sense of old and new ways exist in Baker Lake. One young man described traditional means of coping with challenges and learning practices such as moderation as a gradual process necessitating small steps towards well-being:

I believe there’s always going to be challenges around – some may be easy, some may be hard. It depends what challenge you seek and what challenges you see that you wanna take on. If you see a challenge that is hard, maybe you might want to take that later on in life once an opportunity to do that opens for you. And when there’s an easy challenge that comes up, I would say it’d be best to take easy challenges first: like learning how to tie ropes before making a qamatiq, a sled… There are basic steps in life, we always, we should take before taking a big step otherwise maybe we will stumble later on for forgetting how to.

The realities and choices that come with living in a settlement are experienced differently by residents as the community continues to change, and with it, Inuit way of life. A lack of prior experience practicing values of moderation and balance on this scale has been a
limitation for many to benefit from mining and minimize impacts. Effects of the two-week in, two-week out schedule upon Inuit relationships and well-being varies greatly depending upon individual and family capacity to cope with these changes. Participants indicated that working out of the community for two weeks at a time is a big adjustment for many who are “not used to that type of time” and maintaining a strict work schedule. As one community member expressed, “An adjustment period to gaining employment is going to be hard. That skill or mindset of employment was not there.” Another participant discussed a lack of experience with this type of employment and drinking as follows:

All these parents that are working at the mines now didn’t get a chance to party because it wasn’t available to them when they were growing up I guess, so I said they’re reliving their teenage lives because first, they’re making money they never thought they would make, and secondly, the alcohol and the drugs are very available now - it’s all over the place. There is even different kinds of drugs coming into town. So those are what I would say is making families very unhealthy. There’s a lot of broken relationships because of that. And a lot of hungry kids.

With social impacts from mining, almost three-quarters of participants (34) noted that these issues come down to an individual’s ability to make choices and be accountable, and that “you can’t blame the mine” for individual indiscretions. An elder with grandchildren working at Meadowbank discussed this issue of choice and accountability:

One of the things mentioned earlier is that affairs are happening at the mine. The mine cannot fix that – it’s individual choices… I myself cannot control my young people. It’s the choices [they make], and they won’t know until they grow up and see it for themselves from their own experiences.

To be a balanced person, you have to balance the negative with the positive, through the choices you make; “[i]n order to live healthy, there has to be moderation in everything you do.” To live well in the Arctic today, you need money, but there are issues associated with the rapid influx of money and goods into Baker Lake that require a period of adjustment and response from the community.
Communication, awareness and education:
“[t]here’s not enough information out there and what little there is can be downplayed so easily because it’s not quite enough.”

Three-quarters of participants (30) acknowledged the importance of further awareness and communication on issues affecting the community. Participants discussed this need in reference to the community’s lack of experience and skills to cope with changes brought through mine employment. According to one elder:

Baker Lake is growing with mining. A lot of us are for the mine but we’d like to see the community have a place to help people who are touched by alcohol and drugs. There’s no turning back. I want to see Baker Lake stay in balance with substance abuse, treatment and other things. Since Baker is growing, alcohol education should be taught in schools with younger children, because there’s so much alcohol abuse. We need more communication on these issues. Education is very important. We never grew up with alcohol up North; it affects people easily. One way of balancing is through education, for the long run, like 10 to 15 years from now.

Many participants discussed communication and education on these issues beginning with the family, and the “investments” parents make in their children so they can learn how to cope with stress and the challenges they encounter. A community health worker discussed family relationships and values in shaping individual experiences with mine employment, saying:

It all comes down to their self-esteem. I mean, it’s good that they have money, they can spend it as they wish, but sadly of it goes to [alcohol]… It all comes down to self-esteem. Self-esteem starts with parenting.

Some participants noted that with strong relationship values of communication and trust, rumours and gossip do not have any lasting impact, and that families are making the most of a good employment opportunity to improve their well-being. One Inuit Meadowbank employee expressed that “[t]he rumours are still there but they’re less big now. It all comes down to communication and skill with their spouse; it’s a matter between two individuals.”
**Cultural continuity:**

“I believe you have to understand where you come from in order to be able to view yourself as you are presently. Basically you have to know where you come from to know where you’re going.”

Participants highlighted the need to strengthen relationships, particularly amongst the youth, with their Inuit heritage, cultural values and identity while simultaneously adapting certain values and ways of life to thrive in a modern Arctic community. One high school student defined well-being in the following way, highlighting the importance of Inuit identity and cultural continuity within processes of modernity:

[Wellness means e]veryone would work towards a positive goal and everyone would contribute their share, everyone would play their part, no one would harm other people or put them down or all that stuff. Pretty much keeping a positive attitude towards your fellow man and contributing like getting a job, contributing to society. Being environmentally conscious, hunting and keeping your roots strong too. ‘Cause modernity is taking over but that doesn’t mean that your culture has to suffer. With technology and all that, you can still go hunting, you can still throat sing you can still square dance, you can still do all that.

There are challenges for identity and wellbeing if cultural values and knowledge become less operationalized; if the values and principles that were an intrinsic part of everyday life have become compartmentalized and disassociated from day to day Inuit life. Some youth are struggling with their identity in the midst of rapid change as they try to relate to the past and simultaneously determine their future; to navigate their place within “old” and “new” ways. One community member expressed concern over these more recent changes with the influx of more money and vehicles into the community:

I’ve thought about these young people that break into businesses, taking other people’s property – how can we deal with these hard youth who want to be like criminals? That’s one of the very unhealthy things for the community. It would be good to have equipment for them to see new things. It would reverse their minds from bad to good... An event on the land for summer, fall, and winter for these youngsters, to give them direction. Their parents say,
‘Well they have nothing to do! When we approach them, they say they’d like to have things, but we can’t afford them.’ That makes my heart boil.

Approximately one-third of respondents (15) noted that cultural activities improve self-esteem and identity of the youth, addressing feelings of alienation and life dissatisfaction. For example, engaging the youth in traditional arts and crafts such as drum dancing, traditional sewing and ayaya singing - Inuktitut songs that tell stories about one’s life, often from living on the land. The community organizes land-based programs within the various seasons through which elders demonstrate traditional harvesting skills and knowledge with adults and youth. There are also traditional skills and Inuktitut learning opportunities through a program called Aulajaaqtut (“moving forward together”) offered within the Nunavut high school curriculum. These classes provide opportunities to learn land-based skills and to help the youth cope with problems and develop positive self-identities with support from Inuit values. One educator celebrated ongoing community actions to bring traditional values back into the schools and to enhance community well-being through cultural continuity:

And with the IQ principles being very important to schools right now I like seeing that because that’s how the community was, we would get together and share, and a lot of times country food, because that is how we survived before we moved to settlements.

Spending time communicating with elders, learning Inuit skills and strengthening Inuit cultural identity entails a form of counselling from the Inuit perspective discussed by nearly all participants as well. Another community educator described the high school Aulajaaqtut program and the importance of cultural continuity, skill development, and youth identity in the following way:

We have some students in the school that are not suffering but, what’s the word, they’re struggling I guess and they’re boys, they’re all boys. So I’ve organized for an elderly man to come in and just build the qamatiq. I would never say to the boys that they’re getting counselled, but I would say you know, ‘You’re getting to spend some time with an elder and learn a skill, a traditional skill.’ Another thing that we’ve been doing is bringing in an elder woman to come in and counsel the students from the Inuit perspective. You
don’t come out and you know, the Inuit way, you don’t come out and ask ‘What’s wrong, why are you acting that way?’ So the elder would come in and say you know, ‘What’s happening in your life?’ It’s not like, ‘what’s missing’ but, ‘tell me, what’s happening.’ And they try and counsel the whole being. I think culture - Inuit culture - is very important. Last year we had some sewing, traditional sewing. Caribou skin preparation to link the skill to the, you know, the identity. It’s really a part of who you are, so it’s really important.

Spending time on the land is one of the most significant dimensions for cultural continuity in Baker Lake. To enhance cultural continuity for future generations, one elder discussed the importance of having a shared non-institutional space to enhance communication and learning among community members, such as an elder’s cabin on the land.

Given its spiritual, social and cultural significance, the land also represents a space for emotional healing. Across Nunavut there are land-based rehabilitation programs for criminal offenders through which families take these individuals out to the land to reconnect with their Inuit culture and identity. Community groups organize walks and camp-outs on the land to raise awareness and funds for community causes. There is a support group for male residential school survivors in Kivalliq that promotes emotional healing through sharing stories and social activities such as hunting and fishing. These land-based activities are empowering because they reinstate a sense of Inuit pride for men, who have traditionally been the hunters and providers in their community. For residential school survivors and their families, healing through the land and social togetherness has helped them cope, to “let go of the pain” and collectively strengthen their identity as Inuit.
**Education and training as tools for adaptation and self-determination:**

“Education is the key to basically building a community because a community isn’t a community without people working together and building on with what they have to work with, and what they could work with in the future.”

Participants described a shift in values in the community towards education as a tool for building a sustainable future. Over half of participants (25) discussed formal education as essential for mitigating social issues and enabling Inuit to adapt within and benefit from socioeconomic transitions. A young man who repeatedly stressed the importance of formal education and adapting to changes said the following:

The most fundamental thing to understand about living here, especially if you’re from here, is that change is inevitable. And it’s healthy. It’s very healthy for the community to constantly be trying to grow, trying to change, trying to adapt to the world–because the world won’t slow down for you and unless this town wants to be left behind, there’s going to have to be a lot of major changes that need to take place. And it’s people, like the people that left, that I hope are going to come back someday - people like myself - people like the people I’m still trying to motivate to go to school, you know, that are going to change this and it’s my belief that.. if I can persevere, then other people can persevere as well.

Education was discussed in the context of improving self-esteem, enabling individuals to make good decisions, and opening up new employment opportunities. This shift in values can be seen through the decrease in high school dropouts and rising graduation rates in recent years. One third of participants (16) similarly expressed a strong need for training and business development to enhance well-being through mining and promote more sustainable economic growth in the community.

**Balancing “old” ways and “new” ways: “tradition or education?”**

Despite these benefits, a third of participants (15) expressed concerns over balancing values for formal education and training and living a traditional way of life, acquiring Inuit skills and knowledge. A strong dichotomy was created between education and
tradition with the inherently assimilationist agenda of residential schools. Experiences in these schools have effectively limited the involvement of some families in their children’s education and the emotional wound such policies inflicted has caused distrust for some of the schools in the community today. Some families experience barriers towards valuing school education today because of these experiences. There are also barriers to post-secondary education because most opportunities require leaving Baker Lake and Nunavut. Experiences of culture shock and homesickness from “a lack of Inuitness” prevent many from pursuing these opportunities, as do family and childcare responsibilities in Baker Lake.

One participant expressed this ambiguity towards divergent values placed on education, asking, “Where is the value now – traditional or school education? I grew up traditionally on the land all summer, until school started again. I was lucky to have both.” Some participants expressed that certain traditional values from living on the land have not been evenly adapted within families in the community towards meetings the needs of life in a globalized Arctic. According to one participant’s view on living well, these value adaptations are specific to individual and family choices:

I think what it really boils down to is the family. I mean the way we were brought up – we’re at a stage where we’re in the transition from an Inuit way of life to a modern lifestyle. And we’re still on that journey, so, I mean some of the parents are probably still way back out there and they prefer to be that way as well.

In the context of this value shift, many families today are encouraging their children to finish high school and to also pursue post-secondary education and training. An elder, speaking of adapting to the demands of a modern economy and way of life said the advice he would give to young people today is simply “to stay in school” and “get an education, because you can’t use the traditional way in every single part of life today.” Another community member raised by her biological grandparents with strong Inuit values has also earned a university education and described herself as “growing in two ways”. For many, this dichotomy between tradition and education is an increasingly false
one as the community continues to grow and more demands are necessarily placed upon a trained and educated local workforce.

**Education and training: self-determination and sustainable economic growth in the context of mining**

There are mine training opportunities available to community members through the Hamlet and at the Meadowbank site, where a haul truck stimulator training program has proven successful. However, community members are concerned over a lack of training and education in non-mining careers for the future well-being of the community. As one participant said, “Most of the training is directed towards Meadowbank, but I’m not really sure what the community would like to see – they need to be asked.” Another community member expressed that Baker Lake needs a more diversified economy: “I think that we should be able to strive forward and work together in order to find other avenues; we can’t always resort to the mining company, we can’t always rely on it.” One elder similarly expressed this need for the community to determine the future path of its economic development:

> Sometimes governments, because they need more money, overrule what the people want. We need more education, not only of mining. We need something that can stay in Baker Lake that will keep the jobs going somehow. We need more industries up here because we can’t stop this thing, this process, anyhow.

Several participants bemoaned the fact that you can work at the mine with very limited education since only skilled positions such as haul-truck driver require a high school diploma. There are also high school graduates who have put their post-secondary plans on hold and are working general labour jobs at the mine. One community member discussed the effect this situation can have on young people’s self-esteem:

> We stress so heavily about the importance of education, and then you hear about these kids going up to the camp to find work because they’ve got a
diploma and you hear that they’ve got like a labourer’s job. And that can be embarrassing, like to work in a dish pit, or to shovel out garbage cans. Like that’s kind of embarrassing to, you know, a young man. So then they start feeling, well, what did I get my high school diploma for if Agnico’s not going to hire me for something a little higher? And you could only say, you know, so often that you’ve gotta work at that entry-level and then work your way up. Kids don’t see it that way. So they end up quitting, come back here, into the community and there’s not much work in the community. All the work is out there.

There is concern that in the context of Nunavut’s establishment as the new frontier for mining that Inuit are not prepared enough to benefit from mine employment opportunities. Approximately a quarter of participants (12) directly expressed frustration that Baker Lake has not adequately benefited from mining, while many others thought the community should benefit more. The majority of jobs in which Inuit are employed are unskilled manual labour and the highest-paying and most skilled jobs are occupied by Southern Canadians. One young person expressed their frustrations over the community’s lack of control and benefit through mining:

And like you're supposed to benefit. This town was to be benefiting it doesn't feel like it is... I wasn't exactly thinking when I was in high school and people were educating us about the mine, I didn’t believe what they were saying about the mine and how people would be stuck with low-level positions. I didn't think that people working be stuck cleaning people's bedrooms and, you know cleaning toilets, cleaning dishes, cleaning up after – the East cleaning up after the West. I didn't imagine something so minimalized for our people; I imagined people on big crushers, people in supervisor positions. You know what, there are but there should be more... I never thought our people were going to be this minimalized by something that promised so much.

Frustrations that the community is not benefitting as much as it should from the Meadowbank Mine demonstrated in the above statement illustrate a lack of community control over and benefit from local industrial development.
Barriers to Individual and Community Control and Participation within Mining Processes

About two-thirds of participants (29) discussed positive impacts on self-esteem and pride for people employed through the Meadowbank mine, supporting themselves and their family’s well-being, and having a sense of purpose in their life. For some community members, employment at the mine is the first job they have held, and this employment has been a source of individual empowerment, building their confidence and self-esteem. According to some participants (12), there are women accessing mine employment opportunities who have developed the resources and independence to leave unhealthy relationships. Elders in particular expressed a sense of pride regarding their children and numerous grandchildren working for the mine, taking advantage of these opportunities to gain experience and learn new skills.

While mine employment has been a resource towards personal empowerment for some, a shared sense of control over mine development as a community is missing. In the past, decisions have been made according to consensus-based decision-making, and primarily through consultation with elders. Elders have the experience of Inuit lands and values needed to make informed decisions regarding the community. There is concern that now with modern institutional ways of governing and making decisions in the community, some voices and dissenting opinions have been excluded from the conversation in the pursuit of progress and development. As one elder discussed, “There should be more get-togethers in the community of members – this would improve things; hearing different points of view. There is a need for more discussion and group-based decision-making”.

Another community member expressed a desire for more meaningful consultation with elders to ensure the land is respected:

We need to have more of our elders participating, like more tours for them to Meadowbank and other mining camps. They are the ones touched most because they lived out there and survived from the land. We need more open communication between elders and mining companies, not just once a year, 3 or more times.
Access to information

There are several barriers to participation in mining processes as described by participants. Some of these barriers relate to the Hamlet government’s responsibility to relay information to the community because “without information, you don’t know whether to participate”. Another participant said, “The Hamlet should be out there, letting the community know, this is what we’re here to do. KIA should be there and telling the community, this is what we’re here to do.” Nearly a quarter of participants (12) bemoaned the lack of accountability and transparency within local and regional government in informing the community of decisions that have been made. Several of these respondents expressed a desire for more democracy and less nepotism with the same families holding decision-making positions within the Hamlet year after year.

Others expressed concern that they do not know where to go with their questions or concerns about mining, whether that is the KIA, the Hamlet, AEM, or elsewhere: “We have a lot of concerns but we never know where to go!” Lack of awareness as a barrier for individuals to effectively engage in communication on issues affecting the community, including mining, was discussed by over two-thirds of participants (31) as a limitation for well-being. Respondents had varying expectations of what obligations Agnico-Eagle Mines and the Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA) have to the community. The majority of participants felt that more could and should be done for the community to benefit, but given the community’s lack of experience in negotiating with mining companies, and the complicated governance and legal structures under which Inuit-owned lands are controlled, there is a lot of uncertainty. For many, there are personal obstacles, challenges and apprehensions in navigating institutional structures to get information on what information or services are available to them in relation to mining processes and developments being planned on Inuit lands. One community educator expressed that channels of communication are underutilized. She said:

There are a lot of free services and a government that usually is pretty good about hearing what’s going on, on the ground – local and territorial
government. Like if you really voiced yourself you can usually connect with the person that you want to talk to… there are a lot of free services available to people, people don’t realize, or don’t access them or know how to.

Given these uncertainties, some community members expressed a disinterest within the broader community and are trying to promote more active participation in mining consultation. A lack of engagement in mining is both caused by and contributes to disempowerment. According to one community member, “We need to advocate and speak more about the issues of mining. We’re getting AEM logo merchandise, but what about a piece of the pie?”

**Communication**

There are issues of communication between the community and Meadowbank mine site contributing to a lack of perceived control and participation in mine development. While word of mouth is an effective tool for disseminating information in Baker Lake, it is confusing and misleading when the information being shared within the community is not factual. There are a number of rumours or partial truths about the mine that circulate, and it is in the best interests of everyone these misunderstandings be minimized through enhancing channels for communication in Baker Lake. One participant discussed this issue in regards to the community’s expectations from the mine:

Access to information is a big issue and not knowing what’s going on in the community. Misinformation: people might say something about an organization or company without fully knowing. We were told AEM would bring a new RCMP officer to the community. I later found out that wasn’t true. They were expecting a lot more from the company than they had committed.

Agnico-Eagle Mines has been working with local administrators, elders and hunters to assess impacts to the land. The Community Liaison Committee helps to address some of these concerns. This committee is comprised of representatives from the mine, the Hunters and Trappers Organizations, Qilautimiut (the elder’s group), Arctic College, the
District Education Authority, the Hamlet and youth. The committee meets bi-monthly to discuss changes with the mine, concerns from community groups, and training and business opportunities. Ultimately, this communication is only as effective as people feel they are capable of voicing their concerns, even if doing so makes them challenge the status quo – acceptance of industrial development as “progress” – and share their questions, concerns or experiences.

There are a number of concerns and uncertainties in the community, as expressed by participants, over impacts from proposed uranium development. However, there is a lack of open dialogue in the community or a platform upon which these issues can be raised. Non-government Nunavut-based interest groups (such as Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit and Isuma) promote critical discussion around mineral development, but it appears there are few Baker Lake residents actively participating in these conversations and voicing their concerns.

Over a third of participants (17) expressed frustrations regarding decisions being made outside the community without adequate community consultation in these processes. There is some frustration about the management and allocation of the royalties coming from Agnico-Eagle to Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI), the parent organization to the KIA. Given the strong need in the community for effective planning towards mining impact mitigation through programs, training and services, community members feel that their government should be investing those monies back into the community. One community member expressed their frustration over mining consultation processes and the role of the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) in overseeing such assessments:

How is it that a group of individuals that most likely have never been here other than for these NIRB meetings get to make these political decisions, you know what I mean? But how is it that our federal budget is made up of people that don't even understand what the budget is, can be used for or how much money is needed here or there?
While composed partially of Inuit beneficiaries, NIRB represents another non-local institution through which decisions are made that directly affect Baker Lake. While opportunities for community consultation exist at various phases of a proposed mine development, including the current Meadowbank Mine, many participants expressed a desire for more consultation during this current mine operations stage.

**Planning for mine closure:**
“I don’t know what we could put in place to prepare people for closing of the mine.”

There is an overall concern from participants that Baker Lake was not prepared to benefit from the mine as much as they should have been and that the government and the Hamlet is equally lacking any sort of plan for the community’s future. This lack of community self-determination within mining processes is not evenly shared or experienced across the community, but for many participants, Baker Lake’s (dis)engagement in mining processes has been a source of disempowerment. Over a third of participants (16) expressed concerns that there is no plan in place for when the mine will close down in less than four years. As one participant stated:

> Is there a plan for the future for when the mine closes down, with all these people who are working there now? And then when it closes down, they have nothing, and how are we going to handle that?

It will be extremely difficult for community members who have become accustomed to a certain standard of living to cope with unemployment. Further, because most of the jobs at the camp are entry-level, several participants expressed concern that the community “will not be able to help them” find employment when the mine closes. There is a general understanding from Agnico-Eagle that Inuit currently employed at Meadowbank will be extended offers of employment to work at the mine scheduled to open in Rankin Inlet, the Meliadine Project, around the same time Meadowbank is scheduled to shut down production, but this employee transfer will not involve everyone.
In the words of one participant: “The North is open for business. Everybody wants a piece of the pie” but so far it’s mostly short-term gains for the community: material benefits but not an adequate share of the profits to put towards improving much needed community infrastructure and services for the current and future well-being of the community.

**Community Self-determination: Initiatives for Healing and Well-being: “do it as a community”**

Nearly two-thirds of participants (28) discussed the need to regain a sense of community control in the context of the rapid transition to a mining economy. Community members spoke of the importance of elders speaking up and voicing themselves more on these issues the community is facing today and not “letting the good values slide by us”. Some elders acknowledged that that they have been “too quiet lately” and need to speak up more. As one elder discussed the usefulness of Inuit experiences and values in leading the community through these transitions:

In the old days, they should have had more things recorded with their elders and how they lived. They had such strong voices and firm values on how to live well and have good relationships with others, how to raise and be with kids and live a good life. That knowledge could be used today. I wonder if some of that skill can be brought back?

Such open communication can raise awareness but also community pride through a collective resolve to regain control over facets of Inuit life and relationships that have been negatively impacted since colonization. One community member expressed this community self-determination in the following words:

I think if more people would stand up, instead of just being quiet about it, and do it as a community… maybe if one or two of the families would stand up and say, hey this is for the sake of our future, and what kind of future do we have if we’re just going to let it [drugs and alcohol] take over. Like, these children are our future!
In the past, silence and personal resolve were coping mechanisms for dealing with hardship and the things one was incapable of changing in life. Participants stressed the importance of publically addressing and working through problems now as a community: “we’re here as a community, we can help each other. It doesn’t matter who you are.” Community members are organizing and coming together to break the silences around issues limiting well-being in their community such as suicide, residential school trauma, domestic violence, and substance abuse. One young man, in discussing these activities said that despite Baker Lake’s small population, remoteness, and lack of services and infrastructure:

[the town is really innovative… You know the town’s really pulling together. We can’t afford a psychologist or a counsellor or anything you know, and people are taking it on themselves.

Several participants discussed a need for better coordination and bridge-building between various organizations together to make the most of limited resources. A health administrator expressed that “all communities need a wellness centre” with organized programs, as a place anyone can drop in and access information and resources to help them live well. A few participants also expressed a desire for a Community Liaison Officer to streamline government proposals and applications and to assist community members in navigating bureaucratic channels to access grants and other funds for community recreational and cultural initiatives.

The most successful programs in Baker Lake are those that are locally-determined and initiated by community members, and not coming from an outside institution. One community member said, “People like doing cultural things especially if they’re organized by individuals, not the school. Not by an institution but done by local people.” For example, several participants discussed the issue of being counselled by someone from outside the culture and the need for more Inuit counsellors who understand the community and its conditions because “[i]t’s hard to understand something without experiencing it. People think they know but until they experience it, they don’t really know.” In relation to more culturally-appropriate services, a couple of participants
expressed a strong desire for an Inuit-run substance abuse treatment centre in Nunavut: “it doesn’t have to follow the systems of wherever else that they have them; see what works for us”. In bringing the community through current and future changes, participants talked about the importance of strong community leadership and working together as a community. One respondent expressed:

Vision is what is needed in this community. We need to get our leaders on our side. There is a need to see the community as people, not just physical infrastructure and organizations. People are more than programs. But we have to implement these things. It can’t be the government doing it; it has to be the community. It has to come from the grassroots; people need to get involved.

Nearly half of participants (20) indicated a need for more community programming, and for youth in particular, like a life skills program that offers them coping skills so they can better handle stress and overcome feelings of alienation and hopelessness in their lives. Such programming is particularly needed in the context of disruptions to family structures through rotational mine employment schedules, as discussed in chapter 4. Community members want more after-school programs (aside from sports), which foster an appreciation for Inuit culture, the arts and music, an improved youth drop-in centre run by a Youth Programs Coordinator, offering structured programming, summer camps and educational opportunities to keep children active and engaged. It was stressed that programs and initiatives directed towards the youth and their empowerment would spread benefit to their families and the community as well. As one young participant discussed positive attributes which make the community healthy: “It always start with the youth and the actions they make, the good ones, it motivates everyone else to be a good person, and the actions that they always put onto them moves on to the others.”

There is a desire for more youth in the community to speak out as well on their experiences and to take on leadership roles in the community for a “balance in leadership”. Participants discussed the importance of empowering the youth to take on these roles and continue to support their endeavours. One participant discussed the ways
in which Inuit are working together to strengthen Inuit identity and build a collective sense of pride in Inuit culture and heritage:

When you tell an Inuk person, everything in their whole life is wrong and this whole new life to live is right, it takes away everything else that’s.. been there for… I don’t know. Even just to question it is like, I didn’t know [if] that was a bad thing or a good thing. But it pops in your head a lot. I was never born in an iglu, but just having that sense from my parents. That’s why there's a lot of unsurity [sic] with the young people today, they seen it from generations so they’re just used to being unsure now. And the thickness and the strength in life in Inuit people were just washed away with my grandparents’ age. And it’s just rebuilding back up. But it’s not in Inuktitut language but it’s still.. like I hear so many great things from all over Nunavut: like oh, these people are doing this now, and these people are doing that. I was just listening to William Tagoona last night and he retired from CBC from working with them for 30 years or more. And when he first started he was saying how an elder mentioned that every Inuit has every right to be Inuk. And when you start to feel that sense, and then you start to realize what you have in Nunavut - what you’re representing, what you have to do for your own people - [it] starts to come into play.

This sense of “rebuilding” a collective Inuit identity and pride which this participant described after generations of attempted colonization and assimilation of Inuit peoples is a significant piece in the ongoing process of Inuit self-determination.

**DISCUSSION**

Living well in Baker Lake today entails successful balancing and adapting of traditional and modern values and practices. While Baker Lake has transitioned to an industrial economy, there are distinct differences between families in terms of how “old” and “new” values are being managed. Aboriginal well-being is an outcome of individuals and communities negotiating between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal culture, which, after over 400 years of colonization can no longer be viewed as fixed or ‘bounded’ (Waldram 2009: 69-70; Samson 2009: 131; Kirmayer et al. 2009a; Kirmayer et al. 2009b: 292; Searles 2008). Much as culture, shaped by these structures, is “always fluid and in flux”,
“belief and knowledge systems” are continuously changing over time, with implications for what it means to be well in a changing world (Gibson 2012: 208).

There has been a strong tendency in academia to highlight the negative effects of acculturation on small-scale societies (i.e., Wirsing 1985) and this is particularly true of Arctic anthropologists (see Vallee 1967; Graburn 1969; Brody 1975). However, there has been a movement in anthropology towards an indigenous paradigm that places Aboriginal people as active and engaged in resource development as opposed to agentless and experiencing solely negative impacts (Dombrowski 2008; Angell and Parkins 2011).

Self-determination has been recognized as a key determinant of Aboriginal health and well-being in Canada, particularly in the context of historical processes of colonialism and marginalization of Aboriginal peoples (Dyck 2009; Loppie Reading and Wien 2009; Richmond and Ross 2009). For example, Asch (2002) recognizes the importance of a mixed economy in remote Aboriginal communities but the necessity also of political and economic self-determination in order for adequate benefits to accrue from mining engagement.

Angell and Parkins (2011) describe a shift in the research of Aboriginal community mining impacts from an approach that focused almost exclusively upon community impacts towards recognition of community continuity. Community continuity highlights the self-determination of Aboriginal communities in maintaining cultural values and practices while adapting to mining and associated socioeconomic changes. The findings of this research reveal the significance of individual and community self-determination and complex ways through which impacts from mining are negotiated through local strategies of adaptation, cultural continuity, moderation and education. Participants described changes to their well-being with mining both through a loss of control and strategies towards self-determination within Inuit relationships and mining consultation processes. These results offer an in-depth depiction of effects from mining and other historical transitions on local perceptions, values and practices for well-being which quantitative measurements of impact are incapable of revealing.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

Thesis Summary

The community of Baker Lake is experiencing yet another period of rapid transition and adaptation with the construction and development of the Agnico-Eagle Meadowbank gold mine and plans for future mineral development in the region. In the context of all this change, this thesis has documented the values, practices and conditions that determine well-being and how individual, family and community well-being has been affected by mining.

First, it has been demonstrated that well-being in Baker Lake is relationally situated and defined. Cultural identity and values are constructed through direct experiences within relationships to family, community and the land. Following this, historical transitions and their lasting impacts upon these Inuit relationships must be considered in the context of impacts mining has upon Inuit well-being. Processes of colonization, settlement and modernity have created gaps between generations and existing time and space structures, causing some cultural values to become either strained or displaced with implications for identity and well-being.

Second, mining in Baker Lake significantly shapes Inuit relationships and hence well-being as defined by and through these relationships. Strain upon relationships and value practices affects well-being through the compartmentalization of time and space in the context of rapid economic growth. Further, a perceived lack of community experience, program and service capacity, and control over mine development has negative implications for individual and community well-being.
Third, in the face of rapid change and development, participants of all ages discussed the importance of adaptation, moderation, cultural continuity and individual and community self-determination as strategies to cope with these transitions. Mine development represents more than just an imposition to the community of Baker Lake, but also a means through which Inuit are negotiating yet another place for themselves in a constantly shifting world.

**Scholarly Contributions**

While there exists a long history of Arctic Anthropology which has produced innumerable Inuit ethnographies (Boas 1888; Jenness 1928; 1970; Birket-Smith 1929; 1959; Graburn 1969; Balikci 1970; Briggs 1970; Matthiason 1992; Dorais 1997), there is a lack of Inuit and more broadly Aboriginal ethnographies that examine local cultural conceptions of well-being (Richmond and Ross 2009; Adelson 2000) or community health and resource development (Heil 2010; Izquierdo 2010, Adelson 2010; Samon 2009). Further, given the more recent experiences of Arctic residents with industrial development, there is a lack of knowledge generated on the intersections of community health or well-being and resource development in a contemporary context. This research addresses these knowledge gaps by documenting the values, practices, and needs of community members for well-being in the context of mine development. The findings of this research indicate that mining impacts multiple dimensions of Aboriginal health beyond the physical body and environment, including spiritual, emotional, mental, social and cultural health. Further, this thesis reveals that mining impacts the intersections between these domains as realized through impacts to Inuit land, family and community relationships through which well-being is largely constructed and experienced.

Quantitative approaches to the examination of mining impacts (such as those reported through the Kivalliq Socioeconomic Monitoring Committee; see also Stedman et al. 2004; Hipwell et al. 2002; Petkova et al. 2009; Frickel and Freudenburg 1996) fail to account for the complex ways in which development affects these components of health. This thesis has taken an historical and agentive approach to understanding a
contemporary phenomenon – resource development on Aboriginal lands – within the context of colonialism and also through the strategies of individuals in resisting these impositions and negotiating between “old” ways and “new” ways towards living well. However, within much of the social science literature examining impacts of resource development on indigenous communities, a rather black and white approach has been taken which casts mining as an extension of colonialism negatively impacting Aboriginal communities without recognizing the agency and strategies of Aboriginal people in responding to and resisting these impacts. In as much as tradition and modernity are not dichotomous categories, neither are structure and agency. The findings of this research indicate the importance of Aboriginal self-determination in the context of historical and ongoing transitions, including the transition to mining.

Taking an historical approach, this thesis makes it clear that individual and community self-determination and healing are integral to well-being and shape the experiences of Aboriginal communities with mining. As such, greater community control is imperative so that community members feel they have a say in their own future and so that neither development nor research contributes to the further colonization of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

**Practical Contributions**

This research stimulates conversation within Public Issues Anthropology concerning planning and impact mitigation around mine development in Aboriginal communities by emphasizing the importance of individual and community self-determination in mining processes. Environmental Impact Assessment and other existing mechanisms may be insufficient in their approach to understanding mine impacts to local communities. While both the federal and territorial governments are pushing for mining as a key to the economic development of Nunavut, there is a sense of alienation experienced by some community members and subsequent disengagement from conversations around mining.
Based on the findings of this thesis, the following specific recommendations are made to the relevant stakeholders. There is a need for greater planning and community consultation around mine developments to mitigate negative impacts. More funding and building space is required in Baker Lake for programs and initiatives community members want to see. Specifically, participants expressed a desire for community-initiated programs for youth, drug and alcohol education, an Inuit run drug and alcohol treatment centre, improved access to childcare, Inuit counselling services, and money management workshops. A community outreach worker was suggested to assist community members with writing proposals to fund community programs and to coordinate these programs with other ongoing initiatives in the community. Industry and government need to better coordinate education, training and community services prior to mine development to enhance local benefit capture through employment and to mitigate community impacts. Further, the need for ongoing healing from colonial legacies is a challenge that magnifies some impacts of mining upon individual, family and community well-being. Communities such as Baker Lake require more funding and support for local programs and workshops to address these wounds.

While existing mechanisms for community participation in mine consultation exist, there are barriers to accessing information needed for meaningful participation. Nunavut’s complicated resource governance structures and the technicality of mining terms and processes can discourage such participation. As lack of information regarding the health of caribou populations and potential contaminants to land and water bodies was discussed as a source of frustration and disempowerment, there is need for more research and sharing of information regarding contaminant risks and exposures. Participants also indicated a need for improved access to health-related information through accessible formats such as television, community radio and social media. Improved communications and broader community consultation beyond the Community Liaison Committee regarding mine site operations through the use of social media or other tools could help to address issues of gossip, rumours and miscommunication that participants expressed as barriers to community participation and control. AEM has recently initiated an in-town support group for spouses and family members of mine employees to help address some
of these issues. Lastly, there is a need for stronger planning and community consultation around mine closure and opportunities for sustained economic development.

A key component of this research was the delivery of research findings to the Hamlet of Baker Lake and Agnico-Eagle Mines to assist with the planning of impact mitigation measures. Research findings were summarized in a March 2013 report: Developing Community Wellness Indicators in the Hamlet of Baker Lake, and presented to the Baker Lake Hamlet Council, community organizations and Agnico Eagle Mines. This report provided a list of drafted community wellness indicators based upon the values, practices, conditions and strategies that determine well-being as described by participants. These indicators can be used to track changes in Hamlet wellness over time as mining continues through the use of a household survey tool. A report was also completed for Agnico-Eagle Mines and the Kivalliq Inuit Association in August 2013 (the Agnico-Eagle Mines Ltd. Wellness Report and Implementation Plan). This report summarized existing knowledge on mining impacts to community wellness in Baker Lake and highlighted opportunities for ongoing mitigation. This Wellness report is being shared with the KIA and the Hamlet of Baker Lake to solicit feedback and obtain further recommendations.

Limitations of the Research and Opportunities for Future Research

One of the main limitations of this research is a lack of local design and ownership. While the research was to be conducted through the guidance of a local steering committee of three experts on community health, this goal was unfortunately unattained due to constraints of time and other logistical issues. A longer field visit planned to avoid the busy summer months may have helped to build stronger relationships in the community and avoid this issue. Having said this, I was fortunate to work with a local research assistant, Britania Twyee, whose knowledge of Inuit culture, families in Baker Lake, and the Inuktitut language proved imperative to this research. Conducting this research, I spoke with as large and wide a variety of participants as feasibly possible, though of course it was not possible to hear from all residents, including some key knowledge holders. In analyzing the information participants shared with me, I aimed to
be as objective as possible and have presented the original words of participants and the context in which these were spoken so as to maintain research rigour. I do not believe the results presented in this thesis have been affected by my own biases, but this is always a possibility with qualitative research.

Lastly, there is a sense that the community of Baker Lake, being the only community in Nunavut at this time to host a mine, has become over-researched. In recent years, numerous researchers have gone to Baker Lake to document mining impacts on Inuit culture, the environment, and other facets of life. This research saturation may be a primary reason as to why the Hamlet Council may not be keen to engage in community household surveys in order to track annual changes in community wellness indicators at this time.

While findings from this research can be extrapolated and compared to other Inuit and Aboriginal communities, they demonstrate the importance of community-based research to uncover indicators of well-being as locally constructed. Though other Inuit communities in Canada share similar values, their histories and their experiences are not the same. There are many opportunities for studies to uncover community perceptions of well-being in other communities facing rapid change and development from mining or other industries. These opportunities extend beyond Nunavut and Canada. Future research uncovering local perceptions of well-being would ideally be conducted early on in the lifespan of a proposed development, before construction has begun. This would be the best way to track changes in well-being over time, gathering a baseline assessment of community values, practices and conditions before the community experiences direct impacts from the development.

In documenting the values, practices and conditions that shape well-being in the context of mining, this research provides a means through which quantitative socioeconomic studies of mine impact can be supplemented. Further, in exploring related changes to family, community and land-based relationships, this research demonstrates dynamic interconnections between various types of mine impact. As both federal and territorial
governments are pushing for mining as a key to Northern and Canadian economic development, there is significant opportunity for this type of community-based research to inform community consultation, planning and impact mitigation to enhance community benefits during and beyond the life of a mine. Overall I am hopeful that results from this particular research presented to the community of Baker Lake be of use as the Hamlet continues to experience mineral development.
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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These interview questions were developed and revised with Research Assistant Britania Twyee.

1. Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your background?

2. How do you define health or wellness?

3. What does a healthy community look like to you? (attributes/conditions/qualities)

4. How do you feel when you think about the health of your community? Do you think Baker Lake is a healthy community? / Do you think most people in Baker Lake are healthy? / What kinds of people experience good health?

5. Can you describe the health/wellness of Baker Lake in the past? In what ways has it changed? What processes or transitions were involved in these changes?

6. What are some of the positive factors contributing to wellness and the overall health of Baker Lake?

7. Can you describe aspects of Inuit ways or culture that promote good health?

8. What do you or your family do to keep healthy – for your day-to-day well-being?

9. What are some of the challenges for wellness and the health of this community? What conditions are preventing the community from being healthier?

10. Where does mining fit in with community wellness (positives and negatives)?

11. Do you have concerns over the future health of this community?

12. Is there enough awareness around issues affecting health in the community? Do you think there is enough information given to the community concerning health issues? Do people talk about health and wellness enough?

13. What kinds of programs or services promote wellness as Baker Lake continues to experience mineral development? Can you think of ways these should be expanded or new programs that should be created?

14. Is there anything else you’d like to share? Can you recommend any other community members we should talk to?
APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Information for Research Participants

Project Researcher: Sophie Maksimowski [removed for this thesis]
Project Title: Indicators of community wellness in the Hamlet of Baker Lake
Ethics Protocol No. 09MY030

Purpose: In the context of the construction and operation of the Meadowbank Mine, the purpose of this project is to develop a set of approximately 50 indicators of wellness for the hamlet of Baker Lake in order to track conditions over time, and to ensure that, on balance, the Hamlet is becoming more well.

Funding for the Research: This research is funded by: ArcticNet NCE, Agnico-Eagle Mines (as per their obligations under their IIBA with the KIA); and MITACS.

Possible Concerns and Benefits about the Research: The project will benefit your community by enabling the tracking of community wellness over time. The exchange of information between your community and the researchers is strengthened by the inclusion of community members as part of the research team in role of advisors, research assistants and translators. The research results will be made accessible to the community, scientists and policy makers and will inform decision-makers about the types of industrial development related changes affecting your community. There are no physical risks associated with this research. The researchers will make every effort to ensure that you are accurately represented in the results of the research. The length of time that you participate in the research is dependent on your availability and interest. Most interviews will require only one visit, but follow-up interviews may be requested if more time is required or if the researchers need to verify information.

What will Happen to the Information that you Provide: Any audio, video recordings, transcripts, or notes that document the information you provide will be kept confidential and will only be accessible by members of the research team. The research team will store these records in a locked cabinet and will only be used in association with the project. If copies of the records will be left in your community, the researchers will ensure that they are kept in a similar, secure manner.

Right of Research Participants: You can choose whether to be in this study or not. You may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may exercise the option of removing your data from the study. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don’t want to answer and still remain in the study. This study has
been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board and the Nunavut Research Institute. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Project Leader</strong></th>
<th><strong>Research Ethics Coordinator</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Ben Bradshaw</td>
<td>Sandra Auld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept. of Geography, University of Guelph</td>
<td>University of Guelph</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guelph ON N1G 2W1</td>
<td>437 University Centre</td>
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<td>Telephone: [removed for this thesis]</td>
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APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Participant Consent Form

Project Title: Indicators of community wellness in the Hamlet of Baker Lake

Project Description: This work aims to develop a set of approximately 50 indicators of wellness for the hamlet of Baker Lake in the context of mining. The development of these indicators will enable the long-term monitoring of health in the hamlet.

Contact Addresses:
1) Student Researcher: Sophie Maksimowski, MA Candidate, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, N1G 2W1; Local Phone: [removed for this thesis]

2) Research Supervisor: Ben Bradshaw, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1; Phone: [removed for this thesis]

Medium of interview: face to face, digitally recorded (if permission granted),

Conditions of release of recorded information: The recorded information gathered will not be released.

Statement of informant rights: I have been fully informed of the objectives of the project being conducted. I understand these objectives and consent to being interviewed for the project. I understand that steps will be undertaken to ensure that this interview will remain confidential unless I consent to being identified. I also understand that if I wish to withdraw from the study, I may do so without repercussions.

____ I give permission for digital recording
____ I give permission for the audio tape to be deposited securely with the researcher
____ I desire that my identity and the information I provide be confidential

OR

____ I am happy for my identity to be made public and the information I provide be attributed to me

Name (please print): ____________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________________

Signature of witness: ___________________________ Date: __________________________
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, N1G 2W1

1) Name: [Name]
Title: [Title]
Institution: [Institution]
Email: [Email]

2) Name: [Name]
Title: [Title]
Institution: [Institution]
Email: [Email]