

PATHWAYS TOWARD RECONCILIATION IN CANADIAN RESOURCE EXTRACTION

Corporate Social Responsibility in Addressing Indigenous Rights:
Pathways Toward Reconciliation in Canadian Resource Extraction

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a concept and useable framework for creating space for Indigenous voices within the Canadian natural resource extraction sector. To better understand extraction sector companies' approach to CSR when engaging Indigenous communities, a total of 18 interviews were conducted with various leading stakeholders within the resources extraction industry across Western Canada. Findings revealed that greater emphasis is being placed on utilising Indigenous relationships to fulfil the requirement of doing business in Canada, rather than an opportunity to genuinely collaborate with communities in a commitment to reconciliation. In an industry that operates around profit-centric performance based on the commodification of land, a basis has been set for relationship building that is predominantly transactional. The transactional approach to social engagement perpetuates a neocolonial power differential between the extraction industry and First Nations, which exposes industry monopolizing power through a patrimonial role as expert. Consequently, Indigenous inclusion takes the form of espoused industry practices rather than recognizing the unique insight of each Nation and their relationship with the land. This study, therefore, considers how CSR strategy can alternatively protect, respect, and empower Indigenous rights in tandem with long-term economic security. Additionally, it will provide recommendations on how, through collaboration with Indigenous communities, companies can move beyond transactional consultation to transformational.

Keywords: Corporate policy; Indigenous relations; Decolonization; Corporate social responsibility; Human resource management; Inclusion.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In September 2023, the Trans Mountain Pipeline project went before the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) to argue that less-invasive construction methods were unfeasible and exceedingly costly, requesting the obligation to use such methods be lifted while building the pipeline through the Thompson-Nicola region. The project's operations threaten a sacred site known to the Secwépemc Nation of Tk'emlúps (Kamloops BC) as Pípsell, the western name being Jacko Lake (Razavi, 2023). Secwépemc Nation members had repeatedly requested that care be taken when building the pipeline in this area, as to not disturb the sacred region. Trans Mountain had initially agreed to a costly, less-invasive method known as micro-drilling to dig under and around the lake to honour the concerns (Razavi, 2023). However, when faced with the time and cost it would take to genuinely uphold their responsibility to the Nation, the project elected to save costs. The CER ultimately ruled in favour of the company's request, giving Trans Mountain the right to use a more disruptive method to build the pipeline next to the lake, which is now underway (Razavi, 2023). This dispute shows the link between profit, cost, and the extent of a company's social responsibility.

The purpose of this study is to examine what action is being taken within the Canadian natural resource extraction sector to honour reconciliation and recognize Indigenous rights. The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is used as a lens, specially with the aim of uncovering how reconciliation is framed by companies in the resource extraction industry. From this, I have investigated the efficacy of government enforced consultation as an ethical commitment extraction sector companies make under the title of CSR, and whether this practice makes an essential difference in the way companies go about engaging with reconciliation and

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Indigenous communities. While the resolve to recognize Indigenous rights has been articulated by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) since 2007, the non-binding resolution remains relatively inconsequential in changing how companies in the industry engage with their impact on Indigenous communities (Carlson, 2017). What is the reason behind the laggard response of the industry? Profit-driven principles continue to command industry practice, informing another non-binding framework, CSR, which influences how and when companies commit to reconciliatory action (Crook, 2005).

The resource extraction industry has immense social, economic, political, and environmental implications across Western Canada, especially regarding priority issues such as its impacts on the environment and local Indigenous populations (Visser & Tolhurst, 2010). As both public and private institutions have begun to prioritize reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples of Canada, debates over the social impacts of the extraction industry have risen in volume and vitality across public awareness and interest (Takach, 2021). These matters of reconciliation are relevant to the social impact of the extraction industry due to its fundamental link to neocolonialism through neoliberalism that leads to the exploitation of traditional land for profit. Consequently, the intertwined issues of social, economic, and environmental justice have become a substantial component of the CSR obligation of extraction sector companies (Takach, 2021). The Trans Mountain pipeline controversy encapsulated the cost-sensitive approach that pervades through all facets of industry practice where corporate responsibility extends as far as profit and cost allow. The situation calls into question government legislation, the extraction industry, and the Canadian legal system in their capability to meaningfully address

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and regulate the fundamental principle that Indigenous Peoples in Canada must grant free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) (Razavi, 2023).

With the hope of contributing to the narrative on the future diversification of business conduct, this research will investigate if there is room within the extraction industry's corporate policy to accommodate the linkage of Indigenous and non-Indigenous practice. The results will seek to raise awareness and encourage action to recognize Indigenous ways of knowing within corporate policy. The incorporation of Indigenous voices into corporate policy and decision making could allow for CSR to expand to be into a practice that involves more of a holistic look at what a company can achieve through their community involvement. Traditional knowledge remains centred on community focused conduct, with the emphasis on future generations seen in many Indigenous cultures. Led by this sentiment, CSR could become a practice that looks forward, taking proactive efforts to address social issues instead of attempting to remedy issues after they have occurred. Additionally, CSR practice could become more based in reciprocity to inform CSR as an obligation corporations have to their communities and the land. Especially in resource extraction, it would translate into to more equitable sharing of financial benefits and potential environmental consequences. Finally, the inclusion of Indigenous influence in corporate practices could also contribute to increased sustainability when it comes to the speed and quantity of resources harvested or extracted, as well as the use of less invasive processes.

Research Questions

This research pursuit began with the question: what work is being done within the resource extraction sector to incorporate and elevate Indigenous voices? As the project evolved, a greater focus was established on the social responsibly extractions companies have to Indigenous communities, and I began to investigate CSR strategy and its influence on the

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relationship building between extraction sector companies and local Indigenous communities.

Due to the flexibility of the semi-structured interview format that was selected for the data collection of the study, additional sub-questions were introduced to further explore CSR within resource extraction:

- In what ways does neoliberal hegemony dictate the current CSR strategies present in Canadian Resource extraction?
- Where does the reciprocal and sustainable approach of traditional knowledge find a place in an industry built on limitless growth?

Based on previous research conducted on the extraction field, the study conjectured that the current approach to CSR fails to authentically recognize Indigenous influences and fosters continued assimilation as opposed to endeavouring towards active reconciliation. Upon further investigation of the above questions, it was surmised that corporate community engagement and social initiatives are used as a substitute for the inclusion and acknowledgement of traditional knowledge within corporate practices (Interviewee 9, August 21, 2023). These research questions helped to explore the complex relationship between industry and Indigenous communities and uncover solution-based recommendations on how CSR can encompass the honouring of Indigenous rights. In addition, these questions enabled the dissection of the neoliberal capitalist practices that inform profit- driven resource extraction and utilize CSR as a convenient “legally non-binding framework” as opposed to tool to foster social impact (Hanlon, 2011, p.81).

Approach to Inquiry

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this program of study, this research aims to address the intersection between business, governance, and human rights to speak to how the interplay

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impacts the rights of Indigenous people in Canada. Constructivism has been selected as the theoretical approach with the aim of interpreting research participants' perceptions and personal experiences to gain an understanding of the influence of corporate governance and profit maximization on reconciliation and Indigenous rights. A social constructivism approach supports the idea that corporations construct the extent of what CSR means to them, why they undertake CSR activities, and how they disclose CSR action (Robertson & Samy, 2017). Robertson and Samy (2017) state that CSR research cannot rely on positivist mainstream quantitative techniques as these only offer a superficial reading of such a complex topic. Social constructivism provides the proper context to understand the power of CSR as an idea that acknowledges the human aspects, individual personalities and collective consciousness that govern CSR practices (Robertson & Samy, 2017). Through an anti-positivism, critical framework, qualitative analysis is used to create more informed reconstructions of participants' lived experience. This paradigm was selected to produce results that will not only help to raise awareness but speak to those within the field of resource extraction who may relate to the findings and be encouraged to take future action to ensure that Indigenous ways of knowing are properly recognized within corporate policy.

A multi-method approach was used to allow the constructive and critical paradigms to complement and reinforce each other. The methods used were chosen to capture an accurate representation of the current trends seen in the practice of CSR and Indigenous Relations. First, an extensive literature review was undertaken prior to commencing conversations with participants, so that I, as the researcher, had an understanding of the history of CSR, Indigenous rights, and natural resource extraction in Canada. Following, semi-structured interviews were used as the primary method of data collection to obtain firsthand insights from individuals who

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are embedded within the industry. The interviews were interactive and conversational, with the research questions designed to be broad to create space for candidness, creativity, and storytelling (Taylor, 2016).

Participant recruitment began with criterion sampling, relying on the network of the researcher and supervisor to source interviewees, but transitioned to snowball and chain sampling strategy once the interviews were underway. The sample of interview participants included both Indigenous and non-Indigenous industry professionals; however, due to confidentiality requirements stipulated in the Research Ethics Board (REB) approval for this project, the Indigenous identity of the specific participants have not been disclosed. With that said, I acknowledge the unique and diverse contributions of these participants and their distinct experiences as members of the First Nations that belong to the region in which this study took place.

Study Findings

Data gathered through the conversational interviews with elite industry experts mentioned above, revealed that partnerships between companies and Indigenous communities remain heavily dictated by the industry. Findings discovered that the relationships with Indigenous communities are often used by companies as a means to an end, when acquire a permit to operate, as opposed to the potential to collaborate and incorporate new voices on projects. Relationships take on a transactional nature as companies anticipate the receipt of an operation permit following community consultation. This approach fails to ensure Indigenous peoples gain long-term sustainable benefits from projects.

Extraction sector companies tend to approach their CSR obligations under the familiar guise of Environment, Social, Governance (ESG) standards and reporting, utilized to embed

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social responsibility into the existing creation of value for investors. Allotting CSR initiatives under the catch-all of ESG reporting allows for consultation and engagement with local communities to be classified as simply another expense, where extraction sector companies can operate following the usual profit driven process. This approach to CSR can also be financially beneficial in terms of being able to display such pursuits as a means of attracting additional investors (Ding, 2022, Kaul & Luo, 2018). The use of ESG reporting allows companies to continue to pursue limitless growth behind the mask of social awareness, while neglecting to observe the companies social influence outside of the financial implications (Interviewee 3, August 8, 2023).

CSR in resource extraction has also begun to play a pivotal role in a variety of new governance systems, specifically in the standard and regulation setting (Interviewee 3, August 8, 2023). A demand from Indigenous communities to enhance consultation and relationship building practice has revealed the inadequacies of current regulation. Legislation regularly fails to meet the current demands of these communities, leaving business to adjust the standard of practice simply to meet the requirements of the Nations they interact with (Interviewee 3, August 8, 2023). CSR initiatives, such as social engagement with local communities, has brought business into a greater governing role alongside national government, instituting the market and the relational networks within as regulatory mechanisms (Moon, 2015). This occurrence can be linked to the concept of ‘coordinated compliance’ (Potter et al., 2012) that stipulates the effects of coordinated business activity across neoliberal markets. The “coordination of trade and human rights practices eventually support efforts to build abstract regulatory institutions for coordinated implementation of trade and human rights standards” (Potter et al., 2012, p. 133). Extraction sector companies begin to ‘regulate’ themselves through their own standards that are established

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through the company's engagement with Indigenous communities. This is a relative lawless space that lacks any form of concrete regulation, especially when considering the abstract and voluntary framework of both CSR and the reconciliatory guidelines of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Nonetheless, interview participants noted the changes that have occurred regarding the power dynamics between industry and communities over the past decade. Now more than ever, there is a demand for companies to promote long-term benefits that will contribute to the overall well-being of a given community. With the progression of Indigenous inclusion in resource extraction, meaningful inclusion has begun to look like partial if not full ownership of projects. Regardless of such changes, there are still significant challenges when it comes to the inconsistent capacity across communities that determines their ability to establish themselves as equal partners. A consistent theme across conversations with experts is a call for infrastructure development, to not only to enhance overall well-being within communities but encourage the economic development stipulated in both UNDRIP and the TRC.

In the discussion of these findings, I inspect the gap that is the varied levels of business capacity within Nations and where there is space for industry to play a part in assisting with infrastructure and economic development. While previous research has investigated Indigenous ownership as a promising venture towards Indigenous inclusion and industry led reconciliation, there has been limited dialogue that holds the industry accountable for contributing to the public development required for communities to participate as equal partners on extraction projects. My research aspires to begin to address and fill this gap by articulating a more holistic look at what extraction sector companies can achieve through CSR. Where a company's social obligation

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extends to both relationship building as well as contributing to the economic and social development of communities.

Background

Origins of Corporate Social Responsibility

It is not an overstatement to say that for-profit corporations are a central figure in modern-day society, functioning as a key symbol of the current capitalist culture (Bowen, 1953). Decisions made by businesses affect not only the organization, its shareholders, staff, or customers, but have an impact on the lives, prosperity, and facilities of all society (Carroll, 1991). Furthermore, businesses contribute significantly to provisions that dictate the economic development of a given country, employment opportunities and subsequent income to workers, along with establishing the economic basis to advance public infrastructure (Bowen, 1953). When considering the extensive scope and consequences of private business operations and decisions, it becomes apparent that by virtue of such strategic placement and significant decision-making power, businesses must contemplate their social responsibility (Bowen, 1953). These social responsibilities transcend the typical financial obligations to shareholders but encompass the economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities of a business concerning the overall impact on stakeholders across society (Carroll, 1991). To fully recognize the influence of a business on society, CSR began to evolve over the 1950s (Roth et. al 2020), assigning a fundamental morality in the way a company behaves toward society (Bowen, 1953).

Regardless of its pertinence, CSR still exist as an abstract term with ambiguous implications for businesses. As Carroll (1991) articulates, while economic and legal responsibilities are seldom overlooked, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities continue to be less defined and approached as optional. CSR offers a convenient voluntary approach to the

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regulation of irresponsible business practices that lead to social and environmental consequences (Hanlon, 2011), distilling a prevalent suspicion of capitalism into a set of demands for action (Crook, 2005). CSR exists simultaneously as an idea, societal expectations of business, and business practice (Moon, 2015), resulting in a multitude of definitions and practices that are consistently reimagined to suit the requirements of a business. Interest in both their social perception and addressing broader societal concerns, including human rights, has led organisations to adopt CSR as a strategic element that is intricate to how business is done. Businesses have found that a display of social consciousness goes hand in hand with attracting employees, customers, and investors (Moon, 2015). Baker and Roberts (2011) go as far as to say CSR can be understood as a strategic technique to rephrase corporate capitalist goals in ethical terms to manipulate how the corporation is viewed by its stakeholders (p. 9). CSR can hence be observed as a piece of neoliberal capitalist ideologies that legitimizes capitalism instead of challenging it (Roth et al., 2020).

CSR operates on the assumption that corporations can address and solve even large-scale social and environmental problems, fostering the anticipation that business and society can be reconciled, and that capitalism can solve the problems it creates (Caldwell et al. 2008). As markets have become increasingly socialised as non- economic, new terms have been introduced to maintain the idea that formerly economically exclusive focused companies can properly address non-economic issues (Moon, 2015). In conjunction with CSR, ESG has emerged to engage with the new-found interest typical shareholders have taken to a company's social and environmental activities (Torres et al., 2023). As companies respond to and reinforce the trend of social responsibility, they have consolidated CSR as 'business as usual' using ESG. The use of ESG to communicate value to investors allows for companies to navigate and engage with their

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social impact on a familiar landscape, that of maximizing profits for shareholders. Here ESG permits the assignment of economic value to the management of social issues, to reinforce the idea that all problems can be addressed and resolved by capitalist means.

While this phenomenon can be interpreted as increased social efforts from the private sector, the sustained emphasis on profit driven objectives delegitimizes the fundamental social responsibility of a business and threatens the authenticity and overall impact of CSR practice (Kaul & Luo, 2018). As CSR situates companies as responsible for what can be considered public goods historically delivered by publicly owned entities, the goal of profit maximalization paired with the deliverance of social services creates potential divergence between the financial and social impact of CSR (Kaul & Luo, 2018). For instance, “any profits realized from CSR represent the privileging of shareholder interests over those of other stakeholders, which may prove unsustainable when it comes the recognition of certain stakeholder needs” (Kaul & Luo, 2018, p.3). The overlap of this greater social influence with profit motivated results pushes the boundaries of what can be determined as competitive social impact or strategic manipulation. The distinction depends on how a company chooses to balance CSR with their profit-making objectives.

Calls to Action for Business

The basis of my argument and analysis of CSR practice in resource extraction will be positioned around the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) Calls to Action, specifically those directed at businesses to facilitate reconciliation. My focus will be on the TRC’s 92nd call to action:

The call [for] the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework

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and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources.

(p.10)

It is from this request that I link reconciliation to the social responsibility of companies across the resource extraction sector. The need for reconciliation is born of a burdensome and often violent history of colonialism that isolated Indigenous peoples socially, culturally, economically, and geographically (Scott, 2020). As an industry that has profited for decades from the production of natural resources on traditional land and facilitated the exclusion of Indigenous communities, extraction sector companies find themselves ethically and morally bound to meet the calls to action in the TRC (Takach, 2021). The operations of these companies have direct consequence on the well-being of these communities and can be seen as deeply related to issues of social, economic, justice and sustainability (Takach, 2021). By virtue of their powerful position in resource extraction, extraction sector companies have an obligation to actively engage with their CSR practices to addresses the far-reaching social and economic implications that have been inflicted upon these communities.

When attempting to address the calls to action, many resources extraction sector companies solely focus on the call to “commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p.10). However, once the consultation has been completed and an operation permit acquired, inconsistencies appear regarding how companies continue to include community members or where action is taken to further support social and economic development. This proves to neglect the latter call to action outlined for businesses, which

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necessitate the legitimate inclusion of Indigenous voices on a project, along with the provision of lasting economic benefits. Specifically, when “[ensuring] that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p.10).

Here is where the TRC is used inappropriately by companies, like that of CSR, where an abstract and essentially non-compulsory framework results in companies picking and choosing how and when they take responsibility for their social impact, and in this case acknowledge reconciliation. The TRC’s calls to action are observed as optional due to the lack of regulatory enforcement and consequences. This voluntary nature on both fronts means for minimal private sector compliance and varied degrees of commitment to inclusion across extraction sites. With that said, effective action on the TRC has made headway in the form of Indigenous ownership on extraction projects; however, it remains unclear where the responsibilities of corporations lie in the pursuit of this endeavour.

Addressing the Call for Indigenous Inclusion

Across Western Canada, Indigenous-led energy projects are emerging amidst calls for a just transition in the industry, recognition of Indigenous rights, and an acknowledgement of the need to rebuild industry–Indigenous relationships (Miller & Parkins, 2023). Indigenous communities across Canada are increasingly investing in energy initiatives, energy efficiency measures, and natural resource extraction projects that centre community members as decision makers, owners, and beneficiaries (Creamer et al., 2018). Through economic development and the building of business capacity within these communities, First Nations can begin to reclaim

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control over the resources, wealth, and health of the land through community decision making (Creamer et al., 2018).

Such transitional ownerships look towards an alternative more ‘people-centered’ economic approach to resource extraction as opposed to solely profit (Creamer et al., 2018). Although Indigenous owned energy projects are becoming more common, the feasibility of Indigenous equity ownership often differs across regions and communities with variable levels of understanding, promotion, support, and infrastructure. With the increased demand for community involvement and reconciliation in the extraction sector, how companies choose to enact their CSR could be pivotal to supporting the development of both infrastructure and training that prepare communities to take partial if not full project ownership.

The Implications of Working Within Colonial Institutions

The potential exists by which resource extraction initiatives can perpetuate the colonial structures of exploitation where non-Indigenous companies continue to hold power over and profit from the use of traditional land (Maclean et al. 2014). Since industry processes generally follow well-established practices that are often only compatible with existing regulatory frameworks and neoliberal markets (Maclean et al. 2014), there has been criticism regarding their lack of transformative power (Peterson et al. 2005). Due to these limitations, relationships between non-Indigenous companies and Indigenous communities may only serve to legitimize the hegemonic power of the companies and the state and fail to recognize and advance Indigenous rights (Maclean et al. 2014). This makes the evaluation of the social impacts of resource extraction essential to the pursuit of reconciliation across the industry.

An additional critical observation is that the field of CSR is one that is riddled with biases (Erdiaw-Kwasie, 2023). CSR ineffectiveness commonly relates to heavy reliance on past

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experiences and processes in CSR creation regardless of changing business environments and industry perspectives (Abuya, 2016). CSR practice and implementation depends significantly on human cognitive abilities resulting in cognitive bias that creates a gap in how businesses enact CSR and how they communicate their CSR, weakening the overall effectiveness (Erdiaw-Kwasie, 2023). As a researcher in this arena, I have chosen to approach the topic with thoughtful optimism while acknowledging the potential for exploitive relationships and participant bias. More specifically, as a white settler discussing the implications of race and culture on business, I recognize my unique position as a researcher in this field. My analysis is not an attempt to dominate or minimise the voices of Indigenous peoples in this industry, nor am I attempting to provide an all-encompassing solution to be imposed on Indigenous peoples (Stefanelli et al., 2018).

Conclusion

This chapter has comprised the origins of CSR, evaluating the practice as both an attempt to address the call for greater social involvement, along with a convenient voluntary approach to regulation that supports neoliberal capitalist economics. This latter approach is prevalent in the CSR practice of resource extraction sector companies, where consultation with Indigenous communities is approached as a box to be checked or simply another cost on a project. The TRC Calls to Action articulates the social obligation extraction sector companies have to Indigenous communities beyond basic consultation, where the 92nd requisition outlines how Canadian businesses may endeavour towards reconciliation through authentic inclusion. More genuine reconciliatory efforts in the resource extraction sector have involved Indigenous led resource management, satisfying both the call for inclusion and equal representation of communities in decision making.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following literature review seeks to understand the historical and contemporary context of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a general business concept and across the resource extraction industry. In this chapter, I aim to demonstrate the influence profit maximization has on CSR practice and explore alternatives to this blueprint that engage with collaborative, people-centred incentives. First, I will explore the history of CSR, both across business practice and within the extraction industry. This is done through a review of recent academic literature that investigates and evaluates the impact of CSR practice. This is paired with literature that analyzes the impacts of resource extraction on local communities and the effectiveness of the strategies used to mitigate those impacts. Next, the concept of neoliberal capitalism will be dissected, specifically in relation to the implications the ideology has on resource extraction and the industry's approach to CSR and Indigenous communities. I will then consider previous recommendations that have been made by researchers regarding how to better address Indigenous knowledge integration across resource management, exploring community ownership as a catalyst for the introduction of new voices in decision making. The chapter concludes with a case study that explores the benefits of collaborative governance between extraction sector companies and Indigenous communities. From this, I articulate the potential for CSR to encourage genuine reconciliatory action when detached from profit and refocused on collaboration between stakeholders.

Expansion on CSR as a Business Concept

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is considered as a “broad field discussing issues related to legal compliance, philanthropy, corporate governance, environmental sustainability, market relations, community, workers rights, and other welfare practices” (Waheed & Zhang,

2022, p.837). CSR defines an organization's commitment to take responsibility for its stakeholders to earn the utmost trust in the company (Saenz, 2019). The practice relates to the moral purpose of business and its good relationship to society (Mitnick et al., 2023). The emergence of CSR scholarship has brought to the forefront the role of business firms in the public sphere to introduce differing definitions of CSR which comprise political and citizenship responsibilities for businesses (Goodman & Mäkinen, 2022). This includes engagement in global governance or providing public goods and services which governments cannot or will not offer. Here firms are found "to *democratize* their processes and structures to engage with diverse stakeholders in a step toward increasing their legitimacy as actors working for the public good" (Goodman & Mäkinen, 2022, p. 251).

Since its initial development in the early 1950s, CSR has matured in theory and practice. The practice has moved through stages of greed, philanthropy, marketing, management, and now responsibility (Carroll, 2021). The initial phases of CSR remained preoccupied with philanthropy, community relations, image building, and CSR departments (Carroll, 2021). These traits do prevail in contemporary CSR as the characteristics that form the foundation, however, there has been minor noticeable shifts. A change from "image driven to performance-driven; from specialized to integrated; from standardized to diversified; from Western to Global" (Carroll, 2021, p. 1270). The basis of current CSR is additionally rooted in value creation, strong governance, societal and stakeholder contributions, along with environmental integrity, with sustainable networks (Carroll, 2021).

Ahmed & Streimikiene (2021) refers to the idea that socially responsible companies are superior to competitors in terms of recognizing opportunities to address and remedy social issues, build interest, and simultaneously help communities. Organizations can improve their

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reputation and through CSR practices (Lu et al., 2020), moreover, environmental and social responsibility can lower operation costs, leading to higher profits and increased competitiveness (Ahmed & Streimikiene, 2021). Ultimately, CSR enables the strategic management of external and internal challenges that come with ecological and social systems (Liczmańska-Kopcewicz et al., 2019). Internal CSR practices address internal audiences and take the form of setting up ethical codes of conduct, employee health and safety, work–life balance, trainings, protection of human rights, equal opportunity, and diversity practices (Zaman et al., 2020). External practice includes actions that target external audiences and include partnerships with charity organizations, philanthropy, environmental and community focused practices, and CSR reporting and awards (Zaman et al., 2020).

As the call for social responsibility continues, businesses are endeavoring to integrate CSR practices to effectively engage the internal and external stakeholders to build long-term relationships (Tian, 2022). Organizations endeavor to seek and adopt innovative practices for business success, with the incorporation of CSR practices beginning to be a pivotal element when enhancing relationships with various stakeholders (Arellano et al., 2020; Waheed & Zhang, 2022). Due to its overarching impact and implications on business practice CSR has received significant focus from researchers, specifically when exploring how such practices act as a prime factor of corporate competitiveness, sustainable performance, and profit maximization (Waheed and Yang, 2019). Researchers have suggested CSR as a prime driver of firms' performance such as environmental performance, financial performance, social performance, sales performance, and overall performance (Khan et al., 2019). This has occurred in tandem with organizations recognizing that CSR activities can support the obtaining of economic profit

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as society becomes increasingly conscious regarding the social impact of corporations (Waheed & Zhang, 2022).

Organisations can indicate their competitiveness to stakeholders when it comes to due diligence and their performance regarding their human rights responsibilities (Torres et al., 2023). In a highly competitive market environments, organizations use CSR as a differentiation mechanism to further elevate their authenticity (Markovic, 2021). Through being responsible and contributing in a positive manner to society, organizations can further improve stakeholder perceptions of their sincerity, quality, and legacy, in comparison to other organization that could be equally or more appealing (Markovic, 2021). Achieving sustainable success and performance is a notable aspect for organizations to survive in competitive marketplace (Waheed & Zhang, 2022). Thus, company's have been noted to make a conscious effort to embed CSR practice into the ethical culture shared and valued by the company.

With that said, as its relevance as a business concept grows, research on CSR is continuously evolving. Several studies on CSR have used stakeholder theory to develop a conceptual model that encompasses social concerns, regulatory concerns, stakeholder concerns, and economic concerns, linked to organizational performance (Barboza, 2019; Brunk & de Boer, 2020). Tian (2022) states that stakeholder theory allows researchers to evaluate the impact of distinct social practices in diverse contextualization, "to help grasp the phenomena related to different complexities in unique environments and community spaces" (Vitolla et al., 2019, p. 1567). The theory proves useful when exploring the phenomena related to social aspects addressed through CSR, in which issues are examined from all the perspectives of stakeholders either internal or external (Tian, 2022). Results from these studies have successfully demonstrated that through addressing social and public concerns, along with the environment,

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companies have the opportunity to demonstrate a positive and significant influence on organizational competitiveness. This encourages organizations to combine CSR events with social and economic goals to gain stakeholders' support along with market competitiveness (Orazalin, 2020).

Nonetheless, critics identify that CSR additionally serves as an opening to expand markets and increase overall economic influence and business profits (Schneider, 2019). This market expansion involves the extending of market relations through a firm's increased influence on various aspects of a social climate (Schneider, 2019). The role of CSR in this process is most apparent where CSR activities affect marginalized stakeholders. While often well intended, "CSR actions can result in distinct power asymmetries where corporations often hold the power to unilaterally demand and implement codes of conduct and impose systems of compliance" (Schneider, 2019, p. 1306). Local stakeholders often find themselves bearing the increases in costs that result from CSR initiatives and for that reason such systems become tools for extracting economic surplus (Schneider, 2019). In this case, CSR allows economically and politically powerful corporations to alter the social environment of their stakeholders according to economic principles (Schneider, 2019).

Researchers have additionally begun to assess the aspects that contribute to the success of CSR approaches, along with analysing the extent to which a corporation acknowledges their social responsibility (Widad et al., 2022). Assessment tools include a range of the following dimensions: social accountability, corporate governance, environment protection and sustainability, ethics and human resources, and organisational strategic planning systems (Widad et al., 2022). These dimensions enable how an organisation takes accountability for the impact of its decisions and activities to integrate social responsibility throughout the organisation and its

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relationships. When assessing CSR regarding corporate governance, the majority of research has focused on internal mechanisms, whereas external and internal corporate governance collectively shape an organization's CSR outcomes (Zaman et al., 2020). These mechanisms are strategically different and hold unique focus and implications on internal and external stakeholders. Research that considers the differences between internal and external CSR actions can bring more attention to the foundations of CSR that bridge internal outcomes related to employees and managers and external organizational outcomes in the form of financial returns and community impact (Zaman et al., 2020).

A more recent dimension used in researchers' assessment – increasingly relevant to both the social responsibility of organizations and the subject matter of this thesis – is community involvement and development. Community involvement and development explores the organisation's relationship within the territories and communities in which it operates (Widad et al., 2022). Relationships with actors in a company's community involves employment creation and skills development to establish itself as a member of the community and/or recognize the other members of the communities they support (Widad et al., 2022). Community involvement and development responsibilities hold attention to “an organization's community engagement, education and culture, employment creation and skills development, technology development and access, wealth and income creation, as well as social investment” (Widad et al., 2022). This dimension is pointedly relevant when acknowledging stakeholder relationships, where ongoing discussions involving stakeholder interactions and networks create, maintain, and enhance an organization's ability to create value (Lee, 2020).

Ultimately, evaluation of CSR is determined by the actual performance: who gains or loses from implementation, as well as how those gains and losses are judged morally appropriate

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when consider against an organization's financial performance (Mitnick et al., 2023). The reasoning behind CSR requires a moral piece. As Mitnick et al. notes (2023), "valuing social welfare outcomes is not the same as valuing moral outcomes" (p. 195). Actions that increase the social good of shareholders by increasing the firm's value reflect an emphasis on one major stakeholder relationship, however, such actions are not necessarily morally desirable for all stakeholders involved. Moral norms imply an ultimate requirement for CSR action to be identified with a moral direction. This allows practices to be based on ethical principles of right and wrong, not of profit centric pursuits and shareholder expectations (Mitnick et al., 2023).

A History of Monetary Led Corporate Social Responsibility

A common misconception when it comes to the topic of decolonizing and reconciliation across business practice, is that corporate community engagement and social initiatives are a suitable substitute for the incorporation and recognition of traditional knowledge within a business conduct (Parsons, 2008). This phenomenon is explored in Richard Parson's research on the "influence of western discourses of 'community engagement' in an Australian Aboriginal community" (Parsons, 2008, p.99). This research discusses the concepts of "sustainable development", "corporate social responsibility" and "community engagement", which are often mentioned as evidence that corporations are appropriately responding to critics regarding their historical wrongdoings (Parsons, 2008). This evaluation of CSR criticizes the inherent assumption that modern-day capitalism can properly address environmental and social concerns with monetary recompense. Parson's study showcases how both the prior and current approaches to Indigenous involvement only serves to "internalise harmful discourses, neutralise opposition, and maintain both capitalism authority and colonial power systems" (Parsons, 2008, p.108).

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Parsons concludes that these historical power relationships limit the capacity to challenge the beliefs of the colonial-capitalist design.

In a 2020 study, researchers criticized the use of sport-based programming led by extraction sector companies in Indigenous communities in northern Canada. Through this research a broader judgement was made on the concept of CSR work, where sports development programs established in Indigenous communities are thought to demonstrate corporate commitment to sustainable development, as opposed to safeguarding a “social licence to operate” (Millington et al., 2020, p.522). The act of employing CSR strategies disguised as a community-oriented gesture, while still relying on an historically exploitative relationship between the resource extraction sector and Indigenous communities, acts as a basis for most contemporary CSR work (Millington et al., 2020). The study explores the motivations and tactics of the resource extraction industry that continually default to the colonial practice of acquiring claim to land and strategically excluding and marginalising the Indigenous peoples. Not only do these strategies directly invalidate the knowledge and practice of the respective Indigenous groups, but the resource exaction inhibits access to the land for traditional ceremonies that monetary gestures cannot replace (Millington et al., 2020). In these instances, it is rare that CSR provides effective solutions when addressing the TRC’s call for reconciliation, especially in enabling the inclusion of Indigenous consultation and knowledge. This study made a point to expose CSR for its ineptitude as opposed to displaying it as a proactive solution, with the aim of engaging with industry to examine the resource extraction sector’s influence in Indigenous communities (Millington et al., 2020).

In referring to Brad Long’s research, the concept of CSR and its ineffectiveness in facilitating reconciliation is once again evaluated. In particular, Long argues that “a true

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appreciation of Indigenous practices requires, for starters, an appreciation of place and context, of collective and common values, of ecological connection with nature and opposition to colonial or global powers” (Long, 2022, p.22). Long’s study problematize how companies can “construct a public image of their benevolence towards broadly conceived homogeneously identified Indigenous issues while simultaneously exploiting land to which particular aboriginal communities are connected” (Long, 2022, p.22). This study conjects that if efforts towards reconciliation are to forge a commitment to mutual respect, then a framework in which Indigenous spiritual and cultural values are allowed to shape the project processes and economic development is necessary.

When businesses interact with a Nation their operations impact, the concept of spirituality and the people’s connection with the land in question remains largely absent from discourse surrounding CSR and company–government–community engagement (Long, 2022). This is in stark contrast to the unique spirituality practised within these communities, where a social, cultural, and spiritual attachment to the land is often viewed as interconnected with understandings of business and economic systems and processes (Long, 2022). When extraction sector companies fail to acknowledge and respect the importance of place during negotiations with a Nation, the spiritual foundation of communities is significantly undermined (Long, 2022). No progress can hope to be made in addressing the reconciliation called for by the TRC without a fundamental realignment of the economic motivations that informs commercial activity. New processes are needed that are “grounded upon respect for the environment and a sense of responsibility for the well-being of future generations” (Long, 2022, p.25). This means dramatic changes to the CSR discourse, accentuating the need for such regimes to be “restructured around

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an Indigenous spiritual framework in which a holistic understanding of the natural and human worlds and attachment to land predominate” (Long, 2022, p.25).

This begs the question of land claim and whether the current organisational structure has the capacity to properly grasp such a deep connection with the land and a Nation’s claim to it. Thus arises a paradox; with most private corporations operating on a stakeholder model, problems become evident when considering Indigenous people being granted stakeholder status by a company that operates on stolen land. The stakeholder model reduces the unique rights, deep cultural connections, and extended residence on traditional land; denoting only partial claim to land that is inseparable from an Indigenous community’s existence (Long, 2022). As Long (2022) states “Indigenous groups are not conventional stakeholders” (p.21), so it cannot be quantified that Indigenous rights are the same as stakeholder rights. It follows that an economic value attributed to land and resources is fundamentally incompatible with the values and interests of Indigenous peoples, dismissing the cultural importance attached to the landscape. From this, an alternative approach to CSR and Indigenous inclusion is recommended, where the relationship with Nations is differentiated from the standard approaches to community engagement used with other stakeholder groups. These relationships would go beyond the oversimplification of solely consulting with Nations but would involve incorporating a deeper understanding of “the complex nature of Indigenous cosmologies” into the practices of the business itself (Long, 2022, p.22).

Through company audits, researchers have explored what is considered effective implementation strategies for new CSR initiatives that “recognize the needs of the Indigenous communities and gauged the adaptability of operational level managers” (Sethi et al., 2011). At the forefront of this research is an emphasis on organisational culture and how it is imperative to

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either the success or failure of implementing Indigenous knowledge effectively into corporate strategy. A proper assessment of culture will include a socio-political analysis of the work environment and the company's ability to establish new methods and adjust to meet external challenges (Sethi et al., 2011). The internal conditions of corporate culture, history, and top management's vision and decision-making style will ultimately dictate the reaction to alternative business practices (Sethi et al., 2011). The conclusions from these audits suggest an outcome-orientated business approach as the essential guideline for other companies creating new organisational codes of conduct that recognize the future centred aspects of Indigenous culture (Sethi et al., 2011). While these insights provided helpful guidance for what elements are necessary for actively incorporating Indigenous identities into corporate conduct, it fails to detail how to achieve organisational change if a company's culture is still far from being ready to acknowledge Indigenous inputs.

Neoliberalism: When Profit Becomes Morality

When considering the CSR strategies explored in the previous section, a common critique made by researchers is that current approaches assume that monetary compensation is an apt solution for social justice issues. This method of fulfilling social responsibility falls in line with what is required of businesses under neoliberal principles. When it comes to for-profit business, Friedman (1970) states that CSR only serves to distract from the prime social purpose of business, arguing that this is done through "profit maximisation for shareholders". It is through this profit maximisation that businesses can make critical social contributions of employment, taxation, as well as improve and develop their ability to meet customer demands for their goods and services (Friedman, 1970). This assertion encapsulates the basic approach extraction sector companies take to their CSR strategy when addressing Indigenous communities. A common

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approach seen in the industry involves the recruitment of community members into labour roles, providing them with temporary employment (Long, 2022). As per Friedman's stance on the social obligation of a business, extraction sector companies are satisfying the aspect of providing employment opportunities in a way that is seamlessly incorporates into the existing business purpose of profit maximization.

Extraction sector companies are still mainly interested in making money whether this goal is stated plainly on their annual report or not (Crook, 2005). This prioritization of profit regularly leads to claims like those in the section above, that companies use CSR to "merely paying lip-service to the idea of moral and good corporate citizenship" (Crook, 2005, p.2). Such accusations are linked to the prioritization of profit when commercial interests and social well-being collide (Crook, 2005). Under neoliberalism, social and moral responsibility is assigned according to market logics, meaning CSR can only address social well-being as far as the capacity to financially benefit allows (Cohen, 2019). In her research, Wendy Brown (2003) contends that this is due to the neoliberal state encouraging and rewarding practices that shape human behaviour as *homo economicus*, categorizing effectively "all dimensions of human life in terms of a market rationality" (p.40). Brown identifies this as a transformation of the meaning behind ethics where, under neoliberalism, moral behavior becomes the consideration of costs, benefits, and financial outcomes (Cohen, 2019). Through a system that prioritizes wealth creation, the institution of human rights and security becomes intrinsically tied to capitalist targets (Braedley & Luxton, 2010). As a product of this system, CSR is designed and used to preserve such neoliberal economic and the profit-based morals it enforces (Hanlon, 2011). Through CSR, neoliberal processes become embedded in all community relationships and

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engagement strategies, standardising wealth creation alongside the provision of rights and inclusion.

Under the pretext of protecting, monitoring, and legislating human rights through corporate policy, CSR has also provided the grounds for companies to insert themselves into a local context and assume significance under the guise of socially conscious behaviour (Wouters, 2023). It is by these means that CSR operates as a tool used to apply neoliberal processes to the resolution of social issues even when addressing an issue created by a business following those such processes. Connell (2010) labels neoliberalism as “a historic project engineered to reform social structures and institutions” (Hanlon, 2011, p.80). These reformative tactics are evident in the use of CSR strategy to establish business-led solutions to social issues that evades the intervention of government legislation as per the neoliberal free market desires. Wouters (2023) indicates neoliberal institutions as both the producer and product of many historical socio-political contexts, specifically as they relate to colonial practices that enable the same reformative methods upon other systems. Neoliberalism justifies and supports colonial endeavours including the “commercial colouration of nature, the injection of outside capital, and the rearranging of relations between place, production, and social reproduction” (Wouters, 2023, p.101). Such comparisons have established neoliberalism and neocolonialism as powerful, distinct but nonetheless convergent, political, economic, and cultural forces (Hall, 1996).

In her research, Sharene Razack argues it is the persistence of colonialism through neoliberal practice that is the predominant influence which permeates through all institutions (Razack, 2016). As discussed above, long standing patterns of power have emerged as a result of neoliberalism, including the redefining of culture, value systems, business practice, and morality. This influence is pointedly evident in the resource extraction sector, where neoliberalism

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rationalizes the appropriation of stolen land, its people, and resources for profit (Takach, 2021). These forces prevail through continuous dispossession of both Indigenous land and the people who belong to the land (Razack, 2016). The connection between Indigenous rights violations and colonial dominance consistently fails to be recognized by the neoliberal system which utilizes the reaffirming practice of CSR to associate ethical and responsible conduct with that of profit maximizing market rationality (Brown, 2003). Across the extraction industry, CSR strategies allow for self-regulation that ultimately protects problematic practices from criticism (Hanlon, 2011). In order to be fully accountable for the impact on these communities, companies must explore their social responsibility beyond this profit driven format. The resolve to truly address reconciliation involves authentic relationship building along with the meaningful recognition and support of Indigenous rights and decision-making (Malin et al., 2019).

Decentring Profit Through Indigenous Ownership

In the pursuit of reconciliation in resource extraction, researchers have identified an alternative to current CSR practice, one that holds inclusion at the forefront as opposed to profit. Aiding with the economic development required for Indigenous co-ownership of extraction projects shows immense promise when elevating the voices of communities within industry, looking beyond the aim of making money to supporting community development (Miller & Parkins, 2023, Malin et al., 2019). Indigenous ownership poses a proactive approach to community involvement by offering practical applications of procedural justice, equity, and public empowerment that cultivate and nurture spaces where these outcomes are the primary goal of social and economic policy (Malin et al., 2019). The concept of community owned natural resource projects particularly highlights the importance of justice, drawing on themes such as “procedural justice—how decision-making occurs; distributive justice—how energy

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costs and benefits are allocated; and restorative justice— addressing injustices caused by ongoing resource extraction” (Miller & Parkins, 2023, p.47-48). Extraction projects have led to recurrent negative social consequences on Indigenous communities as the most affected stakeholder has been unable to effectively engage with the prospect of development or to properly participate in decisions to alleviate harms and have access to benefits (Malin et al., 2019). A range of studies have established this pattern of inequitable exposure, risk, and benefit across marginalized Indigenous communities, which companies consistently fail to address with current CSR policy (Mohai et al., 2009).

Research on the topic of Indigenous ownership goes beyond how Indigenous communities can contribute to extraction initiatives by identifying the unique vulnerabilities these groups have to extraction developments due to their remote proximity. This reveals how their exclusion from industry practice does not only contribute to unsustainable practices but ultimately jeopardizes the well-being of the communities. This risk is further articulated in the case of the Mount Polley Mining disaster. In 2014, the Mount Polley mine’s four-square kilometre tailings pond failed and released over 24 million cubic meters of water and mine tailings into surrounding waterways, depositing tailings silt up to ten metres thick at the bottom of Quesnel Lake. Residents of nearby Indigenous communities were only notified of the disaster by media reports or over Facebook, but not by the company or the province. This disaster directly impacted traditional territory, such as loss of access to sacred land, access to hunting, fishing, and traditional foods, as well as medicines, in three First Nations – Xat’sull First Nation, Williams Lake and Lhatko Dene First Nation. Such incidents showcase the meaningful involvement of Indigenous communities in resource management and extraction as a key component of a company’s social obligation. Research reinforces the social responsibility of

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companies in the extraction industry – who have monopolised power over extraction decision making – have to communities who their operation fundamentally impact (Hoffman et al., 2022).

In addition, Indigenous leadership in the development and carrying out of projects, to align with traditional ecological philosophies, can provide space for Indigenous knowledge to be applied to project procedures (Miller & Parkins, 2023). Community ownership provides a direct pathway to community-led decision-making through the presence of natural laws in project design; consideration for future generations; intergenerational engagement with Elders, knowledge keepers, and youth; and roles for governance bodies like an Elders senate (Miller & Parkins, 2023). This phenomenon is enforced by the significant success of the Haisla Nation in securing an environmental assessment certificate by the British Columbia provincial government to move forward with development in 2023. The Cedar liquefied natural gas is the largest First Nations-owned infrastructure project in the country and will employ approximately 500 people during construction and uphold 100 full-time jobs once operational. It will allow for unprecedented economic opportunity for both the Haisla Nation and for the communities within the region not only in the short-term, when creating new jobs, but long-term benefits through continued monitoring and maintenance by the nation. Furthermore, the granting of the environmental certificate through the government of BC, signifies support for economic reconciliation and establishes a precedent for the nation to take control of future decision-making and economic endeavors.

With that said, the varying levels of economic development across Indigenous communities requires additional support from both government and private sector players who have been the sole benefactors of resource extraction up until now (Miller & Parkins, 2023). The role of companies and developers is touched on regarding support for Indigenous involvement

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and ownership, grounding their work in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 92nd Call to Action for the corporate sector. Opportunities for capacity building, knowledge-sharing, and mentorship from private sector energy leaders are an increasingly promising path forward for the future success of Indigenous-owned energy projects (Buss et al. 2021). This is where CSR strategy can be executed in a way that aims to address the development of Indigenous owned extraction projects through mentorship, funding, and leadership programs. The role of central governments can moreover catalyse, inhibit, and shape projects through funding mechanisms and consistent policy positions that transform social norms and overall support for community-led extraction (Creamer et al., 2018). This involves building new narratives around CSR and community engagement through public policy and legislation that communicate the socio-economic and environmental benefits of an inclusive ownership transition (Miller & Parkins, 2023).

Collaboration as a Pathway to Reconciliation

When considering Indigenous ownership in resource extraction as a viable method for elevating the inclusion and influence of local communities, structural change is required in the industry to make this type of company-community collaboration possible (Creamer et al., 2018). The case study on the Ontario forestry industry in Zurba et al's *Pathway to Reconciliation*, serves to demonstrate new transitional models of social engagement and decision-making guided by these collaborative principles. This research explores the tensions that exist between conceptualizations of a profit driven industry and reconciliation, along with the structural shifts needed in natural resource governance to foster conscious and intentional reconciliation (Zurba et al., 2020). Through this study, former models of governance in resource extraction are criticized for often being solely driven by the desire to create "peace in the woods" (p.187) – to

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eliminate the conflict that requires expensive and lengthy negotiations between company and community. As mentioned previously, under neoliberalism the moral obligation of extraction sector companies is equated to their ability to mitigate costs and maximize profits (Brown, 2003). Therefore, it follows that past attempts to “collaborate” with Indigenous communities have been limited to basic negotiations grounded in minimizing cost. The authors place emphasis on the reminder that:

When considering the meaning of reconciliation, it is important to reflect on whether the desire for peace in the woods represents a desire for a system inclusive of culturally relevant justice mechanisms, or if it simply denotes the absence of direct conflict between First Nations communities and forestry companies. (Zurba et al., 2020, p.187)

Through this statement, the study challenges the effectiveness of social initiatives that operate with the sole intention of limiting difficulty and cost, as opposed to meaningfully considering reconciliation through changes in how they conduct social engagement.

To propose an alternative to the cost-sensitive CSR strategies that fail to challenge current business conduct and equate lack of conflict with successful partnership, this study engages with the contemporary conceptual framework of collaborative governance. Collaborative governance outlines a governing arrangement where public and private stakeholders engage in a collective decision-making process that is “formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative” and that aims to create, implement, and manage effective social programs (Ansell & Gash, 2007). In this instance, collaboration implies two-sided communication and equal influence between stakeholders, establishing the opportunity for all stakeholders to have their voice heard (Ansell & Gash, 2007). By holding all stakeholders to the same standards,

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collaboration also implies that even non-state stakeholders, such as extraction sector companies, hold real responsibility for policy outcomes and their social impact (Ansell & Gash, 2007). The concept of collaborative governance is employed here by the authors of *Pathways to Reconciliation* in the effort to engage the industry in ‘structural reconciliation’— “a process occurring within established institutions resulting in structural changes that promote equity and relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples" (Zurba et al., 2020, p.191). Here, Zurba et al. (2020) contend that structural reconciliation through collaborative governance can enable institutional transformation by means of rebuilding authentic relationships and evading the creation of policies that perpetuate colonial oppression.

Conclusion

Through this literature review, historical approaches to CSR within the extraction industry have been evaluated and analyzed based on their varied impacts on local communities and efficacy when addressing Indigenous rights. The influence of neoliberal capitalism on CSR was then identified, highlighting how this ideology equates morality to the following of market objectives and limits corporate responsibility to the maximization of profits. Next, the recent movement towards Indigenous ownership was examined in relation to elevating Indigenous inclusion across resource management, establishing Indigenous communities as an essential stakeholder in decision making. Finally, the conceptual framework of collaborative governance and structural reconciliation were woven together to establish collaboration as a platform for developing more effective CSR policy. Along this line of reasoning, by applying a collaborative dynamic between companies and communities, the voices of communities can be present in the development of social policies that impact community well-being. This joint influence on policy creation can assist in better recognizing the needs of each unique community in social policy and

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upend oppressive practices instead of servicing their protection. This approach to CSR holds the impact on a particular community at large, as opposed being structured around ensuring the creation of continual profit. Emphasis can be placed on the fundamental relations between companies and communities to transform oppressive practices into practices that reflect greater social accountability, equity and shared decision making.

Chapter 3: Approach and Methodology

This study aimed to dissect corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a construct, more specifically how Canadian extraction sector companies acknowledge and manage their social impact on Indigenous communities. Through this research, I endeavoured to establish a better understanding of the obstacles that exist to pursuing reconciliation in resource extraction. To do so, I first selected the specific regions of Alberta and British Columbia as the focus of this research pursuit, to investigate reconciliatory efforts within two provinces with heavily resource-based economies. All interview participants were sampled from the two provinces over the course of June 2023 to September 2023. In terms of data collection, this exploratory research was framed by natural resource justice and reconciliation literature relevant to the topics of collaborative ownership and Indigenous-led resources projects. In addition, content and discourse analysis were used to identify themes arising from 18 semi-structured interviews with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous corporate and governmental partners within the extraction sector. This included the mining, oil & gas, and forestry. A semi-structured, conversational interview format was chosen to elevate the voices of research participants and capture a comprehensive, candid description of contemporary CSR in resource extraction. I chose constructivist theory to explore and critique the neoliberal principle of profit maximization that inform resource extraction in contrast to the pledge to reconciliation.

Why Western Canada?

I selected the area of Western Canada, that is the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, as the focus of this study for both scope, recruitment purposes and the economic relevance of resource extraction in the regions. First, it was determined through discussion with the researcher's supervisor and committee that analysing CSR practice across all of Canada

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would only serve to saturate the findings and conclusions of the project. The selection is done to avoid generalisation of the plethora of Indigenous identities that exist across Canada, by placing focus on the particular relationship between companies in these provinces and the unique Indigenous groups who reside there. A narrowing of the scope to resource extraction sector companies and projects that occurred within the provinces of Alberta and/or BC allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the data collected. In addition, this focus produces effective and critical discussion on the impacts of the extraction industry in specific regions of the country. Second, due to the researcher's connections in Victoria BC, Kamloops BC and Calgary AB, there was a significant level of proximity and familiarity of both the industry and the regions. Familiarity with the region and the politics within the industry across both provinces allowed for the researcher to be more informed when cultivating a more comprehensive understanding from the insights gathered during interviews.

The two provinces were also selected due their acute relevance in the global field of resource extraction. Alberta is a main contributor to the global production of natural gas, with several notable oil & gas production companies with headquarters in Calgary due to proximity to the oil sands. This includes international oil production companies such as Shell, along with other major industry players such as Suncor Energy, Enbridge, Imperial Oil, Canadian Natural Resources Limited, and Husky Energy. Many extraction sector companies have additional headquarters established in Vancouver, as the city rests at the epicentre of the transportation of resources whether it be by coastal pipelines or shipping exports. How companies in these provinces choose to conduct their CSR in relation to reconciliation and Indigenous right is particularly informative when it comes to understanding the approach taken by the industry as a whole.

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Lastly, but by far the most important to this study, there is a uniqueness to the extraction projects that occur within these two provinces. Both provincial economies have heavily resource-based economies with most Canadian oil & gas production occurring in Alberta, earning 16% of the provincial GDP, and the sizeable forestry and mining industry in BC (Government of Canada, 2018). The extraction industries within these two provinces are also deeply intertwined, with a variety of notable prairie-coastal pipeline projects, all of which have had sizable impacts on Indigenous communities (Yousif & Smith, 2020). Furthermore, the implications of extraction are not consistent across the two provinces due to the different territorial agreements between each provincial government and Indigenous groups. For instance, all of Alberta is considered under Treaty agreements, including Treaty 6, 7 and 8, with only the furthest northeast corner of BC under Treaty 8 (Sherwin, 2021). Alternatively, most traditional territory in BC is considered *unceded* where title of the land was never formally transferred away from the First Nation belonging to the traditional territory (Sherwin, 2021). This means for a heightened level of ambiguity regarding how Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples regulate their territorial coexistence (Sherwin, 2021). Here, Indigenous rights are subject to different legislation and thereby different priority and treatment, varying the social obligation of extraction sector companies regarding how they interact with the community whose land they operate on. The lack of consistency between provinces is an added complexity for companies when developing their CSR policies, which this research has attempted to explore further.

Research Paradigm*Theory and Epistemology*

Previous research in this field have taken a constructivist approach, with the aim of dissecting the many factors that inform the practice of CSR including human aspects, individual

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personalities, and collective consciousness (Robertson & Samy, 2017). The constructivist lens is applied as a means of understanding the attitudes and ideas that govern how a company takes accountability, to establish a platform for challenging neoliberal hegemonies and conceptualization that have historically dictate corporate conduct (Carlson, 2017). These studies have used historical insights and qualitative data to carry out a structural analysis of corporate philosophy and critically examine the construct of CSR (Carlson, 2017). Using a constructivist view, researchers have arguing that CSR is a symbolically conveyed, communicative event, centred around the moral signaling of economic actors, which does not simply produce positive outcomes but also results in dysfunctional effects (Schultz, 2013). Based on these constructivist assertions, a picture of CSR comes about where the accountability discharged by a business is determined in the eye of the beholder, meaning what is considered under the realm of corporate responsibility can vary greatly from business to business.

My research falls into the classification of constructivist theory, taking a critical stance on the enduring neocolonial norms that have established a particular approach to CSR that voids a company's responsibility beyond making profit for shareholders. Constructivists generally define norms as "collective expectations for the proper behaviour of actors with a given identity" and "shared social understandings of standards of behaviour" (Hofferberth et al., 2011, p.211). CSR has emerged as a bundle of norms which created new notions of appropriate behaviour for private business actors regarding social and environmental standards, human rights and working conditions (Hofferberth et al., 2011). With that said, CSR norms are notoriously vague and are likely to differ in conceptions between businesses and individuals. This is where constructivist theory is helpful in application to this study, in regard to gaining an understanding of the various approaches and conceptualizations of CSR as it relates to reconciliation in Western Canada. This

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theory is particularly suited to the engagement research conducted for this thesis, where the microprocesses of organisations are investigated (Hofferberth et al., 2011). This approach recognized the attitudes of participants and the corporate culture as important when determining the extent of accountability attributed to reconciliation through CSR practises (Robertson & Samy, 2017).

The chosen epistemological foundation is that of constructivism, with the aim of gaining understanding through the interpretation of research participants' perceptions and personal experiences (Weber, 2012). The constructivist approach was selected to address the varying viewpoints that accompany the resolution of social justice issues in resource extraction. In reference to my research question regarding how neoliberal hegemony dictates CSR practices, I use constructivism to observe how neoliberal constructs embed into approaches to social responsibility. Particularly, I aimed to explore the constructs of profit maximization and reconciliation and understand whether meaningful steps towards authentic reconciliation can be taken through CSR under the current profit driven framework. I addressed these constructs through interviews with study participants, where I explored their conceptions of the social responsibility of the resource industry extraction as they relate to reconciliation.

Methodology

For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were utilized so as not to limit the scope of the findings, as reconciliation is a complex and evolving issue across Canada. A list of questions was prepared by the interviewer to guide the discussion (Appendix B), with significant space left open for participants to elaborate where they felt it was relevant to the topics discussed (Clifford et al., 2016). The structure is provided through a prearranged line of questioning but remains sufficiently general to still ensure flexibility. This flexibility allows for

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the telling of a detailed collective story, binding together seemingly unrelated people within an industry to identify a sociological community of those working around the same topic of reconciliation (Taylor, 2016). Once linked, the possibility for social action on behalf of the collective can become present (Taylor, 2016). Another main advantage of the semi-structured interview method is the way in which it encourages reciprocity between the interviewer and interviewee, enabling the interviewer to improvise follow-up questions based on participant's responses (Kallio et al., 2016). Follow-up questions can be asked to help clarify answers to the main questions, or further investigate a participant's response, while remaining focused on the issues that are familiar to the participant and central to the study (Kallio et al., 2016).

Semi-structured interviews are often referred to as informal or conversational interviews and have been noted as the most common interview technique used in qualitative research (Clifford et al., 2016; Taylor, 2005). Interviews for this study were structured as conversations to encourage participants to candidly share their experiences working in the field of CSR and community engagement in the extraction industry (Clifford et al., 2016). A qualitative research format was implemented in order to gain a phenomenological understanding of the approach to CSR in the resource extraction sector, specifically when confronting the topic of Indigenous Relations. With the aim of gathering in-depth insights on the current CSR strategies within the resource extraction field, this conversational interview format enabled the capacity to extract valuable qualitative data results.

While the conversational interview method can mean that personal biases of the participant permeate through the data collected, I chose to not avoid the biases that come with these topics, as I believed them to play an essential role in revealing the gaps within CSR and business conduct. Although knowledge and opinions varied between participants when it came to

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the Calls to Action and Truth & Reconciliation being an essential part of CSR, these responses were all the more valuable in showcasing the current gaps that exist within the private sector and revealed opportunities for further development and growth within CSR practices. Due to the pertinence of my research, I decided that pure objectivism would only serve to discredit the genuine experiences of the participants as well as the hardship and pain produced by extraction sector companies within Indigenous communities. These issues deserve the range of explicit expression, rather than the detached illusion of neutrality.

Analytical Approach

The qualitative research methodology of grounded theory was chosen to categorize and analyze findings, with the aim of generating theories and themes based on data grounded in the observed reality of the research context (Gourding, 2002). This approach involved a methodical process of data collection, categorization, and analysis to identify patterns and relationships in the data collected through semi-structure interviews (Gourding, 2002). To conduct my analysis, the data was categorized into current trends of CSR policy within the extraction industry. This was specifically in regarding the effectiveness of current practices to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) recommendations for how businesses may meaningfully engage with the Indigenous peoples of Canada. The basis of my analysis is positioned around the TRC as a way of encouraging business to facilitate reconciliation through alternative approaches to community engagement and business practice. From the data gathered from the interviews, I have discerned how corporations are actively altering both their community engagement and hiring practices to properly acknowledge Indigenous participation and reconciliation. In referring to the TRC, I evaluate how organisations are engaging with and creating roles for community

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members based on commitment to the 92nd Call to Action, and how these recommendations act as a guide for business operations and work with Indigenous communities.

The 92nd Call to Action asserts that the corporate sector follow the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as a reconciliation framework in their work with Indigenous communities through the three pillars of engaging in meaningful relationship building: ensuring equitable access to jobs; education and long-term community benefits; and providing education and training for staff (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p.10). The analyses of the data collected will refer to these pillars as evidence as to whether an organisation's CSR work engages effectively with community members during the development of a project. Effective involvement includes, but is not limited to, internal staff training, hiring a community liaison, including members in decision making conversations and training design process, and employing community members long-term.

Evidently, this evaluation criteria goes beyond standard CSR efforts taken by a company and focused on identifying purposeful awareness building and conscious efforts to adapt business conduct to produce long-term results for communities. This involves displaying actions that have been taken to break from traditional corporate social responsibility to consult with local Indigenous communities and identify where their voices have changed how business is done. Information drawn from these interviews has been further cross-referenced with the public promotion and published reporting on extraction sector company websites to determine the consistency between what organisations claim to be doing and the reality of CRS strategy to date. This is particularly crucial when establishing an understanding of how the TRC calls to action are being addressed by companies within the industry and if specific effort is reflected with the anecdotes shared verbally in the interviews. More simply, I will be evaluating whether

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current CSR policy is effective in addressing the specific Truth and Reconciliation Commission 92nd Call to Action and aligns with the call for authentic reconciliation.

Data Collection

To gather the necessary data, I have conducted a total of eighteen interviews with stakeholders from a selection of organisations across the resource extraction industry that operate within the regions of Alberta and British Columbia. This has included businesses in Kamloops along with Calgary, Vancouver, Victoria, and other regions across Western Canada. These interviews consisted of a total of six questions regarding CSR policy development, implementation, and maintenance, including specific questions on inclusionary efforts to incorporate Indigenous voices as a part of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) work (Appendix A). The interviews were conducted over the course of a total of 30 to 45 minutes depending on interviewee availability and the extent of content discussed. Due to the demand of professional schedules and the locations of those involved, the majority of the interviews took place digitally, utilising the video conferencing services, MS Teams. In person interviews took place in a private meeting room booked on campus.

Access to the interview participants were gained through my LinkedIn professional network, along with connections made with the help of my Project Supervisor, Robert Hanlon. Criterion-based sampling was conducted where participants were selected based on their job title and their proximity to CSR policy development and implementation. This included, but was not limited to, those holding job titles such as Public Relations Consultant, Environmental Consultant, Public Relations Coordinator, People and Culture Coordinator, Community Engagement Specialist, Indigenous Relations Manager and/or some variation. The sample of interview participants included both Indigenous and non-Indigenous industry professionals;

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however due to confidentiality requirements stipulated in the Research Ethics Board (REB) approval for this project, the Indigenous identity of the specific participants could not be disclosed. With that said, as a researcher, I acknowledge the unique and diverse contributions of these participants and their distinct experiences as member of the First Nations that belong to the regions in which this study took place.

Over the course of the interview process, recruitment changed from directly relying on criterion sampling and transitioned to snowball/chain sampling strategy as interviewees began referring other individuals in the industry who were interested in participating and sharing their insights. This sampling strategy was also used to combat the difficulty that came with gaining access to members of the targeted titles mentioned above. When it came to receiving an introduction to elite professionals in the extraction industry, I relied on my growing connections within the industry to recruit other members they know of that were information-rich regarding Indigenous relations in resources extraction. Out of the 25 individuals who were contacted to participate, 20 agreed to be interviewed. Due to the schedule demands of these respondents that resulted in schedule conflicts, 18 of the 20 were subsequently interviewed (Appendix A).

Ethics Review

Due to the sensitive nature of CSR and its connection to reconciliation, Indigenous rights, along with the ethical considerations that come with conducting interviews with individual participants, ethical approval was considered. This project was subject to an ethical review process from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at Thompson Rivers University where the interview approach and questions were reviewed to ensure there was minimal risk or harm to the participants. Prior to the interviews, all participants were provided an informed consent document which ensured each respondent was informed that they could stop the interview and

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have their data retracted prior to analysis and inclusion in the study if they so wished. An additional verbal informed consent script was read by the researcher before commencing the transcription of the interview. All interviewees were selected based on their direct involvement in the resource extraction industry, specifically in the field of CSR and Indigenous Relations. All participants were given the choice to remain anonymous or be credited.

When it came to navigating the risk associated with engaging with individuals regarding sensitive subjects within their professional lives, specific steps were taken to alleviate the chance of negative outcomes from the interview. To mitigate the employment risk, interviews were conducted off-site of the business in question. Interview locations included a private meeting room for in person interviews and a one-on-one MS Teams meeting room for virtual interviews. To ensure no identity was compromised, the names of the participants are not identified to preserve their anonymity. This also involved omitting the name of the organisation the interviewee works for, simply including their role and type of business, so it is not possible to link the interviews back to the interviewees. In terms of emotional risk mitigation, I provided documentation to inform participants of ways to further their education in Indigenous methodologies and effective ways of incorporating Indigenous insights into employment systems. This came along with educational resources that will help to be proactive with policy decisions going forward. Participants will be debriefed by way of a completed executive summary that outlines the research findings and summarised discussion. A summary of the research findings was made available February 2024.

Conclusion

Through this research, I endeavoured to establish a comprehensive and candid understanding of the efficacy of CSR in resource extraction to recognize and address

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reconciliation and Indigenous rights. In this pursuit, the regions of Alberta and BC were selected as the focus area of the project, due to the relevance of Western Canada in both national and international resource extraction. In addition, this selection permitted the exploration of the lack of legislative consistency between provinces as an added complexity for companies when developing CSR policies. The theoretical approach to this research was that of constructivism, acknowledging CSR as combination of norms, attitudes and ideas which have created new corporate philosophies of appropriate behaviour for private business regarding social and environmental standards, along with human rights. With the aim of gathering in-depth insights on the current CSR conceptualization within the resource extraction field, a semi-structured, conversational interview format was chosen to enable the capacity to extract valuable qualitative data results. Grounded theory analyses were used to identify common themes based on participant insights and assemble a clear picture of contemporary approaches to Indigenous inclusion.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

Based on the data and statements collected through interviews, this research offers four main findings. First, there is a lack of accountability within the industry when it comes to linking corporate social responsibility (CSR) to the field of Indigenous Relations (IR). Specifically, when acknowledging where these two practices are inherently connected to the call for reconciliation and building meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities. Second, findings have revealed the tendency of the extraction industry to continuously superimpose already existing practices and procedures on communities rather than involving them in the decision-making of a project. Third, extraction sector companies continue to approach CSR and community engagement as only a tool for doing business that helps to increase profits and the companies' bottom line. Finally, changes to the industry's approach to Indigenous inclusion and reconciliation have started to be driven by an amplified demands from communities, who deny access to their land if long-term social benefits cannot be delivered. For the purpose of this study, the research findings have been divided into the following sections: 1) CSR and Indigenous relations: two sides of the same coin; 2) superimposition of profit maximization; 3) social responsibility as a fiscal strategy; and 4) meaningful inclusion over monetary compensation. To understand where these findings come from, it is important to address the entwined factors of the inclusion of Indigenous voices within an industry that has historically and presently profited from the use of traditional land and its resources (Takach, 2021). The findings drawn from these interviews with stakeholders within the extract industry reflect the juxtaposition between a profit driven industry and reconciliatory action.

CSR and Indigenous Relations: Two Sides of the Same Coin

While interviewing industry experts on the current approach to CSR within the resource extraction industry, the concept of Indigenous Relations (IR) was repeatedly referred to as a vital part of community engagement. IR is a rapidly growing and evolving field in the resource extraction industry, used to address a company's responsibility to obtain free, prior, informed consent (FPIC) from communities impacted by operations; however, it is rarely used as an interchangeable term to CSR. Interviewees noted that while the concept of IR is considered within the umbrella of CSR, 'Indigenous Relations' is on the technical end of CSR. "It's the community engagement that is required to ensure that an operation permit is acquired, and the project occurs and that it is carried out in the safest and most conscious way possible" (Interviewee 12, August 23, 2023). Here, IR can be interpreted as the application of CSR informed by stakeholder theory. Extraction sector companies identify the need to address social concerns and issues that are pertinent to the perspectives and interests of stakeholders both internal and external (Tian, 2022). The concerns of external stakeholders, that being Indigenous communities, are considered through IR where the expectations and needs of a community are addressed in relation to how they are impacted by a company's activities. In the case of internal stakeholders, IR services the ability to acquire an operation permit, have a project move forward as well as promoting a socially conscience image to investors.

Operation permit acquisition is the leading mission behind IR, done through extensive consultation and negotiation with Indigenous communities, making the practice itself highly economically charged and imperative to whether a project succeeds or fails (Interviewee 3, August 3, 2023). By consequence, IR is seen by those in the industry as the 'boots on the ground' work of relationship building, whereas CSR work is understood in more of a practical or

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performative sense of maintaining a good corporate image. “The practice of Indigenous Relations (IR) is the bridge between company’s and communities, while CSR is the mask that company’s wear to the public and at times their employees” (Interviewee 3, August 3, 2023). These concepts play off each other in a policy versus practise dynamic, where IR is used to ensure community engagement is done in the most timely and cost-effective way possible and CSR reporting offers the positive portrayal of the companies’ work. This dynamic is common in highly competitive market environments, like resource extraction, where companies use CSR as a differentiation mechanism to display authenticity and competitiveness (Markovic, 2021). Extraction sector companies indicate their competitiveness when it comes to implementing their due diligence obligation, and their performance regarding maintaining financial success alongside human rights responsibilities (Torres et al., 2023).

As IR has become a fact of doing business in Canada, Indigenous inclusion has become ingrained in corporate culture – integral at the ownership and executive levels (Interviewee 18, September 14, 2023). Regardless of this familiarity, there is extensive work to be done in terms of creating space for community voices to be heard beyond basic labour opportunities (Interviewee 9, August 21, 2023). Like that of its counterpart, CSR, the absorption of IR into ‘business as usual’ has allowed for companies to incorporate consultation with Indigenous communities into merely another expense on a project. When categorized as an expense, a financial barrier arises when it comes to the decisioning making regarding corporate social action. If it costs a company less to pay a fine for breaking from legislation, than to make major changes to operations to follow the wishes of a community, the less costly approach will be followed to remain competitive. The receival of a permit complicates matters further with any and all community engagement being overshadowed by the transactional objective of obtaining a

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permit and securing the success of a project (Interviewee 3, August 3, 2023). As a corporate practice, IR provides companies with a platform to engage and negotiate community stakeholders on their terms, with relationships still predominantly dictated by industry. This deferral to industry practices fosters a lack of understanding and trust on both sides, creating barrier to meaningful stakeholder relationships (Interviewee 9, August 21, 2023).

With IR becoming a principal expense on extraction projects, companies with less resources such as time and capital are left to employ basic and cost-sensitive relationship building strategies that default to the same methods regardless of the unique community they are dealing with (Interviewee 1, July 4, 2023). This is particularly evident with smaller companies whose lack of resources means having to choose between remaining competitive with other companies or create a comprehensive IR program. As stated by a participant, “most of Indigenous Relations are a waste of time – specifically if it involves hosting BBQs or events” (Interviewee 9, August 21, 2023). “Nothing will get done using the cookie cutter approach, yet this is still the default for many in the industry” (Interviewee 6, August 9, 2023). The cost associated with relationship building not only limits the genuine effort companies are willing to commit to inclusion and reconciliation after a permit is acquired but fails to acknowledge the unique experiences and needs of the diverse communities impacted.

Furthermore, tokenism is still prominent in the industry by means of bringing on Indigenous employees specifically to do all the heavy lifting when making an initial connection, building trust, and fostering a relationship (Interviewee 8, August 17, 2023). As a research participant put matter-of-factly, “it is easier, quicker and less costly for a primarily white company to stand behind the face of an individual who presents as Indigenous, instead of having to do the difficult work themselves to get a permit” (Interviewee 8, August 17, 2023). Initial

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consultation will often involve an Indigenous person going into traditional lands to make the first contact, however, “the more effective and meaningful relationships have involved non-indigenous people doing the work” (Interviewee 15, August 28, 2023). IR fails to be meaningful to Indigenous stakeholders in the long-term when done by a token individual who is only brought in to acquire a permit then leave (Interviewee 7, August 15, 2023). Such statements indicate the similarities between CSR and IR when it comes to encouraging change at the institutional level. These practices are designed to promote the competitiveness and success of a company, proving ineffective when delivering the long-term influences that accompany genuine reconciliation.

The lack of change at an institutional level is attributed by those interviewed to the absence of awareness training and economic development on the community side. According to the interviewees who work in IR, “more focus is needed on a learning management system for not only industry but Nations as well; that is to say awareness courses should be offered to both companies and Nations” (Interviewee 6, August 9, 2023). Training programs for community members are specific to job site positions, with no mentorship and training outside of what is useful to a company’s operation (Interviewee 6, August 9, 2023). The motivation behind providing employment opportunities to Indigenous community members is that of ‘killing two birds with one stone’; satisfying the demand for inclusion while not having to invest in employee development beyond what is required for the project (Interviewee 6, August 9, 2023). Here lies the discrepancy that exists between fulfilling the obligation to FPIC with an Indigenous community and recognizing the responsibility to provide developmental support to ensure members can meaningfully contribute to a project. Extraction sector companies keep “empowering their white employees, but the same effort is rarely seen when it comes to

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empowering communities” (Interviewee 9, August 21, 2023). IR as a practice only services the company’s goals when the community has no concept of how to provide their input, or the ability to experience long-term benefits (Interviewee 6, August 9, 2023).

When the socio-economic impact of a company is considered within IR, consultation with communities becomes about more than simply a permit acquisition and financial advantage for the company. More genuine representation of Indigenous voices in the industry has involved bringing in community stakeholder, such as Elders, to share insights and make decisions about a project, as well as hiring Indigenous owned businesses as contractors during operations (Interviewee 17, August 31, 2023). “In the business development world, it can start with something as simple as procurement and supply chain management where a company hires indigenous businesses to help them grow as well as the communities where they do business” (Interviewee 2, July 6, 2023). However, putting this into practice poses its own issues. “The biggest hurdle to collaboration is getting access to sites for these individuals such as knowledge keepers and elders” (Interviewee 14, August 24, 2023). Difficulties come up when these individuals are not treated as officials who have the same access as non-Indigenous contractors would.

Community members having access and ability to participate on a project site is a simple yet telling sign of how a given company is prioritizing IR beyond the securing of permit (Interviewee 10, August 22, 2023). Ultimately, evaluation of IR as an extension of a company’s social responsibility is determined by the actual performance when sufficiently addressing the needs and interests of external stakeholders like Indigenous communities. What are the communities gaining from these relationships with companies and are these benefits and gains equal when considering what a company gains from the relationship (Mitnick et al., 2023). When

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approached as a cost-saving strategy, IR only serves the social good of shareholders as the main stakeholder relationship, however, such actions are not necessarily morally desirable for all stakeholders involved.

Superimposition of Profit Maximization

Across conversations with the research participants in IR roles, I found that Indigenous inclusion tends to take the form of adoption of industry practices rather than recognizing the unique insight of each community. Relationship building still involves “white relations managers going out into communities and trying to superimpose the industries' ways, wills and wishes on them” (Interviewee 6, August 9, 2023). Determined by the same cost-sensitive attitude that lends to the practice of tokenism, it requires less time and money for an extraction sector company to enforce pre-existing practices than to acquire an intricate understanding of how each Indigenous community approaches resource management. This follows with the profit maximization principle where firms strive to maximise profits by maintaining a marginal cost to marginal revenue. By consequence, relationships with communities are disseminated through a neoliberal capitalist lens, lending to further emphasis on profit-centred methods, limiting the potential for learning outcomes, and ultimately influencing how communities will engage with a project (Interviewee 6, August 9, 2023). In other words, with all prior partnership necessitating the adoption of espoused industry procedures rather than equal collaboration.

While Indigenous inclusion has seen growth, companies are not actively learning from the communities due to a lack of emphasis on industry learning outcomes (Interviewee 13, August 24, 2023). When navigating the relationship between a company and the communities it works with, there is a common blueprint that organisations fall back on when identifying the desired outcomes of the partnership. This blueprint is defined by “the spectrum of community

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engagement, that ranges from transactional to transformational” (Interviewee 13, August 24, 2023). At one end, community investment and corporate responsibility is approached as a means to an end, where a company engages with a community purely to receive something in return. Alternatively, at the other end of the spectrum, community engagement is observed as a way of transforming how a company does business in terms of improving policy and building more sustainable practices based on learnings drawn from collaborative partnership. Per Interviewee 13, “the extraction industry is still predominantly transactional”. This approach to relationship building relies on a power differential between corporations and the people, “ensuing the post-colonial trap that assumes the company as the educator of these communities” (Interviewee 13, August 24, 2023). Not only does this narrative discredit a community’s ability to make decisions regarding the use of their land, but it also limits the potential for knowledge to be shared in the opposite direction to inform resource management methods. Companies have become accustomed to taking the stance of expert as opposed to exploring the potential for growth and improvement of industry practices (Interviewee 13, August 24, 2023).

Furthermore, with the extraction industry being purely profit based, there is little to no flexibility when trying to incorporate practices that do not directly serve the goal of maximising profits (Interviewee 5, August 8, 2023). This limits the amount of change that can be accomplished in the long-term when using the industry made solutions of IR and CSR. “Although dealing with people who have a fundamentally different worldview and the values of sustainability and holistic thinking can drive change, until there is a better way of making money that elevates those values, it is unlikely a dramatic paradigm shift can occur” (Interviewee 5, August 8, 2023). Profit maximization operates as the bottleneck to reconciliation when it comes

to a company's readiness to contribute to the economic and social development of communities and willingness to adopt alternative sustainable practices.

Social Responsibility as a Competitive Strategy

As mentioned throughout this chapter, findings have revealed an acute emphasis being placed on Indigenous relations as a means used by extractions companies to access traditional land, with the objective of continued profit from its resources. The main priority for companies is to obtain permits and get projects approved and IR is used strategically to achieve this (Interviewee 3, August 3, 2023). Industry tends to want immediate action, but "the establishment of trust and listening is now necessary under the circumstances to build relationships and have productive discussions with communities moving forward" (Interviewee 12, August 23, 2023). Relationship building has not only become a requirement of doing good business but a key component of success when it comes to securing permits. Extraction sector companies continue to have enthusiastic growth plans and now see that community involvement is going to be a huge part of how they get future approvals (Interviewee 12, August 23, 2023). A company's social impact is now highly considered in the business operation side of extraction projects and intrinsically tied to the financial success of a company.

In the form of IR, the concept of corporate responsibility is used as a strategic technique to rephrase these corporate capitalist goals in ethical terms, such as consultation, to manipulate how the company is viewed by its stakeholders (Baker & Roberts, 2011). When extraction sector companies have a specific story that they want to tell, public relations specialists will be brought on to show the work they have done in a favourable way to the public (Interviewee 5, August 8, 2023). Reasons can vary on why they want to tell the story, but often it's when they feel they have done a good job and want that to be made known to build the public reputation (Interviewee

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5, August 8, 2023). In an interview conducted with a PR specialist, the interviewee spoke about how “in early 2020, [they] spent six weeks in northern BC interviewing Indigenous community leaders about their thoughts on industrial development in the region” (Interviewee 5, August 8, 2023). The agenda of this investigation was to “demonstrate that there was strong support for market driven solutions to poverty in these communities, and openness and support for projects like [Coastal Gas Link], which was receiving very publicised opposition” (Interviewee 5, August 8, 2023). This type of profit-based motivation is especially useful when addressing typical stakeholders in a format that establishes a highly profitable project as conducive to a positive social impact. While the project does have the potential to offer economic development opportunities to a community, the prerogative of the extraction sector companies remains focused on bolstering their reputation to appeal to the public and potential investors and in turn secure the fiscal returns.

Here the competitive advantage of CSR practice is demonstrated, serves as an opening to expand operations, and increase overall economic influence and profits (Schneider, 2019). Market expansion is achieved by extraction sector companies through market relations by which IR is conducted to build relationships with Indigenous communities and socially implicate the company (Schneider, 2019). As detailed above, this results in distinct power asymmetries where the company holds a transactional power to unilaterally make demands (Schneider, 2019). Here CSR allows economically and politically powerful extraction sector companies to influence the social environment Indigenous communities, according to economic principles (Schneider, 2019).

Meaningful Inclusion Over Monetary Compensation

According to participants who work in permit acquisition and agreement negotiation, there are three main components of an IR negotiation: money, power, and identity (Interviewee 4, August 8, 2023). Emphasis on the first component of money was prominently echoed across many of the conversations as the key factor of all negotiations. With that said, the elements of power and identity have become exceedingly relevant in negotiations, especially as Indigenous communities have become more powerful players in the industry landscape and the call for reconciliation becomes louder. While money can be negotiated, identity is not negotiable (Interviewee 4, August 8, 2023). The emphasis on profit driven outcomes has begun to operate in direct contradiction to the reconciliation process especially when companies continue to profit from the use of traditional land. The development of a framework centred on sustainable relationships is needed so companies are not just coming to these groups whenever they need an approval or with the intent of enhancing their reputation (Interviewee 12, August 23, 2023).

As negotiation power becomes closer to balanced between companies and Indigenous communities, communities can begin to utilise the power that they have to shape future development to value sustainability and caring for people (Interviewee 5, August 8, 2023). While companies have commonly approached IR as simply a way to gain access to land and resources, communities are no longer willing to have their land be used without their input. Companies have begun to meet resistance when solely utilising money reliant tactics when negotiating and are left to rise to meet the demands of Nations who wish to have a say in how their land is used and how social benefits can be delivered outside of just a cheque (Interviewee 5, August 8, 2023). Now more than ever, there is “a push in the industry to gain more of a conscience and further commitment to work to improve people's condition materially and to empower them to

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navigate out of situations of these kinds of power differentials because of poverty and systemic discrimination” (Interviewee 5, August 8th, 2023). Regulatory guidelines have begun to fall behind the demands of the communities to the point where a project risks not happening if a company solely follows regulation (Interviewee 9, August 21, 2023). Industry has been forced to take on more responsibility when it comes adapting practice to meet these demands (Interviewee 3, August 3, 2023).

With Indigenous communities taking a more significant role in the activity that occurs on their land, IR can no longer simply entail paying Nations for access but must also incorporate economic opportunities and social incentives (Interviewee 4, August 8, 2023). Over the recent decade, more and more equity partnerships between companies and communities have emerged to set a new precedent for Indigenous involvement in resource extraction. “There has been a significant push for Nations to take on landlord status, as well as receive royalties” (Interviewee 4, August 8, 2023). The creation of support programs and economic development organisations designed to facilitate growth in communities has reflected this recent evolution. The Alberta Indigenous Opportunity Corporation is a prime example of an organisation designed to “help with establishing communities as part owners of their assets and to have a revenue stream that goes back into the communities that have no conditions on it” (Interviewee 11, August 22, 2023).

Additionally, the Indigenous Advisor and Monitoring Committee (IMAC) was created by the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) to address dissatisfaction in the consultation process (Interviewee 17, August 31, 2023). The intention of IMAC is to “create a space at the table for community representation and to address these issues of shared concern among communities” (Interviewee 17, August 31, 2023). IMAC was designed under the assumption that proper consultation looks like “getting Indigenous boots on the ground to verify and see for themselves

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that the project is being constructed with the safety not only of the environment but with the safety and health of communities, and the rights and interests of communities at the forefront” (Interviewee 17 August 31, 2023). This includes identifying socioeconomic impacts and determining how to monitor and develop indicators for those impacts (Interviewee 17, August 31, 2023). The aim of the program focuses on the unique insights of Indigenous communities to establish the decision making and practices of each diverse Nation as the foundation of energy standards and regulation on extraction projects.

Along a similar line as IMAC, on large energy infrastructure projects like CGL and Transmountain, proper consultation has begun to involve community monitoring and construction liaison programs. A contributing factor to these changes is motivated by the call for recognition of traditional land by communities, specifically the minimum requirement of operations avoiding cultural sites (Interviewee 16, August 30, 2023). This approach to community engagement allows for the creation of a space where communities can “make informed decisions about how their land is used without manipulation from outside powers – both companies and *eco-colonialists*” (Interviewee 16, August 30, 2023). While environmentalists are making more effort to work with local First Nations that share similar goals, the Fairy Creek controversy is a reminder that it’s not always straight forward or easy. Pacheedaht First Nation, whose territory includes the Fairy Creek watershed, has long relied on old-growth logging when it comes to job creation and additional revenue. This leaves the Nation at a crossroads when it comes to the future of its forests. Those who wish to sway the choices of these communities, industry and environmentalist groups alike, are equally harmful to communities who wish to step out from under the colonial influence that have historically dictated the use of their land. The inclusion of Indigenous voices does not always translate to a

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community's rejection of a project, it simply means that the project is dictated on the terms of the community (Interviewee 16, August 30, 2023).

As demands from communities become more explicit regarding the setting of terms for extraction project operations, a company's social responsible extends beyond basic consultation – "it's about making sure that a community's needs are met when it comes to protecting their rights" (Interviewee 11, August 22, 2023). As discussed earlier in this chapter, further support is required from industry side to ensure community members can be active and meaningful contributors to a project. There still is substantial work to be done in terms of building the basic capacity of communities to take on an important role in the industry. The social condition of poverty means "leadership in those communities are always put on constant demand by their own members, to the point there is no room for proactive planning" (Interviewee 11, August 22, 2023). Consultation does not represent meaningful inclusion on a project when the community being consulted does not have the ability to make an equal contribution.

According to an interview participant embedded in the economic development of Indigenous communities, "strengthening of governance within Nations is pertinent to the success of equity partnerships," specifically when ensuring the voices and input of these communities are strongly communicated, advocated for, and properly recognized (Interviewee 10, August 22, 2023). Multi-level governance especially becomes an integral component of achieving independence through energy development (Miller & Parkins, 2023). As industry takes on more responsibility when meeting the needs and demands of communities (Interviewee 3, August 3, 2023), a government-to-government dynamic arises, making the governance structure of these communities deliberately important so as not to have them fall into the position of token partner (Interviewee 7, August 15, 2023).

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When it comes to the obligation to meet stakeholder needs, the CSR assessment dimension of *community involvement and development* is called back to. Community involvement and development establishes a company's relationships within the territories and communities in which it operates (Widad et al., 2022). Authentic relationships with actors involve taking proactive measure such as employment creation and skills development to recognize the needs of members of the territory and the communities within (Widad et al., 2022). This dimension is intentionally relevant when acknowledging stakeholder relationships, where ongoing discussions and interactive elements involving stakeholder interactions and networks create, maintain, and enhance an extraction sector company's ability to operate, succeed and create value for all stakeholders. (Lee, 2020).

In particular, fostering trust among all collaborating parties to reach agreeable project decisions is a vital component in moving development forward (Krupa et al., 2015), with trust supporting a more unified community vision for a project's future. Without meaningful involvement of Indigenous leaders and community actors in roles with decision-making power, the likelihood of community opposition and unrealistic expectations for the project increases significantly (Krupa et al., 2015). The demand for companies to become an integrated part of community development as a way of building trust is forging a future where "community decision making and the exercising of traditional rights is the basis for negotiation and community engagement" (Interviewee 3, August 3, 2023).

Conclusion

An analysis of anecdotes collected through semi-structured interviews discovered four core findings. First, there is an unaddressed link between CSR and IR when it comes to laggard effort towards change at the institutional level. These practices are both designed to promote the

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needs and success of a company, proving ineffective when delivering the long-term influences that accompany genuine reconciliation. Second, findings have revealed that much of relationship building with communities still involves companies going out into communities and trying to superimpose the industries' ways, wills and wishes. Third, community engagement has become a key component of success when it comes to securing permits to operate; a company's social impact is now highly considered in the business operation side of extraction projects and intrinsically tied to the financial success of a company. Finally, fostering trust among all collaborating parties to reach agreeable project decisions is becoming a vital component in sustainably moving development forward, especially as Indigenous communities become increasingly involved in project ownership, resource management and overall decision making.

Chapter 5: Discussion

When discussing the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in achieving the ultimate inclusion of Indigenous voices in the resource extraction industry, three main themes were prevalent through conversations with interview participants. The first is the overlooked interrelation between CSR and Indigenous Relations (IR); how when paired together, these concepts can capture a company's responsibility to both build relationships with communities and ensure long-term benefits for the Nations they work with. The second was the varied levels of business capacity and economic development within Nations across Western Canada and the gap that exists regarding whether the industry or Canadian government is responsible for assisting with this development. The third theme recognizes the role of government regulation in the realm of CSR and where legislation has both helped and hindered advancement in securing Indigenous rights. These themes significantly relate to one another, especially when considering the factors that both support and enable the exercising of Indigenous rights. In this discussion, I argue the results and profit-driven structure of CSR orchestrated through Indigenous Relations (IR) is ineffective in addressing reconciliation and Indigenous rights when it comes to consulting with and meaningfully including Indigenous communities on projects. I propose an alternative course of action, where companies evolve their IR strategy to acknowledge their role in elevating economic and social development of communities so as to fulfil the aspect of reconciliation that ensures long-term, sustainable benefits.

Reconciliation as an Intricate Part of CSR

This study finds that Indigenous communities are not simply residents or interest groups on a territory, but an authority with the power to decide issues concerning their natural resources (Miller & Parkins, 2023). With that said, Indigenous communities experience varied capacity to

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engage with extraction projects. While some have already taken a leading role in projects in their territory to: “break free of colonial ties, establish more reliable energy systems, and reap the long-term financial benefits that sustainable energy can provide”, others lack the resources to actively participate (Stefanelli et al., 2018, p.95). According to those working in IR, facilitating Nation ownership and economic development needs to be the focus if companies are to answer the call for greater social responsibility in the form of effective consultation (Interviewee 16, August 30, 2023). As the call for both reconciliation and sustainable practices expands in both Canada and Indigenous communities, the extraction industry is uniquely positioned to address their CSR to provide security, environmental protection, and economic prosperity (Bowen, 1953). This approach to CSR would contribute not only to relationship building but the reconciliation requisition as outlined by UNDRIP and the TRC.

If companies are to evolve CSR to take reconciliatory action that is ethical from a human rights stance, they must break from the neoliberal practice of only claiming responsibility for profit margins and shareholder value. I have proposed the TRC as a starting point for extraction sector companies to begin to engage with their responsibility regarding reconciliation, specifically when ensuring Indigenous communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). With the TRC being informed by UNDRIP, the calls to action involve the honouring of Indigenous rights which cannot be done solely through monetary gestures (Millington et al., 2020). UNDRIP Article 5 states “indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social, and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the State” (United Nations, 2007). As a major influence that has historically prevented this inclusion

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and hindered the ability of these communities to strengthen their own economic, social, and cultural development, extraction sector companies are uniquely socially responsible to support communities in developing the capacity required to exercise this right (Malin et al., 2020).

As observed through this research, understanding CSR and IR as an avenue to reconciliation can be challenging for companies for several reasons, including the neoliberal capitalist principle of profit maximisation which sets a basis for the morality that informs contemporary CSR (Brown, 2003). There are also no mandatory parameters in Canada vis-à-vis the distinct requirement of CSR which means for a lack of sincere effort from companies, especially in the face of potential expenses. As suggested by a participant of this study, for companies to have greater impact on reconciliation, CSR and IR must begin to be associated with the genuine support of economic development (Interviewee 18, September 14, 2023). This ultimately does not resolve all issues, for example the lack of financial resources that smaller companies have available to invest in infrastructure projects within Indigenous communities. However, it does provide those companies who do have the resources with a starting point to begin reflecting on how they can adjust their approach to CSR and relationship building in a way that contributes to the economic development of Indigenous communities.

An Obligation to Ensure Long-Term Benefits

As outlined in this study's findings, the common approach taken by companies when facilitating community involvement on projects is providing specialty job training to community members. This training is intended to deliver Nation members with the basic skills to participate in labour work on the project. By offering this training, organisations attempt to claim the relationship between the company and the Nations are mutually beneficial in terms of the company receiving a permit to operate and the Nation receiving the opportunity to enhance the

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skill sets within the communities (Interviewee 3, August 2, 2023). These often represent efforts toward a win-win proposition for CSR that satisfies the corporate financial bottom line (Bazian & Korica, 2023). The primary concern, however, should not be with making a win-win work but in expanding meaningful engagement by companies with communities (Bazian & Korica, 2023).

Such training programs remain particular to the specialty work that is unique to the given extraction project, with minimal applicability to complex needs of the community. As stated in the findings, speciality training is not sufficient in addressing the extreme poverty in these communities or as a substitute for the complete lack of community support and public infrastructure (Interviewee 9, August 21, 2023). A company's commitment to the development of professional proficiency within a community need not stop where the usefulness of the members on a project expires. In the pursuit of genuine reconciliation that produces sustainable and impactful outcomes for the community, I see more promise in the latter calls to action outlined for businesses. This section of the TRC necessitates the longevity of professional opportunity and the securing of long-term benefits. Specifically, it requires effort be made by a company to provide "equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p.10). While access to jobs and education opportunities are a first step towards Indigenous inclusion, opportunities must be carefully constructed to ensure continual assimilation does not occur by absorbing Indigenous peoples into the existing corporate structure. If the intention is to provide a net positive impact on a community, and honour the supposed mutually beneficial relationship, this commitment must extend further to address the need for community infrastructure that will foster social, economic and governance capacity in the long term.

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There are still substantial infrastructure deficits across Indigenous communities, particularly “the further north and the more remote one goes” (Interviewee 18, September 14, 2023). CSR has the potential to foster the provision of business opportunities, mentorship and infrastructure developments that address these drawbacks. Infrastructure investment — especially quality infrastructure investment — is an important initiative to promote long-term economic development, specifically in financially poor and underdeveloped regions (Lokshin and Yemtsov, 2005). More effective CSR initiatives could be as simple as putting resources towards building water treatment infrastructure, accessibility to health services or supporting long-term professional training initiatives. Beyond community involvement “companies can lend a hand in fixing roads, fixing housing, fixing schools, fixing water infrastructure” (Interviewee 18, September 14, 2023). These initiatives can also focus on capturing the business capacity of the Nation - cultivating entrepreneurship by “building programs that cultivate leadership skills within that promote revenue sharing and equity partnerships with companies” (Interviewee 10, August 22, 2023). Through social investment, companies can address some of those other more critical areas related to the socioeconomic impacts within the community (Interviewee 15, August 28, 2023).

As companies shift to an equity partnership structure with First Nations, it becomes in their best interest to ensure these communities have the ability to be engaged and competent partners. This means the ability to maintain a sustained partnership over the entire project, contribute meaningfully to how operations are conducted, and have equal opportunity to benefit from the profits. Increasing the business capacity of a Nation-partner can lead to greater productivity on a project and reveal more sustainable business practice to facilitate long-term economic growth (Ge et al., 2023). Partnership can begin to look like collaborating with

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communities to encourage economic development with “corporations providing goods and services through partners or wholly owned companies” (Interviewee 10, August 22, 2023). When industry supports in the project implementation process, important positive socioeconomic impacts on process transitions and community well-being can be realised (Yalamala et al., 2023).

The Shortcomings of Government Regulation

While community ownership offers positive outcomes when facilitating reconciliation in the resource extraction sector, an important question to consider is: what is preventing communities from being left with the clean up job? As equity partnerships between communities and companies and Indigenous ownership begins to become more common, concerns arise when considering the risk of passing off environmental and financial responsibility. The legislation that dictates environmentally sustainable practices and standards is based on Section 35 in the Canadian Constitutional Act. While this section recognizes and affirms the existing Indigenous and Treaty rights of the original habitants of Turtle Island, the section does not define the term “aboriginal rights” or provide a closed list. Consequently, legislation in the extraction industry requires a lot of fleshing out to be able to comprehensively address Indigenous rights and ensure communities do not end up bearing the consequences of these projects (Interview 17, August 31, 2023). Government policies such as revenue-sharing have the potential to ensure equitable distribution and avoid unequal distribution of impacts and benefits in developed contexts in the implementation of CSR (Jackson et al., 2023). However, one caution regarding these agreements is that the increased state involvement this entails may reduce the involvement of civil society in CSR, minimising potential opportunities for community input in decision-making and the development of relations between companies and communities (Jackson et al., 2023).

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Regardless of the few efforts made to address Indigenous rights through legislation, both government and communities struggle with the capacity needed to ensure substantive consultation is conducted before a project starts or even ends (Interviewee 15, August 28, 2023). Furthermore, being built on colonial values and practice, Canadian governance inherently struggles to properly address Indigenous rights in terms of honouring the decision making of Nations on their land and supporting an environment where this decision making can occur. For instance, in the case of the Blueberry Territory in Treaty 8, the BC government was revealed as complacent in abandoning the Nations in the region with the environmental impacts of years of industrial development. Through this groundbreaking case, it was found that the Province of BC – “by allowing industrial development in Blueberry’s territory at an extensive scale without assessing the cumulative impacts of the development and ensuring that Blueberry would be able to continue meaningfully exercising its treaty rights in its territory” – had breached the Treaty (Amatulli, 2022, p.2).

Never before has a court found industrial development as a cause in infringing a treaty by taking up lands to such an extent that there are insufficient lands for the meaningful exercise of treaty rights (Amatulli, 2022). This case goes beyond calling upon the British Columbia government to do more to protect Treaty rights but acknowledges their role in recognizing Indigenous governance and decision making (Amatulli, 2022). After exploring the current voluntary practices of CSR across resource extraction, I conject that this call for protection can be extended to address the role of government legislation when regulating the inclusion of Indigenous communities in decision making as a part of a company’s social responsibility. While free, prior, and informed consent is currently regulated and consultation is enforced, scenarios

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such as Blueberry River and the Trans Mountain Pipeline showcase the leniency that exist around reconciliatory action.

Indigenous Rights are Not Elective

While “Indigenous communities have begun to implement The UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) standards themselves through private arrangements with project proponents and through the application of their own policies, significant effort is required from both government and industry players to catch up” (Cameron et al., 2023, pg.12). A key aspect of implementing the UN Declaration is to proactively take action to respect Indigenous decision-making, as well as proactively address cumulative effects on land management and project approvals (McCreery, 2012). Both requirements are heavily neglected by both industry and government. Furthermore, UNDRIP includes recognition of Indigenous peoples’ right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their territories and resources (United Nations General Assembly, 2007, p.23). With that said, UNDRIP exists as a voluntary regulatory program, similar to that of CSR in Canada, resulting in both proactive and laggard regulatory bodies when it comes to adoption and implementation as an instrument of public policy (Cameron et al., 2023).

The inconsistent implementation of UNDRIP across Canada, without provincial cooperation and coordination, has meant the creation of significant gaps in the protection of Indigenous rights from province to province. Under section 92A of the Constitution, provincial governments have jurisdiction over natural resources within their borders, including exploration, development, conservation, and management (Government of Canada). With such activities interfering with or limiting traditional practices, including hunting, fishing, harvesting, gathering or ceremony, management and regulatory processes greatly vary (Cameron et al., 2023). As a

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result, little legislative action regarding UNDRIP having been taken to date. The only notable exception is BC, which adopted UNDRIP legislation in 2019, known as DRIPA (Government of British Columbia, 2019). Since legislation in BC has adopted UNDRIP standards in the form of DRIPA, Nations situated in BC and Alberta find their rights subject to different legislation and thereby different priority and treatment.

Consequently, for business within the resource extraction sector, UNDRIP creates discomfort due to the uncertainty of the document and how it applies to how a business is run (Interviewee 18, September 14, 2023). While there is an understanding that companies must try to recognize and incorporate recommendation from UNDRIP and the TRC into their CSR, there is hesitation to take any sort of superfluous action that could put them at a disadvantage to their competitors. To properly address Indigenous rights as instructed by the TRC, Canadian provinces must “reevaluate current practices and legislation against emergent principles relevant to UNDRIP, to created concrete rules that encourage behaviour modification across business practice” (McCreery, 2012, p.18). With the creation of TRC being directly informed by UNDRIP, the calls to action can not be appropriately addressed without proper recognition of the Declaration by all provinces across Canada (McCreery, 2012). A commitment to equal and fair provision of Indigenous rights involves more than regulating resource development; it involves standardizing collaborative governance, economic development, environmental protections, and inclusive land management. The establishment of CSR legislation by Canadian government bodies, like that of the European Union, would eliminate the voluntary nature of addressing the TRC and UNDRIP and prevent a company’s social responsibility from absorbing into the profit-focused mission of the business (Primec & Belak, 2022).

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UNDRIP is a global endorsement of the fact that Indigenous peoples have more than just the right to be beneficiaries of externally controlled economic systems, but that Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and control their own economic futures (McCreery, 2012). This demonstrates that when Indigenous communities avail stable and long-term sources of economic support, this enhances their ability to identify additional opportunities for contribution on extraction projects (Warrier et al., 2021). Support from private organisations and the government, with a distinct mandate to address social responsibility and capacity building, can enable Indigenous communities to become increasingly positioned to take on an active role within the economic vehicles that develop, own, and operate natural resource projects (Warrier et al., 2021). Support from the private sector will require the purposeful use of CSR strategy outside of profit maximization, to focus on collaboration, social support and infrastructure. To answer the call for both reconciliation and sustainable practices, CSR must be developed into a practice that provides security, environmental protection, and economic prosperity for all stakeholders and rights holders.

Conclusion

Throughout this discussion, three key themes were explored relative to CSR being a suitable method of accomplishing the inclusion of Indigenous voices in the resource extraction industry. The first focuses on the inherent obligation extraction sector companies have to reconciliation through their CSR. As the call for both reconciliation and sustainable practices expands in both Canada and Indigenous communities, the extraction industry has become distinctively situated to address their CSR to provide security, environmental protection, and economic prosperity. Second, the potential of CSR to include the provision of business opportunities and public infrastructure was discussed, particularly to assist with the substantial

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infrastructure deficits in remote communities. The third contends for the role of Canadian government bodies when ensuring CSR encompasses a commitment to reconciliation, arguing for the establishment of CSR legislation to eliminate the voluntary element and prevent social responsibility from being absorbed into the profit-led agenda. In this discussion, it was maintained that if companies are to evolve CSR to take reconciliatory action that is ethical from a human rights stance, they must break from the neoliberal practice of only claiming responsibility for profit margins and shareholder value. As an alternative approach to CSR, companies can evolve their Indigenous Relations strategy to acknowledge their role in elevating economic and social development of communities to fulfil the aspect of reconciliation that ensures long-term, sustainable benefits.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the effectiveness of CSR in the resource extraction industry in regard to building relationships between companies and Indigenous communities and addressing reconciliation. By undergoing an analysis of the history of CSR as it relates to the future of reconciliation, I aimed to demonstrate where an industry that has profited from traditional land has an obligation to honour Indigenous rights. In order to achieve this, the following questions were used as the basis for this research:

- What work is being done within the resource extraction sector to incorporate and elevate Indigenous voices?
- In what ways does neoliberal hegemony dictate the current CSR strategies present in Canadian Resource extraction?
- Where does the reciprocal and sustainable approach of traditional knowledge find a place in an industry built on limitless growth?

To investigate the answers to these questions, first an assessment of applicable literature was conducted with a focus on current approaches to CSR across natural resource extraction. This involved an analysis of the neoliberal principles that inform CSR and where the goal of profit maximization prevents for-profit companies from acknowledge their social responsibility beyond compensating their employee and providing a return to shareholders. I then examined recommendations made by other researchers on how CSR in resource extraction could be more intentional when addressing the need for economic development in Indigenous communities, exploring Indigenous project ownership as a catalyst for the introduction of community voices in decision making. Finally, I argued for the benefits of collaborative governance between extraction sector companies and Indigenous communities, articulating the potential for CSR to

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encourage genuine reconciliatory action when detached from profit and refocused on collaboration between stakeholders.

Summation of Results

Further data was gathered through a series of conversational interviews with elite industry experts. Through these interviews, additional information was acquired on the extraction industry's utilization of Indigenous Relations (IR) alongside CSR to establish consultation with communities as simply another expense in their for-profit mission. From these conversations, it was discovered that partnerships between companies and communities are still heavily dictated by the industry, taking on a transactional nature with a company anticipating the receipt of a permit to operate in return for providing financial compensation. The finding from these interviews revealed that relationship building and negotiations between companies and communities are approached as a means to an end, a box to be checked, as opposed to the potential to collaborate with communities and incorporate new voices into business conduct. Companies pick and choose how and when they address Call to Action 92 of the TRC as cost allows. In many cases, it costs a company less to pay a fine for breaking from regulation than to make operational changes, thereby expensive social actions becomes undesirable. Effort is placed on facilitating awareness training programs for industry employees but there are few of the same statute being established within communities to assist members engaged with projects. The current approach fails to ensure Indigenous peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from projects.

Nonetheless, interview participants did remark on the changes that have occurred regarding the power dynamics between industry and communities over the past decade, with

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communities no longer being satisfied with a one-off capital injection from companies who wish to use their land. Now more than ever there is a demand for companies to promote long-term benefits that will contribute to the overall well-being of a community. This shift in relationship dynamic has been tied to the emergence of partnerships and shared-ownership agreements between extraction sector companies and Indigenous communities, which have allowed for increased decision-making power to be passed back to Nations. In the progression of Indigenous inclusion in resource extraction, meaningful inclusion has begun to look like partial if not full ownership of projects. Regardless of such changes, there are still significant challenges when it comes to the inconsistent capacity across communities that determines their ability to establish themselves as equal partners. A consistent theme across conversations with experts is a call for infrastructure development not only to enhance well-being within communities but encourage the economic development call for in both UNDRIP and the TRC.

When discussing these findings, I chose to scrutinize the gap identified through conversations with experts regarding the varied levels of business capacity within Nations and where there is space for industry to play a part in assisting with infrastructure and economic development. While previous research has investigated the phenomenon of Indigenous ownership as productive step towards reconciliation, there has been limited dialogue that holds industry accountable for contributing to the entrepreneurial development of these communities and where this fits into reconciliation. My research aimed to fill this gap. I propose a more holistic look at what extraction sector companies can achieve through CSR, where Indigenous Relations works as both a relationship building tool as well as a commitment to the economic and social development of communities.

Recommendations for Future Action

In terms of the overall impact my thesis aims to have on the field of resource extraction, I have recommended future action for both industry and governmental actors. In the case of industry bodies, I portray CSR practice as a method to be used to provide business opportunities, mentorship, and infrastructure developments to address the TRC's call for long-term economic gain of Indigenous communities. Contributions to quality infrastructure investment specifically is a vital component when promoting sustained economic development in these underdeveloped regions (Lokshin and Yemtsov, 2005). Following along this recommendation, I propose that proactive CSR initiatives could involve contributions building water treatment infrastructure, health services and consistent professional training initiatives. The particular focus of this recommendation was to capture the responsibility of the industry to contribute to the growth of business capacity of the Indigenous communities that their operations impact. Through social investment, companies can address critical areas related to the socioeconomic impacts within the community. By building programs and infrastructure that not only cultivate leadership skills but enhance the overall social well-being of a Nation the reality of equity partnerships and sustainable economic development becomes viable.

It can also be noted that as companies shift to an equity partnership structure with Nations, it is in the best interest to make certain communities have the capacity to be able and equal participants on a project. It is especially pivotal when maintaining a non-exploitive partnership that fosters two-sided decision-making and equal opportunity to benefit. Increasing the business capacity of a Nation-partner can lead to not only greater productivity and idea generation but build trust and communication between partners to facilitate long-term economic growth. Partnership begins to look like collaboration and mutually beneficial economic

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development. In particular, when industry supports in establishing project infrastructure and mechanisms for successful equal partnership, important positive socioeconomic impacts can be observed on a community's overall business capacity and social well-being (Yalamala et al., 2023).

In regard to the recommendations drawn from this thesis as they relate to government bodies, I highlight that the governmental obligation to Indigenous communities extends beyond the acknowledgment of Treaty rights. Legislation must address the recognition of Indigenous governance and decision making on each Nation's distinct traditional territory (Amatulli, 2022). After exploring the current voluntary practices of CSR across resource extraction, I conject that a call for protection of Indigenous rights can be extended to the role of government legislation when regulating the inclusion of Indigenous communities in decision making as a part of mandatory CSR. While free, prior, and informed consent is currently regulated and consultation is enforced, scenarios such as Trans Mountain Pipeline showcase the lenience that exist around reconciliatory action.

Furthermore, the lack of consistency when implementing UNDRIP across Canada, without provincial cooperation, has meant the creation of significant gaps in the protection of Indigenous rights between provinces. A key requirement of the UN Declaration is to proactively take action to respect Indigenous decision-making, as well as proactively address cumulative effects on sovereign land management (McCreery, 2012). Requirements that this thesis notes to be commonly neglected by both industry and government. A commitment to the honoring of all unique Indigenous rights involves more than fine based regulation of resource development. This involves standardizing collaborative governance, economic development, environmental protections, and inclusive land management principles that are requirements of extractive

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operation. The establishment of specific CSR legislation would help to mitigate the voluntary nature of CSR practice, the TRC and UNDRIP and prevent a social engagement and consultation from being cannibalized into the profit-focused mission of the business.

Recommendations for Future Research

A Place for Hybrid Business Practice

Collaborative business practice has been studied across many fields; however, in the case of resource extraction, further research is required to understand how collaboration can be applied to the inclusion and valuing of Indigenous knowledge. Additional research in this area would help to uncover the benefits of Indigenous collaboration to steer business leaders away from dominant management styles and neoliberal economic thinking to embrace more holistic methods (Pio et al., 2021). Further research of hybrid business practice would allow for the recognition of collaboration as the ambitious first step in integrating new methods into businesses—without appropriating knowledge that rightfully belongs to Indigenous people. It is through the careful and collaborative work with Indigenous scholars, activists, and actors that authentic recognition can be incorporated into management process development (Pio et al., 2021). Such research can propose an “integrative perspective arguing for new economic principles and set of management theories based in Indigenous wisdom that particularly emphasises life affirming values of relationship, stewardship, reciprocity, and equity” (Pio et al., 2021, p.329).

Upon reflection, it can be found that literature on cross-cultural management itself exists as hybrid product that includes cultural knowledge appropriated by colonial efforts to become part of the dominant approach to management and organisational studies (Frenkel et al., 2006). The success of ‘modernity’ as a project stems from the ability to mix ideas and methods,

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attempting different combinations in the effort to achieve ‘innovation’. Yet, while modern narratives give generous credit to the cleansing and assimilation of alternative worldly approaches, the practice of hybrid conduct is denied (Frenkel et al., 2006). Further research is required in this field to reveal successful new models to be recognized beyond being worthy of imitation but to be valued as far more effective and holistic methods of land management and business conduct.

Understanding Indigenous Needs and Objectives

To be more comprehensive, further research initiatives would benefit from participation and recounting of Indigenous communities' lived experiences to emphasise the importance for inclusion and provide a fuller picture on how these communities are impacted by extraction practice. There is serious lack of meaningful partnerships between predominantly non-Indigenous researchers and local communities, this project included. Due to time related restrictions, this project only focused on the industry side of this relationship building equation. Further research pursuits can pivot to focus on the accounts from inside the communities themselves to distinguish where meaningful inclusion is needed.

This could take the form of participatory action and/or community-based participatory research, where specific Nations are partners in facilitating collaborative and equitable decision-making in all phases of research. This would entail engaging with Indigenous communities in the creation, implementation, and continued maintenance of research initiatives that are grounded in the local culture and driven by the local community. These research methods lend to community empowerment and power-sharing process that attend to social inequalities (Held et al., 2022). In addition, this participatory research fosters two-way learning and capacity building among all partners; a dynamic that is notably absent from previous relationships with communities. By

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using this approach research can achieve a balance between knowledge generation and intervention for the mutual benefit of all partners and a wider dissemination of results (Held et al., 2022).

Conclusion

This research has examined how the Canadian natural resource extraction sector is taking action to facilitate reconciliation with Indigenous communities and recognize Indigenous rights. The concept of CSR has been investigated, specially with the aim of discovering whether reconciliation is considered under the social responsibility of companies in the resource extraction industry. The findings of this study have unveiled that neoliberal principles continue to govern industry practice, informing CSR as a non-binding framework that can only address social well-being as far as the capacity to financially benefit allows. CSR processes remain inextricably tethered to neoliberal economics and management that hold material and financial growth as paramount. This is where inconsistency arise in a company's commitment to reconciliation, as when commercial interests and honouring Indigenous partners collide, securing profits comes first. Due to this, contemporary CSR struggles to consistently deliver equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities, and long-term sustainable benefits to Indigenous communities. To recognize reconciliation under the ethical commitment made under the title of CSR, a shift to collaborative based economics that recognizes and honours the well-being and growth of Indigenous communities is required. The resource extraction industry can answer the call for both reconciliation and sustainable practices by evolving CSR into a practice that provides security, environmental protection, and economic prosperity for all stakeholders.

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Appendix A

Interview Alias	Title	Company or Organization Type	Date
Interviewee 1	Indigenous Relations Lead	Oil and Gas Transport and Storage	July 4, 2023
Interviewee 2	Indigenous Relations Manager	Energy Reserves Company	July 6, 2023
Interviewee 3	Principal Consultant	Indigenous Relations Consulting Firm	August 3, 2023
Interviewee 4	Contract Consultant	Indigenous Relations Consulting Firm	August 8, 2023
Interviewee 5	Public Policy Commentator	Public Commentary Non - Profit	August 8, 2023
Interviewee 6	Indigenous Relations Consultant	Indigenous Business Initiatives	August 9, 2023
Interviewee 7	Indigenous Relations Practitioner	Oil and Energy Extraction Company	August 15, 2023
Interviewee 8	Project and Relations Manager	Pipeline Projects	August 17, 2023
Interviewee 9	Indigenous Advisory Lead	Indigenous Business Initiatives	August 21, 2023
Interviewee 10	Indigenous Economic Development Manager	Indigenous Relations Consulting Firm	August 22, 2023
Interviewee 11	Indigenous Relations Practitioner	Oil and Energy Extraction Company	August 22, 2023
Interviewee 12	Manager, Indigenous and Community Relations	Energy and Mining Company	August 23, 2023
Interviewee 13	Community Relations Advisor	Community Investment Non - Profit	August 24, 2023
Interviewee 14	Project Relationship Manager	Sustainability Consulting and Professional Services Company	August 24, 2023

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Interviewee 15	Indigenous Relations Consultant	Oil and Gas Production Company	August 28, 2023
Interviewee 16	Project and Relations Manager	Pipeline Projects	August 30, 2023
Interviewee 17	Professional Leader, Reconciliation	Government Policy and Regulation	August 31, 2023
Interviewee 18	General Manager	Sustainability Consulting and Professional Services Company	Sept. 14, 2023

Appendix B

Interview Questions	
Corporate Interview Script:	
1.	What has your career involved before this position (roles, responsibilities, education, experience)?
2.	What is your organisation's current approach to community engagement when it comes to addressing local populations?
3.	What does communication with local communities look like?
4.	What does corporate social responsibility mean to your organisation?
5.	Is there familiarity with the TRC's Calls to Action within the organisation?
6.	What are the specific elements of the organisation's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiative (If any)?
Consultant Firm/NGO Interview Script:	
1.	What has your career involved before this position (roles, responsibilities, education, experience)?

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2.	What type of issues does your organisation focus on addressing?
3.	What are the main concerns of the companies your organisation works with?
4.	What does communication with resource extraction companies look like?
5.	How do local communities play a role in your approach and impact assessments?
6.	How do the TRC's Calls to Action inform your approach as an organisation?

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