

Paper Title

Responsible Extraction in the Canadian-Indigenous Context: Is it possible?

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Abstract

The guiding question of this paper is whether it is possible to ever have an ethical model of resource extraction. If possible, what does this practice look like and what does it mean for Settler-Indigenous relationships? I will discuss how historical Settler/colonial policies have disenfranchised Indigenous persons and what this means for Indigenous participation in extractive market contexts. The paper's second section looks at diamond mining in the Northwest Territories and how these practices have impacted Indigenous sovereignty. This section also looks at how current models of consent and consultation have failed fiduciary responsibilities toward Indigenous persons and what it would take to envision new models of consultation processes in natural resource extraction settings. The Yellowhead Institute (an Indigenous-led think tank at Toronto Metropolitan University), in discussing the limitations of current consultation processes, has provided a (re)imagining of what the consultation phase should look like within resource extraction settings. They argue that Indigenous persons should be seen as legitimate rights holders with land claims. In answering what a responsible resource extraction process looks like, it would be one that can achieve a heightened sense of self-determination over the land for Nations. It will envision new forms of consent, allowing the active withdrawal of Indigenous support if Nations feel the government has overstepped its fiduciary responsibilities. Thus, in developing an ethical model of resource extraction, Settler governments must pay attention to colonial and imperial histories that have disenfranchised the status of Indigenous Nations and envision new ways to interact with Indigenous persons in market-resource settings.

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