

College: L&S
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The proposal to build an open-pit iron mine in northern Wisconsin has been subject of a deep political divide causing much discussion since its initial debut with a mining bill passed by the legislature in 2011. **Supporters of the mine point to economic gain from the demand of this valuable resource as well as the possibility of creating jobs. On the other hand, arguments that oppose the mine are rooted in concern for the environmental and ecological health that could be disrupted if they go ahead with the mine.** Destruction of wetland ecosystems from mineral runoff of exposed waste rock is a major concern. The proposed mining site is located at the mouth of the Bad River Watershed, which empties into sloughs and fragile wetlands of Lake Superior, and fertile ground where wild rice grows. Pollution and threats to the integrity of the water could devastate wild rice beds downstream from the mine. Harvesting wild rice is not only a source of food and economic gains for the Native Americans, but is also a cultural tradition passed down many generations. This is an example of how it is often Native American tribes with little political power that are affected by operations that extract valuable resources. They may have little political power, but they are not powerless. Alliances between the Ojibwe with sports fisherman and others who support the recreational advantages of a pristine wilderness, local people who depend on clean drinking water from their wells, scientists and academics have been organizing collectively to raise awareness and create a political bloc to stop the mine.

Politicians fall on both sides of the issue, stakeholders, scientists, and educators debate various aspects of potential outcomes, while local grassroots groups are actively fighting to stop the development of the mine under the premise of the environmental justice movement. There is an increasing awareness of ethnic minorities and people of lower socioeconomic status that bear the brunt of environmental destruction and pollution (Bullard, 2002). **This type of institutional discrimination is called environmental racism which is being met by advocates from the environmental justice movement.** According to the U.S. EPA (1998), "Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies (Bullard & Johnson, 2000)." Shortly after Gogebic Taconite purchased the mineral rights to the Penokee Hills and declared the proposal of the largest open pit iron mine in the world, **environmental justice groups** hit the ground running to stop this proposal from coming to fruition. Three years later, the mine has not yet broken ground which may be evidence of successful efforts by local EJ groups that have worked to educate the public, mobilize resources, change policy, and empower people to stand up for their land and cultural **traditions**. **The current research proposal will examine the issue of the proposed mine in Northern Wisconsin from a sociological perspective. I will explore different stakeholder perspectives and connections to the mine, understanding the history, power, and structure that is associated with each perspective. Who are all the parties involved and why do they support or oppose the building of the mine? What exactly do they have to gain or lose? The research will also aim to identify impacts that grass root environmental justice groups have had on inhibiting the progress of the mine. What are the actions being taken by EJ groups and how have they slowed the progression of the mine? I will examine education/outreach efforts and efforts to change policy that have slowed the progression of the mine.**

Method for Carrying out the Project

In the first phase of my research, I will implement secondary research strategies to review current literature about environmental justice, water law, Native American Treaty rights, and geological reports from the Penokee Hills. I will do a content analysis of the media coverage in local newspapers and social media to examine how the issue is portrayed to the general public who may not be more deeply engaged and informed. This will give me a foundation for my own research and data analysis. I will then utilize qualitative research **through semi-structured interviews** to gain a deeper understanding of the impact environmental justice groups have had in hindering the progress of the mine. I will **interview** members of the Bad River tribe, environmental justice advocates, local citizens, professors and scientists, government officials, and representatives of Gogebic Taconite. I will transcribe the interviews to keep an accurate record and search **for patterns and themes and create a typology to illustrate the continuum and complexity characterizing this contentious issue.**

Anticipated Significance

Both of my mentors, Professor **X** and Professor **Y** have studied the impacts of policy on human and ecological environments. Professor X's research into environmental policy and asymmetrical power distribution has uncovered social disparities left by authoritarian governments in Brazil and Chile. She has also examined governmental response and policy change to crisis and natural disasters. Professor Y has studied issues in the Southern Louisiana area, specifically focusing on Hurricane Katrina, the BP oil spill, Native American tribes living in the bayous, and the grass root groups that have grown to overcome inequalities due to environmental racism. She has specifically focused on spiritual agency and the empowerment of local people through environmental justice **organizations**. Both of these scholars have inspired me to do my own research into environmental justice movements in our home state of Wisconsin. The proposed mine in Northern Wisconsin is a very timely and relevant issue that needs to be studied from a sociological perspective; just not political economic, or geological view. I anticipate that I will find significant effects from EJ group efforts in slowing the progress of the mine. **I also anticipate a significant revelation about the interconnections of peoples and ecosystems that have a stake in the future of this land.**

R1:The proposal would be stronger if citations are included to support these viewpoints as well as to give a sense of how widespread these discussions are.

R4: Awkward sentence
R2: Sweeping generalizations and words like "they" should be avoided when addressing people.

R4: Well written introduction, stating a clear case of a contemporary issue.

R3: Nice introduction of the issue, though a bit too long for a proposal of limited length. The goals are explicitly stated

R4: I'm not sure if 'understanding' is the correct term here - perhaps 'articulating' the perspectives? This is the crux of the research so it is important to be clear that you are sharing multiple 'perspectives'. This is a bold agenda for an important topic also keeping in mind that the status will change throughout the project (e.g. legislative action).

R1: Research questions stated.

R3: The scope seems a bit too ambitious, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. A lot of jargons, though

R2: Suggests transcription, but that is not included in timeline

R1: This proposed research involves human subjects and must receive IRB approval before research can commence. Applicants of this type of research need to plan accordingly because IRB approval can be a time consuming process.

R4: Are you coding and analyzing the interviews? I would say more about the participants, how you will gain access to them and then how you will code and analyze your data (interviews).

R1: Identity removed by annotators.

R1: Identity removed by annotators.

R4: It is helpful to understand the experience and support the student is receiving but is this part of the proposal? If it is appropriate I would shorten this piece.

R4: You need to refer back to your research questions - or more clearly articulate your research question above and here. Then tie that to your anticipated outcome: that the perspective connect to power and access for impacting a major ecological movement in both supportive and restrictive ways.

R3: I really have NO idea what the student is talking about here... the student seems pretty certain of the outcome at this point... not much of anticipation going on here. Why is this significant? the student does not explain

Schedule / Action Plan

Timeline (dates)	Goals and Objectives	Actions:	How Actions Support Goals and Objectives
Goal I: Review of existing literature and Data collection			
Spring/Summer 2014	First objective: I will review 15-20 academic sources relating to environmental justice, Penokee Hills, Native American Treaty Rights, etc. to compare, I will examine popular media sources. I will also begin the IRB process	I will utilize various bases within Ebscohost including SocINDEX, Humanities Source, and History Reference Center and local news and radio archives vs. Native news sources. I will also apply for an expedited IRB approval.	These sources will give me a deeper understanding of multiple perspectives and aspects of controversy surrounding the <u>mine</u> .
July/August 2012	Second objective: Map out, contact, schedule and interview stakeholders to mine and learn about their perspectives.	I will visit the proposed mine site, harvest camp, and local area including EJ groups and Bad River Reservation and perform interviews.	This will allow me to get perspectives directly from all parties involved, not just information from media <u>sources</u> .
September 16 th , 2012	Third objective: Submit paper to the Wisconsin Sociological association student paper competition.	Report my findings into paper format and submit for the conference.	This is my first draft and summary of my research that will be act as a template for my conference presentation and final poster.
Goal II: Analysis of results and Presentations			
October 10 th , 2014	First objective: First presentation of findings.	Present my research and findings in session at the Wisconsin Sociological Association Conference	This is a great opportunity for me to get experience to speak formally about my <u>findings</u> .
November 2012 through January 2013	Second objective: Submit paper to be judged for inclusion into the special issue of <i>Sociological Imagination Journal of Student Research</i>	I will edit my paper and send it in hopes that it will be picked to be published in the <i>Sociological Imagination Special Edition</i>	To get my research published would be an amazing opportunity and give me a medium for which to share any important findings and educate others on this issue.

R3: Clearly described, though a bit wordy

R2: The language in the timeline is more causal than in proposal. Recommend consistent language.

R1: This is a typo (and more in subsequent sections of this timeline) – It is important to check for these mistakes and inconsistencies as they confuse the readers and may affect the evaluation of the proposal.

R4: I would like to know more about 'access' - is there a relationship already in place? It can be difficult to get participants to agree to be part of a research project.

R4: This is a meaningful project and worthy of support however, the timeline needs to be adjusted. We need to know how many interviews will take place, how they will be analyzed and used as data before a report can be writing. Interviewing, transcribing and coding is time consuming before writing a draft. You have all of this happening in the summer?

The timeline needs to be shifted so the fall is analysis and writing.

Goal III: Reviewing			
January and February 2013	First objective: Reflection and reflexivity	I will reflect on and review my findings thus far and compare them to recent advancements regarding the mine.	I can note and add any changes and advancements that may have occurred since my initial data collection to my presentation.
February 2013	Second objective: Create poster	I will design my poster and write my abstract for the presentation in March.	This poster is the sum of all the work I will have done up to this point. This is an important piece of the puzzle.
Goal IV: Presentation of poster at UW-System and NCUR or UWW UGR Day			
March 2013	First objective: Present my research and poster at UW-System and UWW UGR Day	I will print poster and review my key points.	This is an opportunity to share my findings with the UW-Whitewater community.

Evaluation:

- 1) Are project activities and outcomes connected to the stated goals and objectives? **Strongly agree.**
- 2) Project feasibility. How realistic and appropriate is the study for this student in the time available? **Very appropriate. But see comment on cohort size and its effect on project results.**
- 3) Likelihood of project outcomes. Is the project likely to result in a data set, creative performance, art object, or academic project that can be presented and/or published? **Very likely.**