Exploring human experience in the North 2024

The Northern Review

56

56 | 2024

General Articles plus Special Collection

Editorial

Ken Coates 3

Special Collection: Media Representations of the Arctic

Introduction: Media Representations of the Arctic
Mathieu Landriault 5

Practitioner Perspectives on Arctic Marine Mammals in Environmental News Reporting
Charlotte Gehrke 9

Local (or Not) Insecurity on Arctic Twitter/X: Global Insecurity and Climate Change
Gabriella Gricius 37

Representations of Inuit Issues on X (Twitter): Who is Framing Inuit Issues and How?
Mathieu Landriault, Alexandre Millette & Gabrielle LaFortune 57

General Articles

Reflections on Reconciliation from Non-Indigenous Teachers in Northern Post-Secondary Learning
Faith Whiting 77

Alaska Native Sovereignty and the Federal Trust Responsibility: A Cultural Interpretation of Historical Relationships
William Schneider 109

Breaking New Trail? First Nation and Municipal Cooperation in Rural Yukon
Gord Curran 135

... continued

Emergent and Regional: Networked Climate Governance across Northern British Columbia
Sinead Earley & Sarah Korn 167

Research Perspective

Issittumi paasinnittaatsinik misissuineq: Oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsineq aqqutigalugu nunasiaataanerup oqaluttuarisaanerani pullaviit apeqquserlugit
Unthinking Historical Thinking: Lessons from the Arctic
Silke Reeploeg 193.

Book Reviews

Plundering the North: A History of Settler Colonialism, Corporate Welfare, and Food Insecurity
By Kristin Burnett and Travis Hay
Reviewed by Sara Komarnisky 209

Unsettling the Commons: Social Movements Within, Against, and Beyond Settler Colonialism
By Craig Fortier
Reviewed by Nicole Bauberger 213

Cover Art

Boreal Night | Artist Bio
Doug Rutherford 216

Editorial: Number 56

Ken Coates

The Circumpolar North is as much an abstraction as a reality for the world's people, created in their imaginations through books, newspaper articles, poetry, movies, television programs, music, and other media. The North has been created, fantasized about, re-imagined, bastardized, transformed, reported accurately, and misrepresented. There is a huge global audience for these many different Norths—real, imaginary, metaphysical, and conceptual—and this interest has been sustained for hundreds of years. In the early days of Arctic exploration, memoirs and tales of Arctic adventures sold in large numbers. In the nineteenth century, lecturers gave lantern slide shows to packed theatre audiences across Europe and North America. Robert Service created word pictures, in popular verse, of the Klondike that made him one of the most important authors of his generation. And so it went, through Charlie Chaplin movies, many B-grade adventure movies, children's programs, numerous advertising campaigns, uneven and unpredictable news coverage, and now the anarchistic world of social media.

The media matters a great deal for all regions, but more for the North than elsewhere. There are many media representations of Hawaii or California, but millions of people travel to these destinations each year. Personal observations, private photos, and word of mouth serve as a counterbalance to whatever images and impressions come through the various media. In the case of the North, media outlets provide "Outsiders" (as Yukoners describe the rest of Canada and the South) with eyes on a region that few people will ever visit. Reporters, writers, journalists, photographers, and filmmakers visit the far corners of the North, dropping into fly-in communities, mining camps, caribou migratory fields, pristine wilderness lakes, and inside Indigenous people's homes and community halls. Their selections, interpretations, and presentations of even "real" Arctic images have collectively created the public understanding of the nature and reality of the North.

Special collection guest editor Mathieu Landriault has done an admirable job of jump-starting an extensive investigation of media representations of the Arctic. He and the other authors in the collection clearly understand the role

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that media plays in creating, some would say manufacturing, public images and understandings of the region and the people who have lived here for thousands of years. These articles illustrate why it is important to understand the media personnel who created the images, the motivations that brought them to the North or to their specific stories, and the audiences who consume these representations. The North, of course, now has a substantial media industry, creating the region's own news stories, tweets, movies, television shows, documentaries, YouTube and TikTok videos, Instagram posts, and photographs. Many of the journalists, filmmakers, and content creators are Indigenous people who bring important insights, as do the numerous long-time non-Indigenous content creators contributing to the media representation of the Arctic. This media enterprise is, of course, an ongoing process and will continue to evolve over time. The special collection in this issue of the *Northern Review* is, we trust, a valuable contribution to what promises to be an important and ongoing debate.

The collection is joined by five insightful articles submitted to the journal, all reporting on studies and perspectives completed by researchers living in the North—from the University of Northern British Columbia to the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and from Yukon University to the University of Greenland. The articles cover topics as broad and diverse as the North itself, including education, history, community development, governance, geography, and climate change; and they all include discussions concerning relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. We are pleased to include these valuable and timely conversations in the pages of the *Northern Review.*

Ken Coates is a founding and senior editor of the *Northern Review*, and professor emeritus, Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Special Collection

Introduction: Media Representations of the Arctic

Mathieu Landriault
Guest Editor

The Arctic has been under the media gaze for a considerable amount of time, both in traditional media and popular culture. Explorers' tales of the region have occupied a preeminent place in popular culture, describing the Arctic in mythical ways. These tales have contributed to persistent preconceptions of the region in the popular imagination. As Hansson (2018) points out, the Arctic was portrayed as a site for heroic endeavours, a futile objective for potential conquerors, as otherworldly, and as a gendered space. The Arctic is primarily presented as an area to dominate, to subjugate rather than to embrace or live in. Indeed, references are seldom made to people inhabiting this space, rendering the region as an empty space.

Traditional media has also focused and framed the region in specific terms, molding public perceptions about the Arctic. For example, traditional media has devoted significant attention to framing the region as a zone for economic development (especially natural resource extraction) and as an area to protect from sovereignty and security threats (Nicol, 2013; Landriault, 2016; Gritsenko, 2016).

However, scholarship on explorers' tales and traditional media has constituted a rather modest corpus of research. In most research, attention is centred on conducting content analysis to list popular frames, and focuses on how Arctic issues are described, without investigating the motives or intentions of reporters or media outlets. In turn, very little attention is devoted to understanding why these frames are popular or more frequently relayed in media outlets.

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Additionally, the media and popular culture are in constant evolution: they are embodied now by different media formats. Media consumption has changed spectacularly in the past fifteen years, with consumers being informed and entertained by social media and streaming platforms, rather than by radio, literature, and newspapers. Unfortunately, social media coverage of the Arctic is not well understood. As society and vectors of influence evolve, we must change our focus to understanding these emerging media sources.

This special collection aims to make a modest contribution to this enterprise, adding to a growing body of literature that investigates how new forms of media and popular culture describe and define what the Arctic region is about. Additionally, we must understand how social media users and reporters perceive the region in a diverse media ecosystem: media, whether traditional or social, do not evolve in a bubble, away from other social and political actors. A guiding objective of this special collection is also to interrogate how social media users and reporters relate to other actors (such as governmental officials, researchers, and industry) who are working on Arctic issues.

In the article by Charlotte Gehrke, the author presents and analyzes empirical evidence exploring why news creators, including journalists, are referring to Arctic marine mammals in their reporting. Pragmatic factors such as budget and time constraints as well as value-based factors have proven to be influential in shaping how media outlets are reporting on Arctic issues.

The other two articles focus on how the Arctic region and its inhabitants are portrayed on social media. Gabriella Gricius studies how Arctic threats were conceptualized by users on one social media platform, X (formerly Twitter). Arctic insecurity is more frequently linked to environmental issues and developments, and to local stories rather than global ones. For their part, Landriault, Millette, and LaFortune explore which users were posting messages about Inuit issues on X (Twitter). Inuit social media users form a relatively small but significantly active group of users, contributing to how Inuit issues are framed on the platform. On the other hand, non-Inuit users rarely relayed stories posted by Inuit users, highlighting the potential for Inuit allies to more actively promote Inuit voices on social media.

We hope that this special collection will act as a springboard for Arctic researchers who focus on media outlets, to join forces on cooperative initiatives. In particular, the study of social media warrants more scrutiny: this effort can only be led by working together to form multilingual and multidisciplinary research teams.

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Guest Editor

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Research Article

Practitioner Perspectives on Arctic Marine Mammals in Environmental News Reporting

Charlotte Gehrke
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Abstract: The conservation and environmental policy literature suggests that featuring charismatic megafauna or flagship species—large animals with which humans are fascinated—in environmental communications helps to raise awareness and create public and political support for the protection of ecosystems or species. While a considerable body of literature is dedicated to such species, scholars have paid comparatively little attention to the human practitioners creating these flagship-based communications. To fill the literature gap, this article draws on agenda-setting theory and empirical evidence concerning the Arctic—the fastest-warming region on Earth—and its charismatic marine mammals. Through interviews and informal conversations with journalists, researchers, and policy-makers, the study asks 1) why these practitioners contribute to flagship-based news coverage, 2) how they interact with other practitioners in this process, and 3) how they view the content of the news coverage. The article highlights practitioners' motivation to harness human fascination with Arctic marine mammals to draw attention to broader environmental issues, most notably the climate crisis. At the same time, the article outlines trends in flagship-based news coverage that practitioners perceived as problematic, including the representation of polar bears, human perspectives, and different systems of knowledge. Practitioners also discussed challenges hindering accurate and nuanced Arctic environmental news reporting, including budget, personnel, and time constraints. Through its analysis of first-hand practitioner accounts, the article provides valuable insights and practical information for researchers, journalists, and policy-makers seeking to engage with and improve environmental news reporting concerning Arctic marine mammals, as well as related conservation efforts.

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Introduction

On April 1st, 2023, the civil and environmental engineer Jay Fuhrman tweeted images, graphs, figures, and brief summaries about a new article entitled "A whale of a climate tale: Integrated assessment modeling of marine mammal carbon cycle in net-zero emissions future" (Fuhrman, 2023). According to Fuhrman, he and his co-authors Patrick O'Rourke, David Ho, Zeke Hausfather, Glen Peters, G. Page Kyle, Pralit Patel, and Haewon McJeon "developed a global dataset of whale carbon stocks and fluxes, which we then used to parametrize new technologies for cetacean-mediated carbon removal" (Fuhrman, 2023). In other words, the article suggested that whale bodies provided a viable site for carbon dioxide removal (CDR), referring to the removal of CO_2 from the atmosphere as a way of mitigating the climate crisis. By April 5th, one of the tweets about the paper already had 131,700 views (Fuhrman, 2023). The research paper, however, was entirely fictitious, as was the journal of *nature climat chage* [sic], modelled after the renowned journal *Nature Climate Change* (Nature Climate Change, 2023). It was an April Fool's joke.

Yet, as confirmed in personal communications with some of the jokesters, "there is an element of truth" to this April Fool's joke (G. Peters, personal communication [pers. comm.], 3 April 2023). The scientists behind the spoof journal article explain that it "builds off some misguided ideas around whales as natural carbon removal that [have] circulated around the media over the past few years" (H. McJeon, pers. comm., 5 April 2023; J. , pers. comm., 12 April 2023; Hausfather, pers. comm., 3 April 2023).[1] While framed in a humorous manner, the April Fool's joke is based on serious concerns and frustrations regarding the fascination in environmental news reporting with charismatic megafauna, and potential misrepresentations of related scientific research and climate realities. To further investigate these sentiments, this study asked 1) what motivates journalists, scientists, and, to a lesser extent, policy-makers, to engage in science communication and journalism concerning charismatic megafauna in the first place, 2) how do they interact with one another when engaging in these practices, and 3) how do they perceive the content of environmental news reporting on charismatic megafauna.[2]

For this purpose, the following section begins by discussing the types of charismatic megafauna, namely Arctic marine mammals (AMMs), that this study and the practitioners contributing to it are concerned with, and the agenda-setting based theoretical understanding underpinning AMM-themed communications. Next, the article briefly outlines its methodological approach, followed by an overview and discussion of the results assessing 1) practitioners' motivations, 2) interactions between practitioners, and 3) practitioners' perceptions of news coverage. The latter is divided into three areas of particular concern for practitioners, beginning with 1) the prevalence of polar bears in AMM-based communications, followed by 2) the representation of humans in animal-focused communications, and 3) the different systems of knowledge included in flagship-based news reporting. Finally, the article discusses practitioners' suggestions to improve polar news reporting, and a brief conclusion summarizes the article's findings and suggests potential avenues for future research.

Communicating Science: Setting the Agenda on Arctic Marine Mammals

Similar to the April Fool's jokesters, this article specifically focuses on communications concerning charismatic megafauna. Here, the term charismatic megafauna refers to "large animals with high public appeal that ... receive considerable research attention and policy coverage" (Thompson & Rog, 2019, p. 9). In conservation literature, these animals are also referred to as "flagship species," implying that such charismatic species "are able to galvanize interest and action in ways that the majority of other species cannot" (Jepson & Barua, 2015, p. 95). As Barney, Mintzes, and Yen note,

> Environmental educators and advocates of all stripes have long recognized the value of particularly appealing animal (and plant) species as mechanisms for capturing the imagination and directing public attention toward conservation and preservation of the natural environment. (Barney et al., 2005, p. 41)

Building on conceptualizations of charismatic megafauna and flagship species as reflected in environmental news reporting, this article examines how practitioners perceive this news coverage, including their motivation to create, contribute, and interact with it.

This article is specifically concerned with practitioners who communicate from and about the Arctic, the fastest-warming region on Earth, whose charismatic megafauna are often cast as metaphors for the impacts of the climate crisis. Arctic marine mammals (AMMs)—such as polar bears, seals, walruses, and whales—are often at the centre of science communication and journalism efforts to raise awareness of the environmental issues impacting these animals and the region at large (Keller & Wyles, 2021; Owen & Saisgood, 2011; Ragen et al., 2008), and will thus be the focus of this study.

The polar bear, in particular, is a popular symbol of the effects of the climate crisis facing the Arctic, and the world more broadly (Born, 2021). While studies have examined the effectiveness of communicating information about

environmental concerns with reference to polar bears (Swim & Bloodhard, 2015), scholars have largely refrained from interacting with the practitioners issuing these communications about Arctic marine mammals. Furthermore, studies regarding the science–policy or science–diplomacy interface often do not consider the role of journalism, thus ignoring not just the contribution of journalists but also scientists who contribute to this agenda-setting activity (cf. Karcher et al., 2022).

Even in cases when the perspective of these practitioners is considered, interpretations often focus on overarching (geo-)political interests, rather than the respective practitioners' individual motivations and actions. In her study of diplomatic practices, Kuus notes "the narrow lens of national interest—the interest of the diplomat's state—" (2016, p. 548) that is imposed on diplomatic analyses. While "interstate power politics" (Kuus, 2016, p. 548) certainly play a crucial role in studies of practitioners, such as political decision makers and journalists, who embody and shape the representation of states or regions, scholars suggest that there is more to these practices (see also Gricius, 2024; Kuus, 2008, 2023; Medby, 2018).

In the case of AMM-based communications, academic accounts frequently rely on the familiar narratives of Cold War conflict and interstate power competition in the polar region, highlighting the interconnectivity of polar conservation initiatives with the institutionalization of and tensions inherent in Arctic geopolitics (Gehrke, 2023, 2024; Meek, 2011). While these dynamics play a critical role in informing our understanding of the discourses surrounding Arctic (marine) conservation, they are no substitute for direct interactions with the practitioners engaged in these discourses. Such interactions, currently missing from the polar flagship species literature, allow for a greater focus on the individual motivations, actions, and perceptions that shape the collective practices of science communication, journalism, policy, and diplomacy, which have, in turn, been analyzed at the regional and international level of polar (geo)politics (see e.g., Epstein, 2008; Gehrke, 2023, 2024; Lipscy, 2020; Meek, 2011). As this article illustrates, these interactions can serve to highlight not just the national interests that practitioners may represent or embody, but also draw attention to the institutional, organizational, professional, epistemological, cultural, and personal contexts that practitioners engaging in AMM-based communications inhabit.

To fill this knowledge gap concerning direct interactions with practitioners, the author interviewed a wide variety of science communication, journalism, and policy practitioners concerning their motivations and experiences of contributing to AMM-based news reporting, and their perceptions of this reporting. In doing so, the researcher sought to investigate the underlying assumption in the existing literature that practitioners use charismatic megafauna in their environmental communications because the animal's popular appeal is thought to draw attention to related conservation concerns (Jepson & Barua, 2015; Leader-Williams & Dublin, 2000; Shiffman et al., 2021). If the study found evidence for the latter hypothesis, this would imply that practitioners' communication activities are based on agenda-setting theory (albeit perhaps subconsciously), explained in the following section.[3]

Agenda-Setting Theory

In the context of environmental news reporting, agenda-setting implies that the extent of news coverage on a certain topic and its framing has implications for public and political awareness, perception, and willingness to act on a topic (see Downs, 1972; Guber & Bosso, 2013; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Though the literature on marine and flagship species more often cites than explicitly discusses agenda-setting theory, scholars note how news coverage concerning flagship species can inform and attract attention to the protection of the animals and environments in question (cf. Jarić et al., 2023, p. 1; Jepson & Barua, 2015, p. 102; Shiffman et al., 2021, p. 3).

This reading of agenda-setting theory thus builds on constructivist conceptualizations of public discourse, referring to "a comprehensive ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations about a specific object that frame that object in a way and, therefore, delimit the possibilities for action in relation to it" (Epstein, 2008, p. 2). In other words, "what is said about whales [or other AMMs] is intimately tied to what is done with them" (Epstein, 2008, p. 5); whether an Arctic marine mammal is framed in the news discourse as the target of hunting or fishing activities, or as a wonder of the natural world, will have a direct impact on material human behaviour towards these animals.

Such media effects of news coverage are predominantly characterized as a positive force for raising awareness and creating public support or even political momentum for environmental and conservation policy, with Tichenor and Neuzil going so far as to claim: "Any media reporting of an environmental issue is advocacy, in the sense that media coverage draws attention to that issue" (Tichenor & Neuzil, 1996, p. 41; see also Kovarik, 2021, p. 36). In this context, Arctic marine mammals are thus considered attention magnets, helping to raise awareness of the threat posed to them by the respective environmental issue discussed in the news, potentially drawing in news consumers who may have otherwise dismissed the reporting in question, and invigorating environmentally conscious consumers' willingness to act (Freedman et al., 2021; Jepson & Barua, 2015; Leader-Williams & Dublin, 2000).[4]

This assumption is also reflected by policy entrepreneurs and advocates seeking to build public support and political momentum to advance environmental regulations for protecting the animals and environments in

question (Kingdon, 1995). These entrepreneurs and advocates include state actors, such as policy-makers and science diplomats, as well as "boundary organizations connecting marine science with policy and management" (Cvitanovic et al., 2024, p. 1), such as members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who lobby, advocate, advise, and sometimes even co-create conservation policies in collaboration with other political and scientific actors.

As the following methods section highlights, it is important to note that practitioners often take on multiple roles involved in different stages within the agenda-setting process. This occasionally reflects the Arctic's "small world" characteristic, where practitioners, who often know one another, may fulfill multiple roles in professional fields and regional settings with comparatively few people working in highly specialized areas (Kuus, 2023). At other times, the multiplicity of professional roles is inherent in the context of environmental news reporting; for instance, the politically appointed commissioners of the United States Marine Mammal Commission, an independent agency of the government, fulfill a political role while also being scientists who engage in and with science communication and journalism. This combination of multiple practices that is sometimes embodied in a single practitioner further highlights the need to study the interactions between practitioners who contribute to the creation of, and interaction with, environmental news about Arctic marine mammals. To investigate the latter, the following section details how the first-hand accounts of practitioners were generated and analyzed.

Methods

The empirical contributions of this article are based on a textual analysis of qualitative semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with practitioners in the fields of science communication, journalism, and policy. The objective was to learn practitioners' perspectives on Arctic marine mammals in environmental news reporting, including their contribution to this news coverage and their related interactions with other practitioners.

In total, the analysis is based on thirty-four interviews and six informal conversations, all of which were held in 2023. Interviews and conversations were conducted in person as well as online. Potential interview and conversation partners were identified via an online search for practitioners in the fields of science communication, journalism, and policy who specialize in Arctic marine mammal affairs, sometimes tracing them based on their involvement in a news publication concerning AMMs. Additionally, the study employed the snowball method of asking practitioners for recommendations regarding potential interview and conversation partners. While this method may introduce sampling bias, its limited application kept this to a minimum. Furthermore, on several

occasions, interviewees recommended other potential interviewees that the author had already contacted or interviewed, highlighting the overlap between the potential bias in snowball sampling and the limited size and close-knit character of the epistemic communities (see the *Practitioner Interactions* and *Practitioner Perspectives* sections below). Overall, the practitioners interviewed for this study are from a variety of professions, and many of them are engaged in multiple practices (e.g., scientists who also serve as political decision makers).

The author asked all interview and conversation partners about the three principal concerns of the study—1) why they contribute to AMM news coverage, 2) how they interact with other practitioners in relation to this news coverage, and 3) how they view the content of the news coverage. The semi-structured nature of the exchange allowed the author to ask follow-up questions and tailor additional questions to the respective individual's professional experience (e.g., asking scientists about their experience contributing to a specific news article in which they were quoted or mentioned as a source).

Interviews and conversations predominantly focused on the medium of newspaper coverage (online and, to a lesser extent, print). When asked about news coverage concerning Arctic marine mammals, practitioners most frequently discussed their contributions to newspapers, though many of them also had experience engaging with a host of other media, from television news to documentary filmmaking. While other media outlets and channels, such as documentary films or social media, were also discussed, interviews and informal conversations nonetheless predominantly revolved around practitioners' experiences with newspaper coverage.

Furthermore, while interviewees originate from a wide range of countries, the study largely focused on the North American context (Canadian and American) due to a limitation to English speakers and English language based institutions (e.g., newspapers published in English). While this language limitation has advantages with regard to comparability, it also replicates a bias towards English-language communications and the North American news context that is reflected in the professional settings in which the interviewed practitioners operate, be that in the news landscape, or in the realm of scientific publication and polar policy communications (see Alhasnawi, 2021; Wilson Rowe, 2013).

While conducting informal conversations, the author took notes in the form of keywords that summarized practitioners' statements, whereas interviews were recorded and later transcribed. In addition, the author took notes during each interview. In the text analysis, the author thus analyzed interview transcripts as well as informal conversations and interview notes. Following McKee's (2003), Fairclough's (2003), and Krippendorff's (2019) work on qualitative textual analysis, the author began with a preliminary round of coding in which all

relevant statements regarding the three research foci (motivations, interactions, and perception of news content) were coded and potentially relevant statements flagged for further analysis. Second, based on the patterns developed through the initial round of coding, the texts were re-coded. Finally, the results of this coding process were thematically organized based on the identified patterns for the presentation and discussion of the textual analysis.

Before discussing the findings in the following section, it is important to note that the study treats interviewee accounts as pseudo- or fully anonymous, only providing contextual descriptors chosen by the respective interviewees, and omitting other information.[5] Consequently, while the article features accounts of several Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, they are at times not attributed as such or referenced using a pseudo-anonymous descriptor chosen by the respective interviewee (e.g., Inuk journalist) to honour the respective individual's wishes and preserve their anonymity (cf. Younging, 2018).

Results and Discussion

The following presentation of results is based on the article's three guiding questions: 1) motivations, 2) interactions between practitioners, and 3) perceptions of news content. Each section discusses both original insights based on an analysis of first-hand practitioner accounts, while also contextualizing these against the backdrop of existing literature.

Motivations: Arctic Climate Crisis Communication

When practitioners were asked what motivated them to create or contribute to environmental news reporting on Arctic marine mammals and the threats facing them, policy-makers, researchers, and journalists predominantly attributed their engagement to the desire to communicate the potential and already existing impacts of the climate crisis. As one practitioner illustrated:

> [Arctic marine mammals are] a symbol of the Arctic. They're … the charismatic megafauna species that's going to be so impacted by climate change. And … animals are often the canaries in the coal mines … what happens to their populations is indicative of the health of the Arctic at large. So, whether that's species that are beginning to disappear, like polar bear populations or, you know, southern species shifting into the Arctic Ocean, it's kind of a symbol of what's happening in the environment itself that people can relate to. (Interviewee #11, 2 April 2023)

Practitioners explained that they rely on Arctic marine mammals because these animals not only act as symbols of the region and environmental crises, but their inherent charisma qualifies them as ambassadors above other, lesser-known flora and fauna. One practitioner illustrated this, stating "it's more resonant if you're talking about polar bears than if you're talking about freshwater fish" (Interviewee #8, 7 April 2023). This idea of environmental ambassadorship—raising awareness and public and/or political concern for a species or environment by getting people to visit or view these places or species in person or through media—not only features in the conservation literature on Arctic marine mammals (Shiffman et al. 2021), but has also long been a trope of sustainable tourism research, including polar tourism studies (see Alexander et al., 2019; Cajao et al., 2022; Miller et al., 2020). The idea of environmental ambassadorship also reflects the interviewees' awareness of the agenda-setting processes they are contributing to by engaging in and with science communication and journalism, including a recognition of the power of Arctic marine mammals' charismatic appeal in influencing these processes.

The above-outlined motivation of practitioners to engage in AMM-based environmental news reporting in order to communicate the importance and impacts of the climate emergency, can be interpreted as a reflection of the type of advocacy that Tichenor and Neuzil (1996) accused all media of undertaking in coverage of environmental issues. When an Arctic journalist was asked whether this sentiment resonated with them, they stated, "at its core, all journalism is advocacy journalism" (Interviewee #22, 17 March 2023). The practitioner, however, qualified their statement, highlighting the importance of journalistic values:

> Now, what distinguishes good journalists from bad journalism, is that a good journalist understands that he has advocacy journalism, that he comes from that position, and that there is a system—editorial system—to check for those biases …, to check the accuracy of the information, and to make sure that the other points of view that contradict the bias that you bring are represented. Neutrality, objectivity, balance, and accuracy. So, once you have those mechanisms …, that work distinguishes propaganda from journalism. (Interviewee #22, 17 March 2023)

Similarly, other journalists argued that, though they report on the impacts of the climate crisis on Arctic marine mammals, they are merely motivated to do so because they perceive it as part of reporting on the news of the day. Some scientists equally distanced themselves from advocacy work, noting that other individuals in their respective organizations or institutions engage in this work in their stead. At the same time, they also stressed the importance of telling Arctic

marine mammal stories, and highlighting the interconnectedness of the species' fate with that of environmental issues such as climate change.

Yet, some scientists did not shy away, but instead leaned into the perceived advocacy inherent in their professional activities. Going back to agenda-setting theory, this advocacy function can be interpreted as an expression of policy entrepreneurship whereby practitioners champion issues and push for potential solutions. When asked about their motivation to communicate about the threats AMMs are facing, one researcher noted that their scientific research "provides a backbone and a platform to use this science for advocacy, to use this science for education" (Interviewee #3, 5 April 2023). Another scientist explained their calculated engagement in AMM-based environmental news reporting to communicate the issue of climate change:

> I don't think I really have the podium to do that [influence public opinion on the climate crisis]. I would if I could. What I try to do, I guess, through my work, because I work with charismatic megafauna, is bring it home to things they [the public/policy-makers] should care about, or I hope they can care about. So, nobody cares about ice floes. Nobody cares about phytoplankton … People don't even care about Arctic fish populations … Those are going to be the things which fundamentally change our climate. If we wipe out the walruses—this sounds crass—that's minor as far as ecological change, but people might care about wiping out the walruses. What you got to do is to find something that the public will care about. (Interviewee #14, 17 April 2023)

Similarly, a number of practitioners described their engagement in this climate-based environmental news reporting on Arctic marine mammals not simply as a motivation to raise public and political awareness of environmental threats, but rather as a duty of sorts to their respective professions, to the Arctic, and even to humankind. As a former environmental journalist and policy advocate explained,

> Yes, we believe climate change to be the largest existential threat for future polar bear populations. What could we do about it? Well, I mean apart from the obvious—fix climate change altogether— … we certainly did our part in trying to explain the impacts of climate change on the Arctic [i.e., contributing to environmental news reporting on AMMs, thus seeking to raise public and political awareness]. (Interviewee #8, 7 April 2023)

In summary, this and other interview accounts reflect practitioners' overall motivation to draw attention to the climate crisis and its effects on Arctic animals, potentially enabling or legitimizing policy responses to this environmental emergency.

Having established why practitioners engage in environmental news reporting on Arctic marine mammals, the following section discusses how practitioners perceive their interactions with one another in this process.

Practitioner Interactions

When asked about their interactions with other practitioners in connection to their work on or contribution to AMM-based environmental news reporting, two recurring statements stood out: 1) the positive impact of interconnected Arctic professional networks, and 2) the cautiousness with which scientists approach their interactions with journalists—the latter being more prominent in interviewee statements. First, many practitioners stressed their personal relationships and familiarity with other practitioners, attributing these to the "small world" of the Arctic region and overlapping professional networks. The interviewees highlighted the advantages of these close networks for environmental news reporting, such as, for instance, allowing policy-makers and scientists more access to journalists compared to other regional settings. When asked about their interactions with other practitioners, journalists described their communications with some Arctic scientists and policy-makers almost as reminiscent of a bygone era, where contact oftentimes still occurs via conventional phone calls, sources are recommended by word of mouth, and relationships are built over time, often decades, particularly when journalists are given the resources to engage in long-term travel or life in the North.

Second, scientists' cautiousness concerning interactions with journalists is also built over time, with many citing incidents in their or their colleagues' earlier career stages in which journalists were perceived as misrepresenting or oversimplifying scientific information concerning Arctic marine mammals, which the researchers had communicated. Such caution and preconceptions concerning scientists' interactions with journalists, including science journalists, are well documented in the science communications literature as well as in the literature for science, technology, and society studies, which examine interactions between journalists and scientists (see Nelkin, 1995). When asked about researchers' apprehensions, journalists acknowledged them as valid concerns, with one interviewee noting:

> There's a real difficulty in finding a way, finding a common ground where researchers can feel like their research is adequately seen, and understood, and not oversimplified, or kind of spoken about reductively. And I absolutely sympathize with that … the last thing we [as journalists] want to do is misrepresent something. (Interviewee #24, 11 April 2023)

Here, it is critical to note that scientists who had a better understanding of the pressures and realities of journalism also tended to express a more positive outlook about their interactions with journalists. Examples of such information that researchers were aware of included the time pressures, editorial constraints, or the likelihood of journalists other than their contact point contributing to the news story (including copyeditors and journalists who write headlines). Similarly, policy-makers who had a qualified understanding of the journalistic process, particularly those who once were journalists themselves, were more attuned to trends in AMM-based news reporting that other practitioners viewed critically.

Having discussed practitioners' interactions concerning environmental news reporting on Arctic marine mammals, the following section focuses on how practitioners perceive the news content.

Practitioner Perspectives on AMM News Reporting

This section discusses the three most notable patterns in practitioners' perceptions of environmental news reporting concerning the Arctic, identified through the textual analysis of interviews and informal conversations beginning with the prominence of polar bears in Arctic media coverage, then the perceived absence of humans in such environmental news reporting, and finally, the representation of different knowledge systems therein.

Polar Bear Prominence

What do you picture when you think about the Circumpolar North? Practitioners interviewed for this research project appeared to agree that they, and the general public, "typically always" think of polar bears (Interviewee #11, 2 April 2023). Practitioners noted that this fascination with polar bears, even above other Arctic marine mammals, was a distinct feature in Arctic and environmental news reporting, with polar bears cast as representatives of both the region and the climate crisis (cf. Born, 2021; Owen & Swaisgood, 2008). A Norwegian journalist noted the longevity of the media's fascination with polar bears, remembering newspaper coverage concerning the polar region in decades past: "the main focus ... was climate issues, it was polar bear stories [about the impacts of climate change on the animals]" (Interviewee #19, 5 June 2023). Another observed of contemporary news coverage, that "they've [polar bears] kind of become a bit of a flashpoint for how the media covers the changing Arctic and climate change in general" (Interviewee #11, 2 April 2023). The image of a forlorn polar bear on a drifting ice floe—physically and metaphorically "on thin ice"—has become a media shorthand for the climate emergency (see for example Boyle, 2020; Carrington, 2020; see also Born, 2021). The idea of visible effects of the climate crisis on polar bear well-being in particular appear to have contributed to them being cast as the "poster child" of the crisis. For example, many recall the infamous video footage of a starving polar bear produced by wildlife photographers Paul Nicklen and Christina Mittermeier, though some experts—including several interviewees—have questioned the condition of that particular polar bear, positing that it was perhaps suffering from a parasite instead (Stevens, 2017).

When asked how they view the prominence of polar bears in Arctic environmental news reporting, some practitioners perceived it as a force for good, drawing attention to environmental issues affecting the region. Polar bears "tend to capture human imagination, right? So, I think that people are always curious about the animals in these environments," suggested a Canadian environmental journalist (Interviewee #11, 2 April 2023). A science program coordinator with Environment and Climate Change Canada, a federal government department, confirmed, "Polar bears are very charismatic" (Interviewee #18, 18 April 2023). According to journalists, the polar icons provide an "easy way in and … they resonate with readers, … and even editors always want polar bear details" (Interviewee #11, 2 April 2023).

The latter highlights the importance of editorial influence in environmental reporting, which also contributes to the prominence of polar bears in AMM-based reporting. It is important to note here, that even if the journalists working on this reporting may be closely familiar with the Arctic—have travelled to or lived there—the editors who have the final say on whether an article is published, or a story is even pursued in the first place and awarded the potentially necessary travel and funding, may be unfamiliar with the region. They may thus be more likely to support environmental journalism focused on these charismatic species rather than less "appealing" polar and environmental issues or lesser-known Arctic species, such as phytoplankton, because "polar bear stories tend to, again, they do well. Like you're likely [to] have a lot of interest for polar bear stories" (Interviewee #11, 2 April 2023).

However, when asked about their perception of the prominence of polar bears in environmental news reporting, some practitioners also cautioned of "the perils and pitfalls of using polar bears as symbols of the environment" (Interviewee #8, 7 April 2023). One American journalist noted, "If you want to use polar bears

as, you know, kind of your messenger or your image of climate change, there's nothing wrong with it, but just do it well" (Interviewee #10, 19 May 2023). When asked for clarification, what "doing it well involved," the journalist explained, "being accurate … it's a simple answer. Figure out why polar bears are relevant to climate change. Write about it. And mostly that's gonna have to do with the environmental aspects" (Interviewee #10, 19 May 2023).

Conversely, reports that are inaccurate or that misrepresent this close association between polar bears and the climate crisis—which researchers likened to climate denialism or pseudoscience in extreme cases (see Harvey et al., 2018; Pongiglione & Martini, 2022)—raise concerns among scientists, journalists, and policy-makers alike. In the specific context of polar bear-based communications, multiple practitioners discussed the example of the *Polar Bear Science* blog by Susan Crockford. While it is not the only example, by far, of polar bear content considered problematic by practitioners, interviewees and researchers noted that Crockford's blog features misrepresentations of scientific research regarding the effects of climate change and related environmental issues on polar bears (Harvey et al., 2018; Pongiglione & Martini, 2022, p. 431). Moreover, a journalist remembers publishing a story about polar bears in a prominent environmental publication upon which,

> [Crockford] contacted the editor of that publication saying that I had made up a bunch of stuff or something. And it was completely factually inaccurate what she was saying. But it kind of had freaked the editors out … she is the first SEO[6] result when you look up polar bears often. So, people get misled by going to her website. (Interviewee #11, 2 April 2023).

Scientists also noted concern about having their work misrepresented. One polar bear researcher worried, "she's [Crockford] feeding a lot of disinformation to people … that has implications" (Interviewee #13, 17 April 2023), indicating the potential impacts of mis- and disinformation on public opinion regarding climate change and polar bear conservation (Harvey et al., 2018). However, when asked about their personal reaction to having their work misrepresented, the researcher laughingly noted, "it kind of felt like a badge of honour [to have one's work included on the blog alongside renowned polar bear scientists, like Andrew Derocher[7]]. Because I was like, wow, I'm a big enough name that she cares" (Interviewee #13, 17 April 2023).

As the above example demonstrates, the closer that communications about a specific environmental issue, such as climate change, or a region, like the Arctic, are tied to one specific flagship species, the more susceptible public perception becomes to misinformation or even more nuanced communication of scientific realities. In the case of polar bears, instances of misinformation can be found in the example of the blog misrepresenting polar bear research (see Harvey et al., 2018; Pongiglione & Martini, 2022). Examples of a desire for more nuanced communication, on the other hand, can be observed in recent news articles arguing for more sophisticated news reporting concerning polar bears (Adkins, 2023; Greenfield, 2023). For instance, with reference to how different polar bear subpopulations that are confronted with different environmental settings and changes are able to cope with these to varying extents (Aars, 2021), a Norwegian polar bear scientist cautions, "it is very important to communicate that that doesn't mean that it's not bad for polar bears, that the habitat change[s], it just means that polar bears are good at coping with changes within limits" (Interviewee #12, 25 August 2023).

In summary, this section has highlighted practitioners' understandings of public interest in polar bears and their prominence in Arctic environmental news reporting. In doing so, it illustrates practitioners' awareness of the potential use of flagship species to draw the public's attention to environmental threats endangering AMMs, potentially facilitating their rise on the media agenda. While this section focused on a particular flagship species that is very heavily represented—perhaps even overrepresented, according to some practitioners—the following section discusses the missing human component in AMM-based media coverage of the Arctic region.

The Human Perspective

Much of the flagship species literature discusses which animals are best suited to become ambassadors of their respective ecosystems, and how focusing on one species may draw attention away from other flora and fauna (Jepson & Barua, 2015; Leader-Williams & Dublin, 2000; White et al., 1997). However, the literature less often discusses the comparative lack of attention regarding humans when discussing flagship species. This may be due to the omnipresence of humans in discussions of environmental issues, as many of these issues, including the climate crisis, are caused by human activities. Similarly, the appeal of many charismatic species is inherently linked to their interactions with humans, such as stories of dolphins rescuing humans from sharks, orcas, or from being lost at sea (Barney et al., 2005; Colby, 2018).

Yet, practitioners' accounts highlight how dangerous it can be to overrely on assuming that news audiences are aware of the presence and role of human beings in the ecosystem, especially with respect to settings that may be perceived

as remote, or considered "wilderness," as is often the case with the Arctic region (Gricius, 2022). When asked about the potential challenges or implications of environmental news reporting focused on flagship species, a local Arctic news reporter explained:

> people are not centred in this [news reporting], in a lot of these representations of the North. That by centring an animal, when people think of the Arctic ... [from] outside of the region, if the first thing that comes to mind is a polar bear or a whale or a seal or a walrus, then I don't know that necessarily deletes [sic] local inhabitants from the mind, but it doesn't put them first. … We're not going to think about the people [when consuming solely AMM-focused content]. (Interviewee #20, pers. comm. , 19 May 2023)

The perceived omission of people in environmental news reporting about the Arctic and its charismatic megafauna is particularly striking with regard to the Indigenous Peoples living in the region. When asked about their perception of AMM-based media coverage, some practitioners stated that they believe news stories to increasingly incorporate mentions of the importance of Arctic marine mammals to Indigenous culture and subsistence lifestyles, but stressed the need for greater, more nuanced, and authentic representation that not only mentions, but quotes or is authored by members of Indigenous Arctic communities. As one interviewee noted, "You're not preserving the bears and the whales and the seals just to preserve bears, whales, and seals, but also because they're integral to Inuit culture and society" (Interviewee #8, 7 April 2023). Another interviewee emphasized the importance and persistence of the latter, stating, "We are not going anywhere. The Arctic is our home, and like Indigenous people everywhere, we believe our homeland and waters are the most precious and sacred place on earth" (Interviewee #21, 25 August 2023).

In response to questions about challenges associated with AMM-based news reporting, interviewees often highlighted examples of past harm inflicted on Indigenous communities based on the ways in which Arctic marine mammals and related subsistence hunting have been problematized in the news. As a veteran Arctic journalist and policy advocate explained,

> Inuit, in particular, have a very different relationship with polar bears that includes a consumptive relationship. And they had a history also of major social destruction due to the use of seals as potent symbols used by the environmental movement. So, … particularly European-based anti-sealing work that was done by particular organizations … caused major disruption to Inuit communities. (Interviewee #8, 7 April 2023)

The interviewee was referring to the 1983 European Economic Community and 2009 European Union bans on the import of seal products following anti-sealing campaigns led by environmental non-governmental organizations, like Greenpeace, and related international news coverage that often lacked Indigenous perspectives (Gehrke, 2024). Subsequent analyses of the public discourse surrounding the seal product bans highlighted the importance of reporting on the cultural and economic relevance of subsistence hunting practices in Indigenous communities (Dauvergne & Neville, 2011; Marland, 2014). This emphasis on further inclusion of societal implications was also reflected in practitioners' responses when asked how they would like to see perceived shortcomings in AMM-based reporting addressed. For example, one interviewee wished for "a more holistic view of the environment" in AMM-based reporting (Interviewee #8, 7 April 2023).

Moreover, reflecting increasing awareness of the potentially negative effects of public discourse concerning AMMs and the comparative exclusion of the region's human inhabitants therein, a number of journalists and policy advocates noted that they now "explicitly … [do] not use … animals, like whales and polar bears, for their conservation messaging" (Interviewee #8, 7 April 2023). Others continue to see the value in flagship species-based communications to draw attention to the region and related environmental issues, though they, too, seek to place greater emphasis on animal–human relations. These relations emphasize the interconnectedness of human and animal fates in the age of the Anthropocene, stressing the impact of the climate crises on both, as well as preventing the colonially coded misrepresentation of the Circumpolar North as *terra nullius* (Lat. land that belongs to nobody).

While this section has highlighted the importance of acknowledging the existence and lived experience of humans at home in and visiting the Arctic, the following section discusses how these individuals' varied knowledges are taken into account with regard to environmental news reporting on Arctic marine mammals.

Space, Time, and Knowledge

Overall, there are four broad systems of knowledges discussed in environmental news reporting on Arctic marine mammals: 1) conventional, scientific, or Western knowledge, 2) Traditional Ecological or Indigenous Knowledge, 3) local knowledge, and 4) citizen science. The terminology applied to these knowledges varies and has distinct social and political connotations (see Onyancha, 2022).[8] While conventional scientific knowledge refers to information generated through observations by individuals trained and affiliated with scientific institutions, Indigenous Knowledge (IK) "integrates observations of the environment, animals,

and human health that have been shared and evaluated over generations of continual habitation in focused spatial regions" (Moore & Hauser, 2019, p. 2). The latter definition similarly applies to local knowledge, though varying definitions include or exclude IK, suggesting an exclusive focus on knowledge generated by non-Indigenous local people (Onyancha, 2022). Political communications and interviewee accounts often mentioned Indigenous Knowledge and local knowledge in the same statement or even sentence. Finally, citizen science refers to the involvement of lay individuals, who normally would not be part of the scientific or local observation process, generating knowledge—such as in the case of whale watching tourists being asked to count and describe whale sightings (Alexander et al., 2020).

When asked about the types of knowledges reflected in AMM-based reporting, practitioners agreed that conventional scientific knowledge is the most prominent form of information about Arctic marine mammals represented in environmental news reporting. The other three types of knowledge defined above were perceived as less prominent in the news coverage, as found in other studies of environmental journalism concerning Arctic marine mammals (Gehrke, 2024; Boyd et al., 2019), which reflects the difficulty and cost of the exchange and the joint use of different knowledge types (Karcher et al., 2022). However, practitioners made a concerted effort to emphasize the need for greater representation of local knowledge and IK in AMM-based news coverage.

Highlighting the importance of these systems of knowledge, the director of a marine mammal organization noted, "Indigenous Knowledge reminds us that our health and well-being depend on the health and well-being of other [sic] living with us, the whales, walrus, seals, … all things; and if we don't treat them properly with respect and care, then we are not deserving of them [and] will suffer" (Interviewee #21, 25 August 2023).

Sue Moore, a research scientist and one of three commissioners of the US Marine Mammal Commission, emphasizes the complementary nature of conventional research and multigenerational IK, noting that for conventional scientific data, "if we're lucky we have a decade, sometimes occasionally we have two or three decades and we think that's an amazing time series"; "it's a lifetime, it's not multiple lifetimes, but it has breadth" (Interviewee #23, 22 June 2023). To this effect, Sue Moore and Donna Hauser invite readers of their 2019 *Environmental Research Letter* to consider Indigenous Knowledge as "time" and "generationally" deep "but spatially small, local," and conventional science as "spatially deep" but temporally limited (Interviewee #23, 22 June 2023).

When asked how the challenge of IK underrepresentation in AMM-based environmental news reporting could be addressed, practitioners were eager for greater representation of Indigenous and local knowledge, though they also

cautioned of the required 1) resources, as discussed in the following subsection, 2) work of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, and 3) care required of those charged with communicating these types of knowledge. To this end, Indigenous interviewees also noted the toll that their contribution to the public discourse on Arctic marine mammals can take, with one interviewee commenting, "I don't have a PR team, and I'm not interested in always adding an Indigenous perspective to every opportunity" (Interviewee #21, 25 August 2023). Correspondingly, non-Indigenous journalists and science communicators described the steps they take to ensure that they are adequately communicating IK and local knowledge. For instance, a science program coordinator with Environment and Climate Change Canada explained:

> there's also a certain sensitivity related to the polar bear 'file' because of the strong importance of polar bear to Inuit as a harvested species … there's [sic] some sensitivities there too for me to be aware of when I'm communicating out that research [to the public or other parts of the Canadian government]. And it will depend on who the audience is for sure. But … those researchers [working on polar bear studies] have very strong relationships … established with northern and Inuit communities. And so, I know that by working closely with them, and by running my messaging past them, … we'll ensure that … whatever we're saying is appropriate and accurate. So, I am, you know, relying heavily on their expertise and their experience, but also learning a lot. (Interviewee #18, 18 April 2023)

In summary, practitioners communicating about the environmental issues threatening Arctic marine mammals are tasked with juggling a variety of knowledges, which requires significant resources, effort, and care. This also requires the potential involvement of the respective Knowledge Holders and practitioners in order to produce accurate reporting that does not neglect the influences of certain systems of knowledge in favour of others.

The following section discusses the resources and work required to ensure a greater representation of different knowledge systems and to potentially improve environmental news reporting concerning Arctic marine mammals.

Towards Better Environmental News Reporting on Arctic Marine Mammals: (Local) Journalism for Global Problems

The above discussion of practitioners' perceptions of environmental news reporting concerning Arctic marine mammals highlights three trends that practitioners considered challenging—polar bear prominence, the missing human perspective, and underrepresentation of different knowledges. When asked what they perceived is the cause of these trends, practitioners often attributed the challenges to a lack of resources: "you don't have the resources being put towards environmental reporting and especially Arctic environmental reporting as there should be with marine mammals" (Interviewee #11, 2 April 2023). The implications of this lack of resources are manifold, affecting the quality and quantity of environmental journalism and the activities that inform it, including scientific polar research. Additionally, these resource constraints are further exacerbated by the difficulty accessing certain parts of the Arctic. One Canadian journalist provides a tangible example of how these resource and access constraints can affect environmental news reporting on polar bears: "probably most of the polar bear stories are about the polar bears in southern and western Hudson Bay because it's the southernmost populations." Svalbard polar bears are comparatively underrepresented, according to the journalist, "because it's expensive to get to those polar bears. It requires a lot of time and resources" (Interviewee #11, 2 April 2023).

In particular, practitioners argued that a "lack of local reporters" (Interviewee #20, 2023) and underrepresentation of Indigenous news reporters in AMM-based news coverage contributed to the above-detailed trends. According to practitioners, local and Indigenous reporters would be more attuned to the trends in news coverage they consider problematic, such as an awareness of humans living in the Arctic and their varied relationships with animals. As one Inuit journalist noted, "They're missing out on getting local people involved in local media" (Interviewee #7, 23 March 2023). This criticism concerning the limited involvement of local and Indigenous journalists is reflected in the institutional structures of the news organizations involved in Arctic environmental news reporting. A Canadian journalist explained,

> having bureaus ... that are actually in the Arctic [would improve news reporting on the region]. I don't know of any news organization—large international news organization—that staffs an Arctic outpost. [There are] those [in] the Nordics, but that's like Oslo, you know, Helsinki, Reykjavik, but … having a news bureau in Longyearbyen would be amazing. And in the Russian Arctic as well. (Interviewee #11, 2 April 2023)

The lack of news access to the Russian Arctic has become a particular topic of contention in the aftermath of the communication breakdown following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As the calls for a resumption of scientific exchange and "track II diplomacy" between Russian scientists and other polar researchers and institutions grow louder amid the ongoing war in Ukraine (Dziatkowiec, 2023), interviewed scientists, journalists, and policy-makers highlighted the implications for AMM-based news reporting, most notably a lack of information about the Russian Arctic marine mammals and of exchange with their Russian counterparts, which some already considered incomplete or lacking before the invasion. As one journalist noted:

> it's gonna be a big question moving forward as to what information is coming out of there [Russia], … not just for scientists, but also for journalists. Journalists used to be able to get access. Western journalists could kind of get access, albeit heavily monitored and regulated, but they could still do things in the Russian Arctic. And now we've also lost access to a lot of that. (Interviewee #11, personal communication, 2 April 2023)

As these developments are ongoing, future research should examine the continued impacts of geopolitical conflicts and tensions on environmental news reporting about Arctic marine mammals, including the research informing news coverage of them. The following section suggests further avenues for research and summarizes the article's findings.

Conclusion

Arctic marine mammals are charismatic flagship species. Equipped with the exceptional capacity to capture people's attention, they occupy a unique space in polar and environmental imaginaries. In the context of overlapping ecological crises threatening these species and their Arctic habitats, this research study sought to investigate the assumption that practitioners use charismatic megafauna when creating, contributing to, or engaging with environmental news reporting because the animals' popular appeal is thought to draw attention to related conservation concerns. Reflecting an implicit understanding of agenda-setting theory, the study found that practitioners are indeed motivated to include AMMs in their environmental communications in order to draw attention to larger ecological concerns, including the climate crisis.

Furthermore, when asked about their interactions with other practitioners in the context of AMM-based environmental news reporting, practitioners praised

their close-knit professional networks enabling cooperation between practitioners. At the same time, they signalled researchers' cautiousness concerning interactions with journalists, informed by instances in which researchers felt their knowledge or research was misrepresented in news coverage. Interviewees perceived several trends in environmental news reporting about Arctic marine mammals as potentially problematic, such as the underrepresentation of different systems of knowledge, which may result from a lack of engagement with different researchers and Knowledge Holders. Additionally, interviewees identified the prominence of polar bears above other Arctic marine mammals, and the comparative lack of the human perspective in environmental news reporting on AMMs, as potentially problematic in light of the news coverage's agenda-setting function. Consequently, practitioners noted the need for further investment in Arctic journalism and better engagement with different systems of knowledge to combat these trends. While many practitioners were cognizant of the above-described trends, with some even noting potential strategies to counteract them, several interviewees maintained that their engagement in AMM-based environmental communications was purely motivated by professional duties (e.g., a journalist reporting on an AMM-related story because it happened to be the news of the day).

Overall, practitioners appear to hold higher opinions concerning their interactions with other practitioners and related AMM-based environmental news reporting when they had a better understanding of newsmaking processes. This may suggest that teaching practitioners about the realities of newsmaking may improve practitioner interactions, which may, in turn, contribute to improving the quality of news coverage. Future research should further investigate this observation. Additionally, further research may examine practitioner perspectives in different regional settings or concentrate on different flagship species since the insights gained in this article focus specifically on the Arctic context. Furthermore, this article is limited to discussing the perspectives of English-language speakers based in the North American and Scandinavian Arctic countries. Consequently, future research should consider the perspectives of non-English speakers based in other parts of the Arctic and non-Arctic.

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Notes

1. Multiple authors of the April Fool's article independently recommended the *Breakthrough* article "Negative-Emission Whales" by Trembath and Wang (2019), which debunks articles "touting the economic value of breeding and maintaining whale populations, [which] is neither a reasonable carbon sequestration strategy nor a well-founded monetary valuation." As Haewon McJeon notes, Whale CDR is "so far out there that none of us [April Fool's jokers] would actually ever think it'll happen at scale" (personal communication, 5 April 2023). And Trembath and Wang (2019) recommend that the "next time you hear impressive-sounding claims about managing soils, forests, or whales as a large-scale carbon capture solution, be sure to look at the fine print."
2. This article uses the terminology of "practices" to refer to science communication, journalism, and so on, and "practitioner" to discuss those engaging in these practices. This language was chosen based on the article's connection to the expertise literature that employs these terms (Kuus, 2008, 2016), as well as using the latter as a substitute for the colonially charged language of rights holders and stakeholders (see Sarkki et al., 2021).
3. Conversely, if this study found a lack of evidence for the hypothesis, this could suggest that practitioners are unaware, disinterested, or deliberately ignorant of the potential (political) implications of AMM-based news reporting, evoking past notions of "objective" journalists and "apolitical" scientists (Nelkin, 1995).
4. Jepson and Barua (2015) reflect this agenda-setting process in their theory of flagship-species action (though their writing largely omits the language of agenda-setting). The authors suggest that when a flagship species progresses through this process, it "becomes re-framed (or reinvigorated) as a cultural asset speaking for a wider nature, publics and political agenda" (Jepson & Barua, 2015, p. 102).
5. The only exception to this are interviews and informal conversations regarding specific texts authored by the respective interviewees or informal conversation partners.
6. SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization. In this context, the interviewee is referring to the order in which links to websites appear in online search engines, e.g., when one googles "polar bear science."
7. Andrew Derocher is a professor of biological sciences at the University of Alberta and veteran polar bear researcher, having studied the species over the past four decades.

8. The above-listed terms used for the purposes of this article are based on practitioner statements; by no means do these present a comprehensive list of the types and systems of knowledge practiced across the Circumpolar North, but rather a selection of the most relevant practices with regard to AMM-based environmental news reporting.

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Research Article

Local (or Not) Insecurity on Arctic Twitter/X: Global Insecurity and Climate Change

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Abstract: While Twitter, now known as X, has been used to study political sentiments around elections and political discourse broadly speaking, less research has explored questions of insecurity. Using a data set of Arctic tweets between 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2023, and the R programming language, I asked how posts regarding this region framed the debate around insecurity. My work finds that spikes of insecurity on Arctic Twitter/X did not directly correlate with moments of global insecurity such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 or the COVID-19 pandemic from early 2020. Instead, they reference environmental insecurities such as the 2020 Norilsk oil spill in Russia and other Arctic-specific events that almost all have to do with climate change, both locally and globally. These findings suggest that similar to public opinion polls, local insecurities have more resonance with Arctic publics, rather than highly politicized moments of global insecurity.

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The position of X, formerly Twitter, in the social media landscape has been in a constant state of flux for the past several years. As of April 2024, the platform ranked twelfth on a list of the most popular social networks worldwide with its number of monthly active users falling far behind Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok.[1] It has about the same number of monthly users as Pinterest. However, the platform remains an important part of the political discourse where debate and communication takes place, as well as a setting where public opinion and news agendas are partially formed through mechanisms of agenda setting.[2] Political elites, journalists, academics, and those who contribute to the broader agenda-setting dynamics of public discourse, have all played an important role on the platform.[3] In the wake of Elon Musk's purchase of Twitter in October 2022 and the rebranding to X in July 2023, the social media platform has again gained significant media attention, with many asking questions about the return of far-right commentators that had been previously banned, the "unbanning" of Trump from the platform, and the nature of censorship in the so-called "town square" of the Internet.[4]

The literature on Twitter/X, political communications, agenda-setting theory, and public opinion has been developing for several years. While little work deals specifically with the Arctic, there has been recent work that explores how public understandings of threats—particularly environmental—are discussed on Twitter. For example, some scholars have explored how climate change emerges as a key theme in tweets from regions affected by hurricanes, and that unreliable outlets tend to refer to "climate change" as "global warming."[5] Others have investigated the interactions between how climate risks are portrayed on Twitter and social perceptions of those risks, and profiled social media users to determine how they could influence opinions on the platform.[6] Similarly, Twitter has been used as a source for data analytics in understanding real-time communication of weather monitoring and flood warnings.[7] Specifically, researchers have focused on the differences between elite actors and Twitter users when communicating about reports such as the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), finding that certain issue areas of the report, such as the section on meat consumption, became central on Twitter while they remained small in the overall report—illustrating increasing polarization around climate solutions.[8]

Donald Trump's usage of the platform, both in the lead-up to the United States 2016 election, as well as during his presidency (2016–2020) and the 2020 presidential election, led to heightened interest in the role Twitter plays in fomenting violence, distrust, and negative sentiments.[9] Trump is far from the only politician to use social media or Twitter specifically to shape political discourse, influence elections, or share information in a way that the traditional news media would not allow.[10] Such tools allow politicians to connect directly with their base and often have a tendency to polarize citizens against one another.[11] Twitter has also been studied in connection to how politicians, such as former Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko, have used it to sell insecurity,[12] how marginalized communities such as Inuit are represented during elections,[13] and how specific relationships exist between individuals and trends on issue areas like NORAD.[14]

In the context of the Arctic, Twitter has been used as a data source in limited instances. As cited above, some researchers have explored how NORAD is discussed on the platform, while others have emphasized how Inuit issues were represented on Twitter during the 2019 Canadian electoral campaign. Others have utilized Twitter to examine and quantify the spatial expansion of Arctic tourism.[15] Another researcher used social network analysis to look into how Arctic development policy circulated on Twitter, and to conceptualize the actors involved in information circulation.[16] More recently, scholars have attempted to see whether misinformation plays a role in how Arctic Indigenous languages are represented on Twitter.[17] The limited literature focusing on the Arctic as a region under analysis, as well as the recent work of how climate threats are perceived on Twitter, presents a particular opening for the research that motivated this study. In short, given research on the public perception of risk on Twitter, we can ask how might perceptions of insecurity at large play out in an Arctic context. This is particularly important given the growing centrality of traditional security concerns in the Arctic such as heightened tensions between China, Russia, and the United States,[18] concerns about hybrid threats in the region,[19] and militarization of the region writ large.[20] Investigating the extent to which these traditional security risks are reflected in the discourse on Arctic Twitter/X, the community of accounts posting about the Arctic, is one of the aims of this study.

My work is interested in how tweets that cover the Arctic represent insecurity. Previous work exploring how security issues are addressed in public opinion polls generally finds that local security issues, such as housing and food insecurity, are prioritized over large global insecurities, such as long-standing issues that have entered the public consciousness like terrorism.[21] Whether such trends remain true on X/Twitter—a site of public opinion—is unclear. Further, what type of insecurity is present on Arctic X/Twitter and when does it spike?

In this article, I offer results from a Twitter data set that focuses on the Arctic, with an emphasis on insecurity. Using tweets that were posted between 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2023, I find a series of thirteen spikes where a particular post was retweeted (RT) more than 150 times across the time period. These spikes do not correlate with instances of global insecurity such as the outbreak of the

war of aggression in Ukraine in February 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic, or the release of IPCC reports throughout the time period. While climate change certainly is a question of global security and did emerge, it was not directly correlated with geopolitical instances of insecurity, and there were generally no heightened and politicized crisis moments that might have popped up in the same way that the Ukraine war or the COVID-19 pandemic might have emerged. I further examined the top ten RTs in the month of each spike to see the type of insecurity referenced, finding that the majority were local insecurities—such as the 2020 Norilsk oil spill in Russia, heat waves, or the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)—and that most had to do with climate change. This suggests that similar to public opinion polls, Twitter data also shows that insecurity for the public tends to correlate with environmental issues and is not sensitive to geopolitical international tensions (such as Russia versus the West). Further, for the Arctic, it is climate change that continues to be the most pressing security issue, rather than other escalatory rhetoric suggesting that a new Cold War in the Arctic must be accompanied by militarization.

Methodology

The analysis below was conducted using a database titled "Twitter on Information and Disinformation on the Arctic Region" coordinated by Mathieu Landriault and Jean-François Savard using the API (Application Programming Interface) credentials of Observatoire de la politique et la sécurité de l'Arctique (OPSA).[22] The database was created using the R programming language in RStudio[23] with the following packages: dplyr, ggplot2, gridExtra, Lexicoder Sentiment Dictionary (English), plotly, quanteda, quanteda.textplots, RStudio, rtweet, shiny, and shinydashboard.[24] The database included posts extracted from Twitter between 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2023, encompassing 2,834,609 in total, but did not include geo-location data. The time limitation was due to Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter: in 2023, Musk discontinued free access to the company's API. Thus, additional tweets and collection beyond the collected tweets was not possible. That being said, the analysis of discourse used retweets as its primary object of analysis. A tweet is a single post made on X/Twitter, a retweet (RT) is a feature that allows users to share someone else's post with their own followers. Spikes of retweets were analyzed across the time period by measuring the number of RTs posted in a month. Importantly, the "spikes" of interest are a visualization of activity around the most popular tweets in the sample that fell within the Arctic data set and that also used one of the "insecurity" dictionary words under analysis.

The original data set provided to me included tweets with one of the following words: 1) Arctic, 2) Inuk/Inuit, 3) Sami(s) / Saami(s), 4) Greenland, and 5) Arctic Council. Using these words meant that the total number of tweets in the data set was limited to 31,681 tweets in total. Certainly, these words limited the results to those in the English language and may have limited the scope of tweets under analysis as well as privileged an international audience rather than localized. However, given that the data set was also in use by other researchers, the initial keywords could not be changed—rather, additional dictionaries could be added for further detailed analysis. For this analysis, I was interested in tweets that contained phrases that indicated insecurity of some sort. Table 1 lists the word used to indicate such feelings of insecurity on Twitter.

Using this dictionary of words, I was interested in two phenomena: 1) when were instances of insecurity most prevalent (i.e., when were there spikes of insecurity language and could they be correlated with global moments of insecurity), and 2) what type of insecurity was referenced. To test this, I looked for moments across the time period in question where retweets measured above 150 and then looked at the content of the top ten RTs to see what type of security was indicated. Importantly, dictionary approaches, and the Lexicoder Sentiment Dictionary specifically, have been reported to capture and code content in a way consistent with human coders.[25] This particular dictionary was developed by first observing Michele Gelfand's Threat Dictionary tool and the 240 words included in her lexicon.[26] The database only allowed a limited number of words associated with a sub-dictionary, meaning that the 240 words included in Michele Gelfand's tool would be far too many. The dictionary was thus reduced by taking out duplicate words, such as both "catastrophe" and "catastrophic," as well as terms that were not relevant to the Arctic such as "famine." The dictionary was again reduced to a reasonable number of words that covered different types of threats to the region—search and rescue insecurity, such as "emergency" or "risk," environmental security issues such as "disaster" or "polluted," as well as those relating to interstate competition such as "threat" and "dangerous." Some words in the dictionary were too vague such as "doubts" or "amid" or "anguish" as they could refer to issues not specifically dealing with insecurity. I also chose words that could refer to insecurity in general such as "fear," "worry," and "afraid" meant to capture broader insecurities that could refer to the COVID-19 pandemic or to horizontal escalation from the war in Ukraine to the Arctic. To ensure that incidents involving COVID or Ukraine were captured, I specifically looked within the top ten tweets to see whether allusions to either event came up.

Table 1. Dictionary of words associated with insecurity

Fear	Disaster
Threat	Emergency
Anxiety	Frightening
Insecurity	Harm
Afraid	Polluted
Catastrophe	Risk
Collapse	Warn
Dangerous	Worry

Source: Developed by author from Michele Gelfrand's Threat Dictionary.

The "spikes" found across this time period were measured by those going over 150 retweets (RTs) for a few reasons. First, a threshold of 150 RTs provided a reasonable sample size for the number of spikes under analysis in the context of the data. While literature on retweeting and broader Twitter conventions have suggested that RTs are measures of popularity, these researchers also acknowledge that this is highly contextual.[27] For example, during emergencies, retweeting patterns tend to increase around, during, and after a disaster, but that the numbers vary considerably.[28] While 150 thus may seem arbitrary, the number was chosen due to the relative rarity of this phenomena across the data set, illustrating that 150 was a good metric for choosing RTs that went above the "normal" conversational ecology on the platform.[29] However, second, when a spike passed at least 150 RTs, it was likely that the content was shared beyond the original author's immediate followers—suggesting that the content resonated with a broader audience on Arctic Twitter. This largely has to do with the retweet's function as a mechanism of information diffusion. Such dynamics are particularly clear in research conducted on revolutions such as that of the 2013 Egyptian political uprising where retweets illustrated how users passed information on to others.[30]

All figures in this article are visualizations from this database. Restricting the textual analysis to the top ten RTs was done in order to explore the most influential and widely shared content. In short, by only looking at the top ten RTs, I concentrated the analysis on content that received the most attention and engagement within each spike that encompassed at least 150 RTs. The restriction was also done for reasons of efficiency and practicality.

Findings

From 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2023, there were thirteen spikes in which there were more than 150 retweets that used keywords in the "insecurity" dictionary of words. The retweets in Table 2 are a list of the top ten retweets occurring during the month in question, which included an "insecurity" word in them. These time periods did not correlate with key critical junctures that related to global moments of insecurity, such as the publication of the IPCC reports (related to climate security), the outbreak of Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, or key moments during the COVID-19 pandemic. Given this lack of linkage between key global security events and flares of insecurity on Arctic Twitter, the analysis continued by looking at what types of insecurities emerged in the top ten retweets during each calendar month (from the 1st to the 30th/31st of each month).

The analysis below proceeds as follows. I have divided the spikes into each year under analysis, from 2020 to 2023. Figures 1–3 display the number of retweets over time. The X axis represents the dates throughout the years—as seen in each individual month—and the Y axis the frequency of RTs. The Y axis is scaled based on the RTs. Each figure shows the spikes under analysis. Tables 1–3 then outline each month that exceeded 150 RTs in the first column, the second column presents the number of RTs, and the third column presents the general topics that came up in the top ten RTs. The topics were inferred inductively based on the content of the tweets.

Beginning in January 2020, two spikes occurred—one with 150 RTs and another with 250 RTs. An examination of the top ten RTs during this month shows that the tweets under analysis had to do with climate change in some capacity or with environmental issues such as the Greenland Ice Sheet. For example, one tweet stated "dangerous new offshore drilling in the Arctic Ocean would put polar bears and other arctic marine mammals at unprecedented danger. Tell President Trump to protect the Arctic Ocean from dangerous new offshore drilling." Another mentioned "ice is being lost from Greenland seven times faster than it was in the 1990s. That means sea level rises are more likely to reach 67 cm by 2100. A rate of rise will put 400 million people at risk of flooding each year."

In February 2020, there was one spike of 250 RTs. The topics again touched on issues of climate change, permafrost, offshore drilling, and the Greenland Ice Sheet. Amongst the top ten RTs some explicitly talked about melting permafrost, saying "permafrost collapse is irreversible," calling the Arctic the "fastest warming place on earth," with others mentioning that "scientists studying climate change expected layers of permafrost in the Canadian Arctic to melt by the year 2090, instead it is happening now." Another tweet stated "scientists studying climate change expected layers of permafrost in the Canadian Arctic to melt by the year 2090, instead its happening now. #climateemergency." Other tweets touched

on offshore drilling, again bringing attention to how offshore drilling would be damaging to polar bears and Arctic environmental habitats saying, "their survival is under threat." Greenland's Ice Sheet was another topic with one tweet saying "Greenland's ice sheet lost 2 billion tons of ice in a single day! There's no time to wait, we're in a #climateemergency."

Table 2. Spikes of retweets in 2020 that exceeded 150 and the topics in top 10 retweets

Time Period	Number of Retweets (RTs)	Topics
January 2020	150 and 250	Greenland Ice Sheet, Sea Ice, Climate Change, Offshore Drilling
February 2020	250	Climate Change, Permafrost Thaw, Offshore Drilling
June 2020	Over 2,000	Norilsk oil spill, Climate Change
August 2020	300	Greenland Ice Sheet, ANWR, Climate Change
November 2020	300	ANWR, Climate Change
December 2020	350	ANWR, Climate Change

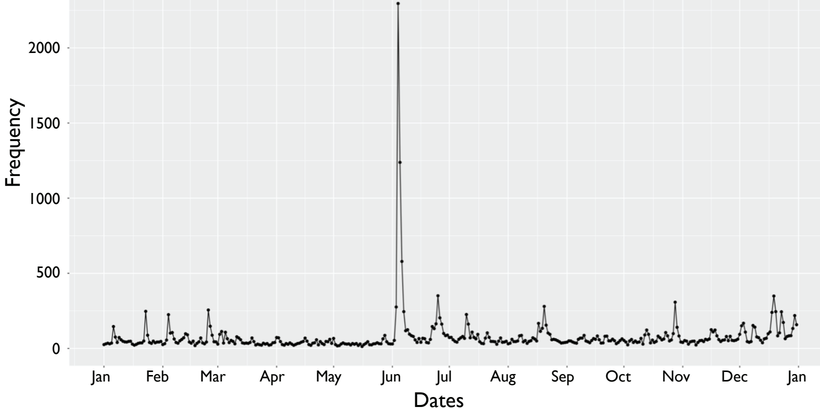

Figure 1. Frequency of tweets in 2020, by month

The largest spike across the whole collection of tweets was in June 2020 when there were over 2,000 RTs touching primarily on the Norilsk oil spill, which was caused by a leaking diesel storage tank. Of the top ten tweets, seven referenced the oil spill in some way. One tweet stated "an environmental catastrophe is unfolding right now in Russia" in reference to the Norilsk oil spill, while another stated "a catastrophe is taking place right before our eyes," again in reference to the oil spill. Others called it a "full-scale environmental disaster." Still other tweets focused on the role of climate change as an ongoing problem, with three tweets mentioning high temperatures, specifically noting that recently "temperatures within the Arctic Circle topped 100 degrees, shattering records … we must never lose sight of the biggest existential threat facing the planet: climate change."

In August 2020, there was a spike of 300 RTs that focused primarily on the Greenland Ice Sheet, the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), and climate change. Some tweets reported on the collapse of an ice shelf in Canada, calling it a "climate emergency." Other tweets focused primarily on Greenland, stating that "collapse of the Greenland Ice Sheet could be a tipping point, if melting cannot be slowed and the ice sheet saved, there will be dramatic, compounding impacts around the world." Still others focused on sea ice melting, saying "we're in a climate emergency. Time to stop the delays and act" and touched on high temperatures in the Arctic Circle stating "91°f/33°c on the shores on the arctic Ocean in Northern Canada today, we're in a climate emergency." Multiple tweets used hashtags like #climatecrisis to indicate this insecurity thinking. Others focused on the potential opening of ANWR for drilling. Such a policy move, some said, would put "animals at risk from Alaska oil drilling."

In November 2020, there was again a spike of 300 RTs touching on issues that primarily had to do with ANWR and climate change broadly. Tweets talking about ANWR focused on its opening saying that "this rushed process will violate indigenous rights, destroy sacred lands, and harm wildlife." Others said, "new oil drilling and spilling in the arctic ocean would put polar bears in unprecedented danger" and that "the Trump administration is endangering the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge … this decision ignores the threat of climate change." Tweets having to do with climate change pointed to rising temperatures, stating "global temps continue to rise at an alarming rate … this is a climate emergency," and two tweets referred to the Arctic region being in a "climate emergency."

The last spike in December 2020 was 250 RTs and again primarily had to do with climate change and the opening of ANWR. Tweets that referenced the opening of ANWR talked about the Arctic being "in danger" and "at risk of energy development," specifically that ANWR "is under threat" and that opening it would "threaten local wildlife, indigenous cultures and the global climate." When climate change was mentioned, the post generally touched on how the

loss of sea ice would "threaten global food security … lead to dangerous extreme weather events" and the polar jet stream crisis—all part of a "rapidly expanding ecological climate catastrophe."

During 2021, there were significantly fewer spikes than during 2020—only two in comparison to six. During February, there was one spike of 250 tweets that covered a broad range of Arctic issues, including the Northern Sea Route, a blockade of an iron mine in Nunavut, the continuing impacts of the Norilsk oil spill, and climate change. The Northern Sea Route (NSR) was mentioned as this related to melting sea ice and climate change, and that its opening represented the fact that "we are in a climate emergency." A specific regional issue was also touched on in two tweets regarding Inuit hunters protesting an iron mine in northern Canada. The tweet reported on this blockade, saying that Inuit were protesting as the expansion would "harm local wildlife." Similarly, the Norilsk oil spill was referenced regarding the fine that the company Norilsk Nickel would face as being part of the "worst ecological disaster in the Arctic."

The second spike during 2021 was in November—where there was again a spike of 250 RTs. This spike represented one of the three spikes in which any type of traditional military security risk was brought up alongside climate change and the Norilsk oil spill. Some tweets referenced the COP26 conference (the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference), the Greenland Ice Sheet, dangerous climate change, and the "death spiral of the Arctic also represent[ing] the death spiral of humans and life on earth"—all touching on climate change as a threat to the region. For example, one tweet stated "dangerous #climatechange is here now" and another claimed "arctic feedback loops could trigger a climate catastrophe around the world." Another tweet brought attention to the pollution caused by the Norilsk oil spill, describing how the Norilsk company "poisoned rivers, killed off boreal forests, and belched out more sulfur dioxide than active volcanos." Traditional security was mentioned once in relation to a visit of the Norwegian Minister of Defence to NATO, reporting on a "great first visit from Norwegian minister of defense to discuss strenghtening the strong defense cooperation between the US & Norway. We discussed NATO challenges in the Arctic, our shared perspective on the Russia threat and the ongoing operations."

Table 3. Spikes of retweets in 2021 that exceeded 150 and the topics in top 10 retweets

Time Period	Number of Retweets (RTs)	Topics
February 2021	250	Northern Sea Route, Nunavut Mine Expansion, Norilsk Oil Spill, Climate Change
November 2021	250	Traditional Security, Climate Change, Norilsk

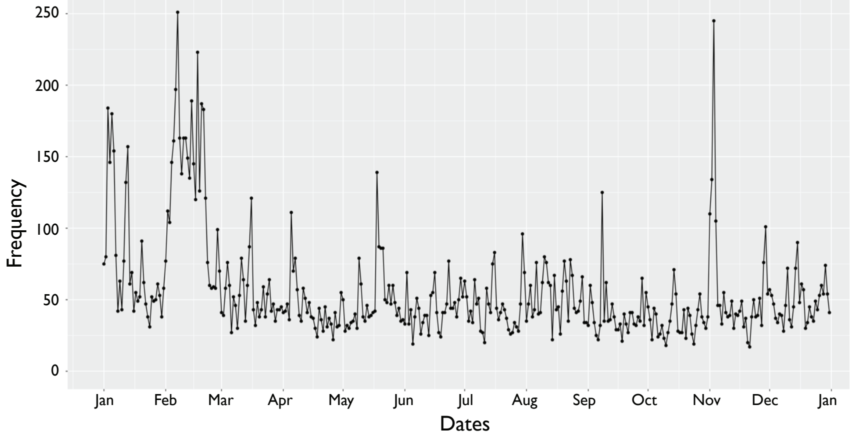

Figure 2. Frequency of tweets in 2021, by month

The period of 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2023 saw an increase of insecurity spikes compared to 2021. In March 2022, there was a spike of 150 RTs. While one might assume that this spike was closely related to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, none of the top ten RTs showed this or even mention Ukraine. While Ukraine was a keyword searched for, the insecurity dictionary could have captured tweets that referred to the crisis using crisis or security language. Instead, the tweets focused on broad threats originating from climate change and Arctic sea ice. For example, some discussed the future, saying "extreme wildfire risk will become so widespread that even the arctic and other regions … could be in peril of burning." Other tweets highlighted methane concentration in the Arctic, icebergs drifting, and thinning sea ice. For example, one reported that "NASA satellite sees Arctic sea ice thinning at frightening rate" and another stated "methane concentrations above the Laptev Sea are disturbing … the East Siberian Arctic shelf must be put into the highest state of emergency." One tweet may have been in relation to

the war in Ukraine but also seemed to advocate *for* climate change, stating that "Russia's actions are largely about oil and gas … Russia needs to advance global warming to open up Arctic shipping routes and access its Arctic oil."

In June 2022, there was another spike of 200 RTs. We see some small indications that traditional security concerns are reflected in this spike, but they certainly did not make up the majority of the top ten RTs, accompanied by language around climate change, and protests about the mine in Nunavut. Some referenced a new heat record in Norilsk, the possibility of the collapse of Arctic sea ice, the collapse of Arctic ecosystems, and food insecurity in Nunavut. For example, one stated "There is a heatwave in the Arctic" and another stated "Arctic expert predicts final collapse of sea ice within four years." Yet another stated "Arctic ecosystems have been in some kind of collapse phase for years." Two local instances of security emerged, with tweets about food insecurity in Nunavut and suicide rates in the Canadian Arctic. Interestingly, increasing focus on the Arctic in a military sense was reflected in two tweets, one of which talked about a new United States Army division in Alaska, and its emphasis on Arctic warfare and Russian military moves in the Arctic stating "Russian military moves in the Arctic worry the US and NATO." With increasing popular media attention on Arctic militarization, this is not surprising.

By October 2022, another spike of 300 RTs emerged, again reflecting a similar division of concerns about climate change and militarization. Tweets that emphasized climate change spoke about fears that "all arctic glaciers will disappear … humanity only has 50 days left to avoid a climate catastrophe," the retreat of glaciers in Iceland, an increase in temperature in the Arctic, and the destruction of Arctic sea ice. However, accompanying these climate insecurities were also fears about Russian nuclear submarines in the Arctic Sea reflected in two tweets. For example, one reported on news that "NATO issued an intelligence warning indicating the Russian Belograd nuclear submarine has been mobilized somewhere in the Arctic sea. It may test its Poseidon drone torpedo."

December 2022 was an interesting and amusing anomaly in the data set as there was a spike of 350 RTs. Rather than the tweets having anything to do with the Arctic, however, almost all top ten RTs discussed the Arctic cold front that hit the United States and caused severe drops in temperature across the country. The final spike under analysis occurred in February 2023, with 250 RTs. The primary topics during this spike were climate change and the Willow Project, an oil drilling project on Alaska's North Slope. Tweets tended to emphasize the threat that the Alaskan Arctic faced with the Willow Project's approval, with one saying it "could be a huge threat to the people, nature, and wildlife that call Alaska home." Others emphasized the loss of sea ice around Greenland, and more broadly how "climate change in the Arctic Circle gravely threatens all people."

Table 4. Spikes of retweets in 2022-2023 that exceeded 150 and the topics in top 10 retweets

Time Period	Number of Retweets (RTs)	Topics
March 2022	150	Climate Change, Arctic Sea Ice
June 2022	200	Climate Change, Traditional Security, Nunavut Mine, Heat wave
October 2022	300	Climate Change, Traditional Security
December 2022	350	Arctic Cold Front in USA
February 2023	250	Climate Change, Willow Project

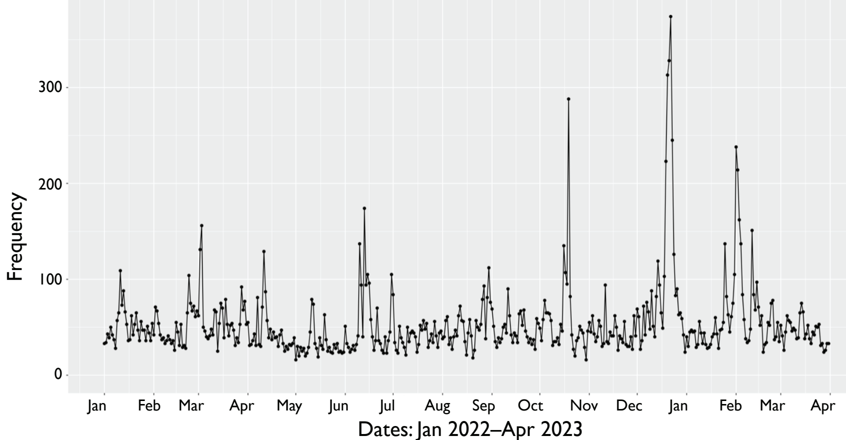

Figure 3. Frequency of tweets in 2022-2023 by month

Analysis

There are two key takeaways based on the above findings. First, most spikes were driven by local environmental issues such as the opening of the Northern Sea Route, ANWR, the Norilsk oil spill, and the Willow Project, in contrast to global feelings of traditional insecurity. In other words, much of the literature and media reports have called attention to rising traditional security issues such as the Ukraine war, rising tensions between the United States and Russia, as well as between the United States and China, and their impacts on the Arctic.[31] However, these issues were not present in the data set, apart from a few mentions. Insecurity on Twitter was thus not really reactive to rising West–Russia tensions. This implies that there is a significant split between the academic consensus on Arctic security issues and what is present on X/Twitter. While this may not be surprising, it begs the question of how much influence that academics who are active on X/Twitter have on the platform. Many prominent Arctic scholars are quite active on Twitter regarding security issues, such as Andrea Charron, Will Greaves, and Marc Lanteigne. However, it appears that their more nuanced read on Arctic security issues—as encompassing both the local and the geopolitical—are not the most retweeted. Further, the prevalence of local security issues is not solely a phenomenon that has appeared on Twitter, but rather a clear trend in how public opinion understands security threats.[32]

Second, climate change appears as a central theme across every spike. While climate change may not be named specifically in a tweet, many local environmental issues that cause insecurity are the result of or related to climate change as a macro-driver, such as the melting of the Greenland ice sheet, warming in the Arctic, and ecosystem collapse. The presence of climate change issues across the content of top tweets confirms the close connection between climate change as a topic and the insecurity dictionary.

It is certainly not new that environmental issues are a key part of Arctic security with concerns arising in the 1990s around threats to the Arctic environment, including the melting of sea ice, nuclear waste, and increasing pollution.[33] By the mid-2000s, climate change was described by Sherri Goodman as a threat multiplier in the region, and others have described shared environmental threats as the key for the institutionalization of the Arctic region.[34] Today, environmental security threats related to climate change are central to discussions of the Arctic, with most scholars taking a comprehensive approach that understands these environmental security threats as intrinsically linked to shipping, fishing, defence and traditional security, as well as humanitarian crises.[35]

Thus it appears that this reality present in the literature and in how Arctic states themselves have formulated their policies towards the region is also true on X/Twitter. Importantly, there is an interesting contrast between the localized issues of environmental insecurity that were identified and the clear global role of climate change in the Arctic. In short, while global insecurities that we might have expected to appear on Twitter, such as concerns surrounding the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine or the COVID-19 pandemic did not, climate change certainly did. Future research could do more to untangle whether certain types of global insecurities are more represented on social media due to, for example, the role of non-governmental organizations and their use of Twitter as a platform. Additional work could also expound on more crisis-driven moments of global insecurity such as those relating to war or disease outbreaks, in contrast to slower moving crises such as climate change. The narration of these slower moving crises is inherently more difficult to securitize given the lack of shocking news events.

These two takeaways illustrate that Arctic insecurity on X/Twitter appears to be driven by two factors: 1) those individuals experiencing or reporting on local Arctic insecurities, and 2) global concerns about climate change, of which the Arctic plays a central role. In short, these two dynamics clearly show that environmental and climate security are central to Arctic Twitter in a way that sidelines issues of traditional military security.

Conclusion

With Elon Musk's recent purchase of Twitter and rebranding to X, the platform is quickly changing from how it behaved in the past to something new. Many popular users of Twitter both in and outside the Arctic community appear to have left or are at least threatening to leave the platform now called "X". However, social media is still a bellwether for how a particular subsection of public opinion operates online. Research has shown that social media can help illustrate how public opinion changes in reaction to environmental crises, for example, while other scholars have unpacked how Twitter reframed the central points of the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which increased polarization around climate change.[36] Given the higher numbers of academics, political elites, and journalists that have used the application[37] and the active Arctic Twitter community, it matters how the Arctic is portrayed, particularly when we consider insecurity.

That tweets on Arctic security centre around local Arctic insecurities, such as the Norilsk oil spill, heat waves, or ANWR, implies the centrality of environmental security issues across the data set. When global insecurities come into the picture, it is solely through the lens of climate change rather than tweets that reported on the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine or COVID-19. While the conflict in Ukraine does not necessarily have material impacts in the Arctic, it has already been shifting how Arctic security scholars understand the region and how the region's

politics are unfolding.[38] Consider the pausing of the Arctic Council, the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO, and concern about hybrid threats prevalent across the European Arctic. This emphasis on environmental issues comes into contrast with how scholars and some commentators are framing the region as the home to a new Cold War. For example, many news outlets have published analyses on Svalbard,[39] increased Arctic militarization,[40] and drawn attention to the Arctic as a theatre of competition. This finding dovetails with other recent work and public opinion polls that indicate most publics are concerned with local insecurities rather than global insecurity, with the exception of climate change. For example, research has illustrated that during Hurricane Irma, many tweets did not just cover the storm, but also personal experiences such as abandoning pets.[41] Similarly, additional work has shown that public opinion polls on Arctic security—rather than reinforcing the importance of the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea as a key global turning point—led to very little change in threat perceptions.[42] Public opinion from Greenland and Iceland are particularly strong examples that local insecurities concern the public much more than great power competition.[43] As X fragments further and the social media landscape becomes more complex in scope, future work should engage further with not only how Arctic insecurity is understood on X, but also on other platforms such as Facebook and image/video platforms including Instagram and TikTok. Such work could examine how aesthetic images of the Arctic may be used to promote a fragile and empty depiction of the region, relying on a colonial reading of the Arctic.

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23. RStudio is an integrated development environment for the programming language R.
24. R packages are extensions to the R programming language: 1) dplyr facilitates data frame creation, 2) ggplot2 aids in the development of graphs, 3) gridExtra provides functions for grid graphics, 4) Lexicoder Sentiment Dictionary contains a dictionary for the automatic coding of sentiment in text analysis, 5) plotly is an interactive graphing library, 6) quanteda and quanteda.textplots are packages for analyzing textual data, 7) rtweet aids in the organization of Twitter data for R, and shiny and shinydashboard aid in building interactive web applications.

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Research Article

Representations of Inuit Issues on X (Twitter): Who is Framing Inuit Issues and How?

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Abstract: This article documents who speaks about Inuit issues on social media and how these issues are portrayed on social media. By drawing on data from the Twitter (now X) platform, we analyzed the most relayed messages posted about Inuit issues from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022. We performed a content analysis in order to explore the tonality (through sentiment analysis) and the topics (through topic modelling) of the posts referring to Inuit issues. Inuit users on X formed a small but dynamic contingent, succeeding in playing a central role in defining Inuit issues on the platform. Their popularity could be partially credited to the positivity of their messages. The rare overlap of topics between Inuit and non-Inuit users on X points to the challenge of Inuit users reaching non-Inuit allies. We conclude that non-Inuit allies could do more to relay Inuit priorities and messages on the platform.

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Inuit non-governmental organizations, such as the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)—which represents the interests of Inuit throughout the Circumpolar North (Canada, Alaska, Chukotka [Russia], and Greenland)—and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)—which represents the interests of Inuit throughout Inuit Nunangat in Canada (Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, and Inuvialuit)—have actively defended the interests of Inuit communities for decades. These organizations have raised awareness about Inuit perspectives and have interacted with decision makers from international organizations and governments in southern Canada. The main function of these groups has been to represent Inuit on the national and international stages, and to share their viewpoints with governments and civil society alike. This led to the rise of prominent voices such as Mary Simon and Siila Watt-Cloutier who articulated and championed the Inuit right to self-determination.

However, social media have introduced a new dynamic. Individual Inuit activists can voice their opinions alongside Inuit organizations, and non-Inuit can also weigh in on Inuit issues, priorities, and debates. Hence, it is a more messy and complex communication environment, allowing more voices to participate in framing Inuit issues, and to be heard.

In this sense, social media are a tool of empowerment, providing opportunities for both Inuit organizations and individuals to share their perspectives and voice their priorities in an unfiltered fashion. However, social media can also be venues that reinforce traditional dominant political, economic, and social perspectives, and that reify current power structures. As such, this article assumes that social media could also allow non-Inuit users to influence popular understandings about Inuit issues and to impose their views about Inuit issues. For example, these platforms offer more exposure and visibility for users' messages.

Hence, this research study focused on empirically studying how Inuit issues were described on the social media platform Twitter between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022 (Twitter was rebranded to X in July 2023). Our first research question centred on figuring out who tweeted (posted) about Inuit issues. Our second research question was to analyze which themes were the most popular when users posted on Inuit issues. Lastly, the study investigated whether posts on Inuit issues were positive or negative. The authors are non-Inuit and non-Indigenous researchers based in southern Canada, who do not speak or read Inuktitut and have not lived in Inuit Nunangat.

Popular Representations of Inuit Issues

Inuit organizations and individuals have laid down their priorities and shared their perspectives in different ways. On this note, studies have assessed the nature of the political ideas promoted by Inuit organizations. Inuit organizations created as a result of land claims agreements (for example, Nunavut Tunngavik and Makivvik Corporation), and national or international groups (ITK, ICC), are regarded as innovative Inuit governance solutions. For example, Wilson (2007) has argued that the ICC was able to provide collective influence, share best practices, enhance political autonomy, and strengthen connections of Inuit. A similar account is drawn by Abele and Rodon (2007), focusing on Inuit internal and external diplomatic achievements. In this regard, scholars have focused on the nature and utility of these political movements and their stance concerning traditional conceptions of state sovereignty (Shadian, 2010; Gerhardt, 2011).

Inuit individuals and organizations have also used media outlets to present their perspectives and as part of a repertoire for social activism. Hence, traditional media were still seen as dynamic and innovative media, with radio and television still possessing substantial potential (Coelho, 2018). Further, Williams (2012) indicates that Inuit have mobilized the production of cinematic material to challenge the world of "colonial knowledge" and transform the narrative surrounding their identity. As presented by Alia (2009, pp. 95–97), media outlets, such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC), and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), were launch pads for several prominent Inuit leaders, including Mary Simon, John Amagoalik, and Rosemarie Kuptana.

Contrary to the demands of producing traditional media content, the relatively inexpensive nature of social media has opened up a space for the emancipation of Indigenous political activism in the Arctic region. Social media allowed, for example, the mobilization of different Indigenous Peoples in Canada in order to launch coordinated action under the Idle No More movement (Wood, 2015). Twitter (X) diffused messages by different Indigenous groups with their distinctive concerns and perspectives. The platform also favoured the dissemination of information towards non-Indigenous users, especially in younger age groups, allowing the Idle No More movement to gain more allies (Raynault et al., 2018).

In the Arctic, social media ultimately allows Indigenous voices to be heard and renews the place of Inuit discourse in the conduct of Arctic affairs (Arruda & Krutkowski, 2017). For the most part, social media have been seen as a tool with the potential to "revitalize Inuit culture" (Pasch, 2010); to provide creative, dialogical, and provocative expressions of Inuit selfhood (Wachowich & Scobie, 2010); or to partake in identity definition of younger generations of Inuit (Castleton, 2018).

These studies have pointed to the potential that social media platforms, such as YouTube and Facebook, possess in enabling a new generation of Inuit to develop their form of storytelling.

Far from looking at social media platforms and the internet as a tool for assimilation or as a challenge, social media are conceptualized as a source of empowerment and a way to establish meaningful connections and cultivate Inuit identity. As Rodgers and Scobie (2015) point out, social media can be a means for Inuit to express resilience and counter the dominant narratives spread in southern societies, such as, in their example, by animal rights activists. In their article on the challenges to the Baker Lake and Pond Inlet mineral extraction projects, Scobie and Rodgers (2013) explain how social media were mobilized by Inuit to change certain socio-political and economic practices. To this end, the aggregation of different exchanges by community members on social networks shows how Inuit have produced a message of resistance to large mining projects (Scobie & Rodgers, 2013). Delaunay (2023) similarly concludes that Facebook and X (Twitter) are the most important social media platforms in northern Canada, and a vital tool for Inuit users to conduct political advocacy and disseminate their priorities.

Media representations of Inuit and Inuit issues have started to receive research attention, although it is still a nascent area of interest. Studies have observed that media portrayals of Inuit and Inuit issues and practices, by southerners in Canada and abroad, have been inaccurate, stereotypical, and grossly simplistic (Yunes, 2016; Glennie, 2018; Lackenbauer, 2018). In other instances, Inuit voices were downplayed in southern media outlets, even on topics directly impacting them. For example, Landriault (2020) documents that opinion texts on Arctic issues were mostly written by non-Inuit authors in southern-based publications, with ideas expressed by Inuit leaders often absent from popular ideas disseminated about northern Canada. However, media based in the North have been able to offer meaningful programming to Inuit communities, with northern media outlets being perceived by Inuit leaders as a necessary component of emerging self-government (Alia, 2009, p. 99).

Overall, the scholarship on the intersection of Inuit and social media has focused on case studies of specific users (YouTube channels or Facebook pages) or events (#sealfie, activism against mining projects). While valuable to generate insights as to how Inuit users occupy these spaces, we argue that a broader view of the social media ecosystem is worth pursuing to understand how Inuit issues are described by both Inuit and non-Inuit users. The research question stemming from this approach is to assess if Inuit users are leading this discussion or if Inuit issues are predominantly defined by non-Inuit users. Analyzing a longer timeline allows us to capture fluctuations and variations in how different types of Inuit issues are discussed by social media users: which Inuit issues are the most frequently mentioned on social media and how are they talked about?

Methods

To capture long-term trends, we collected data from Twitter (now X) from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022, using the *R* package *academictwitteR* (Barrie & Ho, 2021). All tweets containing the keywords Inuit or Inuk were gathered and analyzed. Then, we scrutinized the 500 most retweeted posts every six months to analyze the content of these messages and the identity of the most retweeted users. The objectives were twofold: understanding how Inuit issues were described on Twitter/X and by whom.

Accordingly, 243 accounts were initially coded to account for specific variables. Following an examination of the user's profile information, we were able to sort them into three categories for our analysis: Inuit, Indigenous (non-Inuit), and non-indigenous. In unclear cases, recent posts were examined for explicit reference to identity markers. Users who self-identified as Inuit were coded as Inuit, while users who self-identified as belonging to another Indigenous Nation or group, or who only used the term "Indigenous" without further specification, were coded as Indigenous (non-Inuit). Thus, in this article, "Indigenous" does not include Inuit users—only the term "Inuit" does. Finally, accounts that self-identified as belonging to a non-Indigenous group or that specified no identity marker were coded as "non-Indigenous."

Accounts were also coded as belonging to an organization if they identified as one. Otherwise, they were coded as belonging to an individual. Identifying the organization accounts (discussed below) proved to be much easier than identifying the type of an individual's account since organizations are typically dedicated to an easy-to-identify cause.

Our analysis was anchored in quantitative textual analysis techniques, known as natural language processing (NLP). This technique allowed us to gather the social media posts and extract information about them. To proceed with our demonstration, we used the *quanteda* package (Benoit et al., 2018). We conducted a sentiment analysis on the messages to determine their overall text polarity. This analysis detects positive and negative terms in a document in order to know if a given document (a post in this case) displays a positive or negative tone. We used a combination of the *Lexicoder Sentiment Dictionary* (LSD) (Young & Soroka, 2012) and the *AFINN* dictionary (Nielsen, 2011) in our analysis—the tweets collected were analyzed with these dictionaries to evaluate if messages were positive or negative. While similar, using both dictionaries allowed us to

measure sentiments through a polarity-based (negative or positive) and valence-based (intensity of negativity or positivity) approach at the same time. These complemented each other and strengthened our results.

Subsequently, we performed topic modelling on the messages based on the latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) statistical model. This analysis was performed to extract topics from our corpus of topics. Hence, themes emerged from these tweets in order of prevalence, so we could figure out which were discussed the most often.

Analysis

Our analysis is divided into three sections. First, we offer some descriptive statistics concerning the accounts publishing messages about Inuit issues on Twitter/X, in order to uncover who posted on Inuit issues. Second, we describe the sentiment analysis performed on the content of the messages published on Inuit issues by the various identity categories and the type of users (individual or organization). Lastly, we describe the LDA topic modelling we undertook on the content of the messages, to determine if there is a substantial difference in the content of the messages based on the users' identity, and their reach on the social media platform.

Descriptive Statistics

Our data set was composed of messages on Inuit issues that were posted by 243 unique accounts. As illustrated below (see Table 1), most of the accounts (165 or 67.9%) were operated by non-Indigenous people. Furthermore, there seemed to be an even balance of individual and organization accounts. The organization accounts were mostly owned by news and political entities. Next, we observed that Indigenous people represented the second-largest account holders with 51 (20.99%). For this group, there is a more noticeable difference between the number of individuals (39) compared to organizations (12). Finally, account holders self-identifying as Inuit represented the smallest category of users at 27 accounts (11.11%), corresponding to their smaller demographic weight as there are fewer users who are Inuit on X as a whole. The dynamism of this last group can also be mostly explained by individual users (rather than organizations) who adopted a more grassroots approach than the non-Indigenous users.

Those results allow us to conclude that there were more non-Indigenous individuals and organizations weighing in on Inuit issues on X, compared to Indigenous or Inuit. At first glance, this seems to reflect the larger demographic weight. As such, non-Indigenous or non-Inuit accounts would seem to be the main driving force portraying and defining Inuit issues online.

Table 1. Characteristics of accounts posting about Inuit issues on X (Twitter) between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022.

Identity Marker	Type of User	Number of Accounts	Total
Inuit	Individual	22	27 (11.11%)
	Organization	5	
Indigenous (non-Inuit)	Individual	39	51 (20.99%)
	Organization	12	
Non-Indigenous	Individual	85	165 (67.90%)
	Organization	80	

However, while it is interesting to know who contributes to the public debates on X/Twitter regarding Inuit issues, we also needed to turn our attention to the number of posts made by those account holders. As shown below (see Table 2), most of the messages concerning Inuit issues (63.57 %) came from Inuit users. In other words, only a few Inuit accounts were on the list that posted most on Inuit issues, but the ones that did were prolific. They are followed by non-Indigenous people (24.61%) and Indigenous people (11.82%). Here again, we see that individual messages outweigh organizational messages for Inuit and Indigenous communities. As for the non-Indigenous accounts, while individual accounts addressed Inuit issues more frequently than their organizational counterparts, they were roughly balanced in terms of posts. In this case, Government of Canada accounts and traditional media accounts represented most of the messages posted by non-Indigenous and non-Inuit accounts, pointing to online interest that does not emanate from grassroots interests, but rather institutional.

Even though Inuit have the lowest number of account holders, they are the most invested in discussions about Inuit issues on X (Twitter). Moreover, we observed more engagement by non-Indigenous people than Indigenous on discussions relating to Inuit issues. It is also worth mentioning that non-Indigenous organizational accounts posted more messages about Inuit issues than Inuit organizations. Nonetheless, if we consider each group's demographic weight relative to the others, we are able to conclude that, proportionally, Inuit and Indigenous individuals and organizations are more active in the discussion taking place around Inuit issues than non-Indigenous individuals and organizations on the social media platform X.

Now that we have established a detailed description of our data set, we can focus our attention on the content of the messages that were posted on Inuit issues.

Table 2. Characteristics of posts (tweets) about Inuit issues on X (Twitter) between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022.

Identity Marker	Type of User	Number of Posts	Total
Inuit	Individual	9,510	11,240 (63.57 %)
	Organization	1,730	
Indigenous (non-Inuit)	Individual	1,467	2,089 (11.82 %)
	Organization	622	
Non-Indigenous	Individual	2,489	4,351 (24.61 %)
	Organization	1,862	

Sentiment Analysis

As one of our research questions centred around observing the tonality of posts on Inuit issues, we proceeded with the sentiment analysis of the messages through the combination of a polarity-based and valence-based sentiment approach. The polarity-based approach measures terms as either positive or negative, while the valence-based approach places words on a continuum of intensity, from very negative to very positive—for example, more acute negativity was registered for a term coded as very negative ("war") than moderately negative ("dispute"). As demonstrated below (see Table 3), our results indicated that individuals had a more negative average tonality in their posts than their organizational counterparts in the same ethnic group. Notably, Indigenous individuals had the most negative average tonality (polarity of 0.17 and valence of 0.18).[1] They are followed by non-Indigenous individuals (polarity of 0.30 and valence of 0.27) and Inuit individuals (polarity of 0.35 and valence of 0.60). In other words, messages from Inuit users seemed to be, overall, more positive than posts from non-Indigenous accounts and Indigenous individual users, but slightly less positive than messages from Indigenous organizational accounts.

It is interesting to observe that, in general, organizations' messages tended to have a more positive tonality outlook than posts made by individuals on Inuit issues. Organizations are less susceptible to negativity bias and they want to be perceived as vectors of change with a positive impact on society. Risk-avoidance behaviours are also at play on this point, especially for governmental accounts. As already pointed out by Wukich and Mergel (2016), employees working for governmental departments are afraid of making mistakes or stirring controversies: this cautious approach can also partially explain our findings.

Table 3. The tonality of messages posting about Inuit issues on X (Twitter) between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022, based on sentiment analysis.

Identity Marker	Types of Account	
	Individual	Organization
Inuit	Polarity = 0.35 Valence = 0.60	Polarity = 0.69 Valence = 0.71
Indigenous (non-Inuit)	Polarity = 0.17 Valence = 0.18	Polarity = 0.75 Valence = 0.65
Non-Indigenous	Polarity = 0.30 Valence = 0.27	Polarity = 0.55 Valence = 0.55

Note: Values closer to 0 had more negative messages, while values closer to 1 had more positive messages..

Topic Modelling

The second research question involved identifying the popular themes within messages on Inuit issues. We drew 5,000 random samples to detect which words were associated with one another, and which of these associations of words occurred the most often in our sample. We opted to use the *sentopics* package to perform a latent Dirichlet allocation topic modelling approach. This allowed us to garner a better insight into the content of the posts in our data set.[2] Although studies demonstrate methods on how to select the optimal number of topics (Gan & Qi, 2021), we chose to only retain five topics per category to remain parsimonious in our findings. While we acknowledge that LDA performs optimally with larger samples, as it is based on the occurrence of words throughout documents, we performed 5,000 model iterations using Gibbs sampling to partially alleviate this problem induced by the low sample size (622 to 9,510 tweets) that could potentially skew the distribution of words in our messages.

To gather better insight into the themes and topics of the posts about Inuit issues on X/Twitter, we opted to divide our topic modelling according to ethnic groups and types of users. Such an endeavour allowed us to determine if there was an alignment or some form of disconnection between the topics discussed by Inuit, Indigenous people, and non-Indigenous people, or between individuals and organizations representing those ethnic groups (see Table 4–9).

Inuit individuals' posts (see Table 4) tended to be focused on the fact that they represent a unique kind of community in Canada. Moreover, messages were attending to culture, mostly through the mentions of Inuit tattoos (*kakiniit*), but also relating to the hunting of caribous and seals as traditional ways of life.[3] A significant portion of posts in our sample from Inuit individuals concerned harvesting practices of country food, contributing to the positivity of the messages by this group.

We also noted posts tackling the history of Inuit in Labrador, mainly through mentions of the *Nunainguk* (Nain) Inuit community and the building of a care facility for Elders, which prompted the word *nakummek* (thank you) to resonate through the messages of Inuit individuals' tweets. Contributions by specific Inuit users who were very active on Twitter/X influenced the most common topics. For example, the account of Angus Andersen, teaching Inuktitut language and words while also sharing stories of his personal life and oral stories, single-handedly accounted for the second most popular topic in Table 4 (Topic 2).

As for Inuit organizations (see Table 5), their messages mostly represented their priorities, programs, and initiatives: X has worked as a platform to disseminate their activities, announcements, publications, and events. Among these priorities, organizations mentioned the importance of health care for women, their families, and the communities across Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland in Canada, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the activities of Pauktuutit, a national representative organization of Inuit women in Canada.

Furthermore, organizational posts connected with the broader priorities of Indigenous Peoples, by emphasizing, for example, the topic of violence against Inuit women in Inuit Nunangat through mentions of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). This issue was notably disseminated by Pauktuutit and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). Culture and arts were also predominant in organizations' posts, such as through the *Word of the Day program*, which was launched in 2017 by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association to promote the Inuktitut language and Inuit artwork on social media, including Twitter/X. Moreover, Inuit organizations also posted about the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), and the importance of Inuit participation and collaboration in international organizations, as they have a vast amount of knowledge to share about the Arctic region with other Arctic stakeholders.

Table 4. Themes in individual Inuit accounts on X/Twitter, between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022, in order of frequency (with Topic 1 the most frequent).

Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5
First	Help	Labrador	Seal	Culture
Land	Wife	History	Snow	Indigenous
Nations	Care	Elder	Food	White
Canada	Love	Land	Elder	Family
Nunavut	Nakummek	First	Skin	Inuktitut
Government	Labrador	Learn	House	Love
Arctic	Family	Nain	Hunt	Beautiful
Community	Happy	Language	Caribou	That's
Canadian	Elder	Granpa	Cold	Tattoos
Different	Home	System	Hunting	Nunavut

Table 5. Themes in organizational Inuit accounts on X/Twitter, between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022 in order of frequency (with Topic 1 the most frequent).

Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5
Communities	ᐅᖅᑲᐅᓯᓚᓂᕐᔭᑎᕗᑦ	Women	National	Icc
Health	ᐅᓪᓗᒥ	Pauktuutit	Itk	#inuitcircumpol-arcouncil
Women	Listen	Nunangat	Survey	Canada
Covid-19	#inuktitut	President	Apply	International
Nunangat	Image	Violence	Deadline	President
Right	ᓈᓚᒃᓯᐅᒃ	Work	Join	Arctic
Care	ᐅᕙᓂ	Itk	Business	#icc14thga
Family	Arctic	Canada	Qia	Indigenous
Community	Pootoogook's	National	Research	Knowledge
Pauktuutit	#inuitnunangat	#mmiwg	Help	General

Regarding posts made by Indigenous (non-Inuit) individuals (see Table 6), we observed discussions revolving around racism and slur terms used online, such as on X (Twitter). Another recurring theme in the content of the tweets analyzed was the Government of Canada's reconciliation policies. Additionally, content analysis also reveals the importance of women, children, and families across Canada consistent with previously identified issues.

Indigenous organizations (see Table 7) posted messages about the importance of booking appointments to get vaccinated, and avoiding the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic amongst Indigenous communities. Also, posts discussed the importance of celebrating and learning the history of Indigenous Peoples on National Indigenous Peoples Day. This was pushed forward by the mentions and pride expressed by Indigenous Peoples' communities about the July 2021 appointment of Mary Simon, an Inuk from Nunavik, as the thirtieth Governor General of Canada.

In general, both Indigenous individuals and organizations approached Inuit issues from a more generic perspective, often encompassing them into the broad umbrella of "First Nations, Inuit, and Métis" issues. The topics 2, 3, and 5 for Indigenous individual accounts (Table 6) and topics 2 and 5 for organizational users (Table 7) point in this direction: Inuit issues are promoted and discussed in the broader category of Indigenous issues. While this might raise awareness and attract attention to Inuit issues, the specificity of Inuit communities disappears.

Moreover, non-Indigenous individuals (see Table 8) advocated, through the content of their messages, for the Government of Canada to keep supporting and working with Indigenous communities. This stance was closely linked to issues such as helping Nunavut's children and families fight poverty, advocating for better housing and promoting women's health in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Nunavik. Another common topic was climate change. Posts from this group were also strongly focused on art and culture, most notably the work of Kenojuak Ashevak.

Non-Indigenous organizations (see Table 9) focused the content of their posts on the importance of addressing climate change, the protection of wildlife, and the impact of oil dependence. Another topic that came forward was the importance of offering health services related to the COVID-19 pandemic for Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Art and culture were also pushed to the forefront through the development of programs or support groups for artists with Indigenous heritage. Likewise, messages were directed in connection with the celebration of the history and culture of Indigenous Peoples, through National Indigenous Peoples Day, and the activism of Mary Simon (before her appointment as Governor General of Canada) and the Arctic Children and Youth Foundation, for which she was the founding Chair.

Table 6. Themes in individual Indigenous (non-Inuit) accounts on X/Twitter between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022, in order of frequency (with Topic 1 the most frequent). .

Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5
Indigenous	First	Nations	Land	Help
Native	Nations	First	Arctic	Photo
Folx	Indigenous	Métis	News	Crisis
Culture	Metis	Indigenous	Nunavut	Indian
White	Children	Metis	Rights	Canada
Twitter	Métis	Policy	Work	Hotline
Live	Canada	Trudeau	Research	First
Slur	Communities	Canada	May	Native
Term	Women	Reconciliation	Mine	Kids
Racist	Canadian	Land	Title	Family

Table 7. Themes in organizational Indigenous (non-Inuit) accounts on X (Twitter) between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022, in order of frequency (with Topic 1 the most frequent).

Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5
Book	Art	First	Aptn	First
First	Nunavut	Nations	News	Nations
Appointment	Women	Métis	National	Métis
Métis	Face	Indigenous	Home	Indigenous
#indigenous	Centre	History	Community	Aptn
Members	Water	Celebrate	Ottawa	Communities
Covid-19	@kentdriscoll	Learn	Governor	Live
Vaccine	Iqaluit	Metis	Watch	Canada
Community	World	Children	Arctic	News
#Ottawa	News	National	Nunavik	Services

Table 8. Themes in individual non-Indigenous accounts on X/Twitter between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022, in order of frequency (with Topic 1 the most frequent).

Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5
First	Poverty	Nunavut	Arctic	Artist
Nations	Indigenous	Women	Continue	#womensart
Indigenous	Nunavut	News	Ice	Polar
Métis	Snow	Nunatsiaq	Sea	Ashevak
Canada	Kids	Housing	Climate	Bears
Communities	Family	Canada	Greenland	Culture
#cdnpoli	Canada	Communities	#arctic	Kenojuak
Work	Live	#nunavut	Warming	Asian
Support	First	Health	Continued	Owl
Continue	Posted	#nunavik	Change	White

Table 9. Themes in individual non-Indigenous accounts on X (Twitter) between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022, in order of frequency (with Topic 1 the most frequent).

Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5
Arctic	First	First	Nunavut	#firstnations
Continue	Métis	Nations	First	Métis
Ice	Nations	Indigenous	Children	Program
Climate	Indigenous	Métis	Child	Apply
Sea	National	Communities	Canada	Artists
Land	Learn	Health	Help	Art
Oil	Canada	Covid-19	Indigenous	Funding
Wildlife	History	Services	Initiative	Groups
Protect	Celebrate	#covid19	Government	Support
Snow	Contributions	Territorial	Simon	Artist

In summary, we observed only one recurring theme in all accounts studied: the health care of women, children, and families. Art and culture discussions were also present in most of the categories, except for Indigenous individuals. Moreover, reconciliation policies and National Indigenous Peoples Day were only identified as core topics in half of our categories. Interestingly, climate change was an important topic of discussion only for non-Indigenous accounts. Lastly, topic modelling seems to demonstrate that individuals, regardless of their identity, tend to include day-to-day perceived realities in the content of their posts, while organizations tend to contextualize those realities within a wider and more inclusive range of issues in the content of their posts. Overall, very few topics and stories posted by Inuit individuals and organizations were present on the other type of accounts, pointing to giving priority to other conversations than the ones privileged by Inuit users.

Discussion

A few observations emerge from the data presented in our study. For one, Inuit organizations and individuals are numerically fewer than other accounts mentioning Inuit issues, but they are quite active and dynamic, publishing at a greater pace than other users. In this sense, the conversation about Inuit issues on X/Twitter is dominated by Inuit accounts rather than non-Inuit accounts. These Inuit users have built themselves sizeable followings that steadily retweeted their messages about their daily lives, in the case of Inuit individuals, and about announcements and activities, in the case of Inuit organizations. This was accomplished by posting positive messages rather than negative: promotion of the Inuktitut language, and the celebration of Inuit artistic production and cultural practices accounted for this outcome.

These themes and topics allowed for an inclusive messaging that exposed non-Inuit users to the richness of Inuit culture, including tattoos, the harvesting of country food, and sculptures and drawings, among others. This positive messaging was also present when tackling issues that were more political or social. Rather than engaging in confrontational or antagonistic communication, Inuit organizations strived to underline their distinctiveness without engaging in hostile engagement: agreements and progress were also highlighted while mentioning the immense work ahead on issues such as missing and murdered Inuit women and girls or access to quality health services.

However, the issues mentioned most often by Inuit users were not tackled by non-Inuit accounts, pointing to the distinct voices of Inuit on the platform. Indigenous accounts (non-Inuit) would only mention Inuit issues when these overlapped with broader Indigenous issues, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Hence, Inuit issues were rarely discussed in their

own right, highlighting their distinctiveness. The same can be said about non-Indigenous users. Inuit issues were usually subsumed under the umbrella of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit issues. Several messages tweeted by these accounts were also at a specific point in time, pointing to a rather perfunctory attention given to Inuit issues. For example, National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21) generated a high number of tweets on June 21, but without consistent attention from non-Indigenous accounts the rest of the year. Very few non-Indigenous accounts mentioned or tagged Inuit users to draw connections and share visibility.

These observations highlight the potential for non-Inuit allies to better support Inuit causes and online voices, and to help put the spotlight on issues that Inuit users flag as important. This approach can help promote Inuit priorities and offer more visibility, helping Inuit priorities to be heard and be a part of the public policy discussion, as called for by Inuit organizations in recent policy documents (see for example Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018).

Conclusion

Overall, we found that a numerically small community of highly active Inuit users was able to lead the discussion of Inuit issues on Twitter/X. Positive messages allowed these accounts to assemble a community of followers interested in Inuit culture and communities. Inuit individuals were particularly skillful in establishing relations with other users and promoting Inuit culture and customs. They were able to present Inuit practices in a relatable way and drew on their personal experiences. This community existed alongside well-organized accounts (such as from the Government of Canada and national and international news organizations) led by non-Inuit individuals and organizations. These accounts generally posted generic messages about Inuit communities.

Of course, this study is exploratory: several questions arise and there are multiple avenues for future research. One clear direction for future research is a closer examination of what frequent posters about broadly Inuit issues are posting about, and a comparison with posts made by Inuit users, who may use different hashtags to discuss more specific issues. A similar analysis can be performed based on location, which may identify geographic differences between groups. While we used general keywords (Inuit and Inuk), searching with more refined keywords could inform on more niche content focusing on specialized interests (country food for example).

Another content analysis approach might also examine the differences between what organizational (and especially non-Indigenous) accounts post, and who those posts are aimed at: are they aimed specifically at Inuit users and, if so, what information is being communicated?

A third possible direction is the audience composition of followers. Some of the people posting about Indigenous issues communicate with each other, and further investigation into the audiences for these accounts may indicate not only who speaks about Inuit issues, but also who listens, and how they interact.

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Notes

1. Tonality is measured on a range from 0 to 1. The higher the number, the more positive the messages.
2. We used a default alpha value of 0.1 and combined it with model iterations using Gibbs sampling (Delmarcelle, 2022).
3. Inuktitut words were not part of the sentiment analysis as the dictionaries did not cover the language.

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Research Article

Reflections on Reconciliation from Non-Indigenous Teachers in Northern Post-Secondary Learning

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Abstract: With a recognition that reconciliation within post-secondary education in Canada requires both *decolonization*—deconstructing structures and practices that privilege Eurocentric world views—and *Indigenization*—elevating Indigenous Knowledges and participation—this study explored how seven non-Indigenous post-secondary instructors in the Yukon are interpreting these concepts through their teaching practices. Applying a thematic analysis to semi-structured interviews revealed a number of pedagogies that flow first and foremost from the respondents' understandings of personal identity and positionality. The pedagogies described in this study include a decolonized spirit of learning, physical learning environment, the ability to create and hold space, welcoming the whole student, and collaboration/relationality. By connecting to a review of Indigenous scholarship, these pedagogies (and missing pieces) were further examined, with a look toward perceived challenges in this work and potential sites of action.

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Introduction

With a directive to inform all Canadians about the history and impacts of residential schools, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) defined reconciliation as "establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country" (2015, p. 6). Justice Murray Sinclair, former chair of the TRC, highlighted the role educational systems have played in creating the current rift in relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. He also claimed education to be the pathway to reconciliation (Sinclair et al., 2024, p. 4). Among the Calls to Action put forward by the commission, Call to Action #62 implores post-secondary institutions (and those who fund them) to provide support for teachers to integrate Indigenous Knowledge and teaching methods in the classroom (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p. 331). What these supports are and how teachers carry out this work are a focus across the landscape of Canadian higher learning institutions.

Motivated by this work and recognizing that reconciliation within post-secondary education in Canada requires decolonization—deconstructing structures and practices that privilege Eurocentric world views—and Indigenization—elevating Indigenous Knowledges and participation—this research study explored how a group of non-Indigenous instructors at Yukon University, a small post-secondary institution in northern Canada, are encountering and interpreting these concepts through their teaching practices. By presenting non-Indigenous voice through this study, I recognize this privileged and dominant perspective and the problematic nature of presenting it alone. Indigenous voice is still marginalized in the contested spaces of post-secondary education. In 2016 Indigenous faculty made up only 1.4% of all university professor positions in Canada (Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2018). Although the landscape is ever changing, the relatively low percentage of Indigenous faculty at the institution of study has meant that this inquiry could not confidentially collect and present a diverse perspective on the research questions from Indigenous faculty. The study persisted in capturing non-Indigenous voice, with the recognition that reconciliation requires everyone, and there is value in studying this perspective as well.

Place-based approaches to reconciliation offer a unique standpoint. The setting now referred to as the Yukon has been the home of Indigenous Peoples for at least 15,000 years (CYFN, 2022). Fourteen unique First Nations reside here, representing eight Athabascan or Tlingit language families. Indigenous people make up approximately 25% of the Yukon's population (Yukon Government, 2023). Prior to the nineteenth century, Indigenous people of this area moved with the seasons. The Klondike gold rush, the building of the Alaska Highway, and the implementation of residential schools (funded by the federal government and run by Christian churches) significantly altered Indigenous lifestyles and communities (CYFN, 2022).

The Yukon has a unique and celebrated history of First Nations self-determination and governance. In February 1973 the Yukon Native Brotherhood presented the document *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* to Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in Ottawa. This proposal outlined the vision Yukon First Nations Peoples had for settlement, and it helped to set the foundation for negotiating land claims in the Yukon. Issues in education and visions for change were articulated:

> The White student is not taught about the history of the Yukon before the Gold Rush. He is not taught the methods used by the Indians to control pollution, to manage resources and to protect the environment. The White student is not taught to respect the Indian Way of Life as a system that worked—with much fewer social problems than he faces today. Until this is corrected, the Indian student will be at a disadvantage in a classroom where most of the students are White. (Council for Yukon Indians, 1977, p. 21)

This description of the impacts of a colonized educational experience on Yukon First Nations learners, along with the directive for change, is a reminder more than fifty years later that this discourse is not new. Indigenous people have been advocating for decades for the value of Indigenous Knowledges and their right to occupy space and control in education.

The site of this study, Yukon University, was established as Yukon College in 1963, and it became Canada's first university "north of 60" in 2020. With thirteen campuses throughout the Yukon, a range of programming is offered that includes university access courses, degree programming, trades pathways, and professional learning. Collaborating with First Nations and advancing reconciliation are among the foundations of Yukon University's strategic plan (Yukon University, 2024a). While 26% of credit students identified as Indigenous in the 2022-23 academic year, statistics are not kept on how many Indigenous faculty and staff are employed (Institutional Research and Planning, personal communication, August 6, 2024). Yukon University's website states that, "In our commitment to decolonizing education, we infuse our programming, research, services and student life with Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, perspectives, and ways of knowing, being and doing" (Yukon University, 2024b).

Several faculty-based working groups have been coordinated at Yukon University to focus on Indigenization. The Indigenization Engagement team (comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff and faculty) was brought together in 2016 to discuss what Indigenization means at the institution and to provide recommendations for this work. As part of their final report, the group suggested, "Indigenization is not a process that has an ending but involves ongoing efforts that evolve over time" (Yukon University Indigenization Engagement Team, 2017, p. 7). It is a conversation, "emerging from listening to [Yukon] First Nations people on this journey" (Yukon University Indigenization Community of Practice, n.d.). This sentiment reinforces the relationship that reconciliation has with place, time, and context.

This research study stemmed from deep questions I have in my own teaching and learning practice. As a Yukon University faculty member and an uninvited settler residing on Indigenous lands, I am on a journey to understand my role in reconciliation. As an educator, I recognize my personal, collective, and global responsibilities to move "beyond performative allyship," and take up this work in a meaningful way (Lavallee, 2020, p. 123). Collaboration with my community is important to me. I have chosen to ground this research in the narratives of instructors because, although change must be enacted at all levels of post-secondary education, to me, the classroom is "the most radical space of possibility in the academy" (hooks, 1994, p. 12).

Since this study was conducted in 2022, there have been movements at Yukon University. A new reconciliation framework titled *Breaking the Dawn: Reimagining Reconciliation through Re-education* was put forward, with a vision to create "an opening for the entire Yukon University community to build a shared understanding of our role in advancing reconciliation as a post-secondary institution" (Yukon University, 2024c). One specific change in instructional support that I can attest to as a faculty member has been the development of the Elders on Campus program. The Elders program offers spiritual, cultural, and knowledge supports to faculty, staff, and students at the university. Recently, they have released guidelines on ways of being with the Elders that reminds us to show up with a good heart, disrupt harmful patterns, engage ethically, and practice reciprocity (Yukon University Elders on Campus, 2024). I have had the opportunity through this program to move through tokenization of representation, to co-designing learning, and it has been a deeply meaningful experience.

This article reports on the ideas and stories that a small sample of non-Indigenous Yukon University instructors shared through semi-structured interviews in the spring and summer of 2022. A number of pedagogies emerged through a thematic analysis of their responses. Stemming first from an understanding of identity and positionality, as non-Indigenous teachers they felt a decolonized spirit of learning, physical learning environment, the ability to create and hold space, welcoming the whole person in learning, and collaboration/relationality are key considerations and approaches to teaching within their practices. By connecting to a review of Indigenous-authored scholarship, these pedagogies were further examined. Challenges to reconciliation in teaching and learning are articulated, as are the realms of action.

Literature Review

Education as a Tool of Oppression

The colonization of new worlds by European settlers was fueled by a desire to control land, resources, and people (Battiste, 2013; Dhamoon, 2015; Fellner, 2018; Haig-Brown, 2010). The success of this venture relied on a perceived supremacy of knowledge used to assert power over the oppressed and reinforce their lower status (Battiste, 2005, 2013; Haig-Brown, 2010). The disruption, demotion, and replacement of Indigenous Knowledge through colonization has led to the loss of both knowledge and the process of its generation and dissemination (Morrison & Vaioleti, 2017). The continued dominant positioning of Eurocentric knowledge in the structures and ideals of formal education systems remains an important factor in the subordination of Indigenous Peoples worldwide (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Battiste, 2013), and indicates that colonization is not a singular historic event that happened in the past but remains very much today (Dhamoon, 2015; Fellner, 2018).

In Canada, a familiar implication of colonized education is the Indian Residential Schools system, which operated from 1831 to 1997, and aimed to assimilate Indigenous Peoples to European ways of knowing and being through the segregation from and erasure of Indigenous thought, language, and spirituality (Haig-Brown, 2010). Along with the devastating loss of language and cultural knowledge for Indigenous people, the present-day impacts of what Battiste (2005) refers to as cognitive imperialism and cognitive assimilation can be seen in trends showing that Indigenous learners continue to struggle with equitable access to engagement and achievement in formal education (Battiste, 2013; MacKinnon, 2013; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2016; Morrison & Vaioleti, 2017).

Current Terminologies—Decolonization and Indigenization

In examining reconciliation in post-secondary education, two key terms have been central to the current discourse: decolonization and Indigenization. Decolonization has been defined as an undoing of colonial ways, while offering an advantageous position to Indigenous counter-narratives (Fellner, 2018). Pitawanakwat and Pedri-Spade (2022) indicate that it happens within post-

secondary institutions "when people commit to identifying and changing systems and processes rooted in colonial ideologies and white supremacy that continue to oppress Indigenous peoples and their knowledges" (p. 25). They suggest decolonization is the first step in moving towards Indigenizing the academy, and Indigenization is but one of several initiatives that fall under decolonization.

While some scholars emphasize the shared perspectives of decolonial theory with anti-oppressive and critical studies, Tuck and Yang (2012) assert that decolonization does not have a synonym (p. 3). Many scholars see an imperative to actively engage in the work of decolonization within our formal education systems (Battiste, 2005, 2013; Dhamoon, 2015; Fellner, 2018; Haig-Brown, 2010). Fellner (2018) proposes starting this process with a deep critique of the ways our curriculum has and continues to cause harm to Indigenous Peoples, as well as critical reflection on the racism and bias located in research, learning, and practice.

Indigenization has been described as "the inclusion of Indigenous thought, theory, teachings, people and pedagogy into spaces of learning" (Brulé & Koleszar-Green, 2018, p. 111). Others claim it to be transformational, calling it a process that, "depends on the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their respective knowledges and the creation of various spaces where Indigenous Peoples may enact their ways of knowing, axiologies, and ethics" (Pitawanakwat & Pedri-Spade, 2022, p. 15). Indigenization is an ongoing process that evolves over time and requires listening to and being in conversation with Yukon First Nations people (Yukon University Indigenization Community of Practice, 2017).

It is important to note the situational uniqueness of both decolonization and Indigenization. Grafton and Melancon (2022) remind us these terms are not static or constant, but rather their "meanings change depending on the Indigenous identity and/or colonial position of those participating in them" (p. 136). The interaction between the terms is also important. While the concepts must support each other, they operate in unique ways and are not universally accepted (Grafton & Melancon, 2022; Pitawanakwat & Pedri-Spade, 2022). Debate surrounding the terms cautions that their accepted narrative can be harmful for Indigenous people, given the ongoing nature of colonization and unrealistic expectations of what is possible (Lavallee, 2020). Alfred claims outright that the academy cannot by nature be Indigenized (see Dokhanchi, 2012). Instead, spaces can only be sought within the institution to push back and activate the evolution of Indigeneity.

Cross-Cultural Considerations

Ermine (2007) examines the need for guiding principles around cross-cultural engagement, but he acknowledges a lack of what he deems ethical space—a meeting place between cultures where detaching from bias and affirming human diversity would contribute to dialogue. Oberg, Blades, and Thom (2007) further advance a vision of this space as a generative place where an emphasis is not on either/or culture, but both, and where ease and creativity can be found in the tensions that arise. As these tensions arise, cultural humility and cultural safety are important considerations for cross-cultural meeting spaces (Mooney, 2021), as are colonial trauma and mistrust (Fellner, 2018).

Bartlett, Marshall, and Marshall (2012) advocate for the need to bring together Indigenous and Eurocentric knowledges when approaching issues. Informed by knowledge from Mi'kmaq Elders, *Etuaptmumk* or two-eyed seeing holds that both world views have contributions to offer as neither can fully explain the whole (2012). By approaching issues with the best of both Indigenous and Eurocentric knowledges, we can see from both eyes. Elder Marshall holds that we all have an inherent responsibility to continuously seek other perspectives to enhance what we are seeing and understanding (FNEAA, 2023). In sharing this concept, he emphasizes an equity of knowledge, as Indigenous Knowledge has been left behind in our current systems, despite its proven record of maintaining ecological integrity—which he deems our principal responsibility in today's times (FNEAA, 2023). Applying principles of etuaptmumk teaches us how to coexist and live in harmony and balance with each other and the natural world (FNEAA, 2023).

The roles of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people differ in the creation of a positive post-colonial outlook in education (Battiste, 2013; Castellano, 2000; Ermine, 1995; Fellner, 2018; Pidgeon, 2016). Non-Indigenous people have an obligation to engage in their own processes of decolonization while ensuring they are enabling space for Indigenous initiatives (Castellano, 2000). Part of this work involves confronting racial superiority and the impacts and power dynamics of privilege (Battiste, 2013; Manglitz et al., 2014). Sharing in the responsibility of uncovering internalized biases and being aware of motivations is the role of non-Indigenous people. Fellner (2018) suggests non-Indigenous people carry a responsibility for transparency around their own learning journeys, normalizing mistakes and starting from a place of compassion and love when facing difficult truths. Brulé and Koleszar-Green (2018) encourage non-Indigenous people to see that there is an importance in recognizing when inaction comes from the fear of making mistakes or doing the wrong thing. They believe that acknowledging the continued impacts of colonialism is a responsibility and a commitment that must be made between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to honour and share the land and respect differences in world views (Brulé & Koleszar-Green, 2018).

I come to this research with the assumption that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have a role in the reconciliation of education. Battiste (2013) asserts that, although non-Indigenous people can never learn or vicariously realize an Indigenous perspective, an "Indigenist" agenda is possible, whereby those willing

to participate in a collaborative movement around sovereignty, self-determination, rights, and reconciliation, are welcome. Battiste also holds that Indigenist research does not require someone to be Indigenous, but the context for such inquiry must be from people and related to place.

Research Methodology

This qualitative case study aimed to learn about the experiences of non-Indigenous instructors with Indigenization and decolonization efforts in their classrooms, within the historical, social, and cultural boundaries of the Yukon and Yukon University. Case study methodology was applied since Indigenization has been described as a regionally unique process (MacDonald, 2016). The research was approved by the research ethics boards of both Yukon University and St. Francis Xavier University.

Invitations to participate in this study were initially sent to fifteen to twenty Yukon University academic faculty who had considered Indigenized or decolonized approaches to teaching and learning in at least one full-term academic course taught at Yukon University in the 2019-2021 academic years. Drawing on relationality and familiarity with the work of my fellow colleagues, I determined who invitations were sent to. In accordance with purposeful sampling, I hoped to listen to a group of participants from which the greatest amount could be learned (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because Yukon University is a small institution with relatively few faculty members, to maintain respondents' confidentiality, identifying descriptors could not be made available at any point in the study.

From the initial round of invitations, eight participants were selected for interview, with attention paid to diversity in the representation of academic and program areas. One participant later withdrew, leading to an analysis of seven interviews.

Semi-structured interviews invited narrative responses to open-ended questions (Alsaawi, 2014). By welcoming narrative responses from instructors, it was believed that space would be provided for respondents to explore their unique relationship to the focus of inquiry. Relationality as an intentional research epistemology (Wilson, 2008) was hopefully upheld as these stories were shared with a colleague in a position of deep learning, who could better relate to what was being said than an interviewer who was out of touch with the context of study.

During the interviews, I asked participants questions like, "What evidence do you see of the impacts of colonization in your practice and in your classroom?" They were invited to recall experiences, by being asked, "Tell me about an experience you had Indigenizing or decolonizing a course/program," with guiding prompts such as, "What kinds of things did you do? How were you supported?" Interviews were recorded and transcribed in clean verbatim. Transcripts were coded in NVivo 12, using a combination of in vivo coding (which is using the words of participants in assigning codes), and interpretive coding (where judgments are made by the researcher in what was implied). A thematic framework emerged and was related back to the literature to deepen the findings.

Qualitative research is a natural place to house this inquiry as it allows for a fulsome exploration of subjectivity. An instrumental case study methodology was selected to respectfully position the inquiry in a time and place. The research questions arose from my own experience as a teacher in a northern context, and the methodology and purpose of the study was supported by the then associate vice-president Indigenous Engagement and Partnerships at Yukon University. The First Nations Initiatives (FNI) team at Yukon University, as members of the university community, kindly participated in reviewing and shaping the interview questions for the study.

Grounded in an interpretive or constructivist paradigm, the approach to this study acknowledges that reality is socially constructed, and the interpretations made through the findings are shaped by the experiences of the researcher (Merriam, 2016; Cresswell, 2018). For this reason, researcher positionality is an important methodological consideration. My identity as a non-Indigenous instructor had a profound impact on the development of this project, data collection, analysis, findings, and dissemination of knowledge.

Positionality

I have been an adult educator in the Yukon for nearly twenty years, teaching at the pre-college, college, and university levels. I have also spent time as an adult educator for a Yukon First Nation government. I am a fifth-generation Canadian of Scottish and English descent. My father's people were farmers from rural England and Ireland. My matrilineal ancestors were farmers who immigrated to Saskatchewan in the early 1800s as a result of the Highland Clearances in Scotland. They settled in rural southwestern Ontario, where I was raised, in a small community on the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg, Treaty 21 lands (Long Woods Purchase).

In my time living and teaching in the North, through meaningful cross-cultural relationships, teaching experiences, and learning from Elders, I have observed and felt profound differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous world views and knowledge systems. These experiences continue to reveal the persistent impacts of colonization, including the privilege I have been afforded and the disadvantageous positioning of Indigenous learners within our current Eurocentric systems.

As a faculty member at Yukon University, I have struggled at times with not knowing how to action reconciliation, or indeed, where to engage in an authentic, informed, and productive conversation. My world view is particular and limited. As Mooney notes, "It is, indeed, difficult to separate myself from Western values, culture and structures in order to see the world from another perspective" (2021, p. 235). As a non-Indigenous person, I bring my social conditioning and a biased perspective to this inquiry. As a non-Indigenous person with a duty to reconciliation, I have a responsibility to continue to find a place in the conversation, explore hard topics, and seek to understand the best way forward.

Limitations

As mentioned, the lack of representation of Indigenous voice in this study reflects the demographic realities of Yukon University's faculty and instructional community. Without the voice of Indigenous respondents, this article is incredibly limited and potentially problematic. The research provided a space of reflection and connection for non-Indigenous instructors, but it was not able to provide a space for hearing from and learning from local Indigenous people on these topics. This article, then, could be accused of taking up space and giving a platform to voices that might best be in a position of listening on these topics at this time.

The study was small. Data collection was limited to a small sample of interviews and although attempts were made to ensure participant selection represented a diversity of program and subject areas, many were simply not included. Increasing the scope of this research to involve more participants, include Indigenous perspectives, and include instructors from a wider array of subject and program areas would produce wider-ranging results. A related study might also show the voice of students.

Finally, the study was limited by its adherence to a colonial framework of research. Louie et al. (2017) paraphrase Smith's (2012) perspective in saying research is political and "has been used to the benefit of the dominant culture by modelling the core intellectual practices of colonization" (p. 20). Furthermore, privileging an academic framework and tone in communicating this story makes it inaccessible to some.

Results

On Indigenization and Decolonization

All of the interviewees grappled with articulating what Indigenization meant to them, with some believing the concept resisted definition altogether. Indigenization was ultimately expressed as: being self-determined and directed by Indigenous people and communities, having Indigenous Knowledge and world views at its core, and bringing Indigenous perspectives into the classroom through both content and pedagogy. Those interviewed believe that Indigenization requires Indigenous representation across the academy, and that non-Indigenous participants in this work must demonstrate authenticity, vulnerability, and an awareness of one's own identity and positionality.

For some instructors, Indigenization represents something deeply transformational, requiring fundamental shifts in education. The difference between fitting Indigenous perspectives into existing courses versus an entire re-imagining of education systems highlighted the spectrum of discussion within the concept. One instructor (Alek) suggested that to Indigenize, "you'd completely have to reimagine something … so fundamentally different," that you'd have to begin anew, and Indigenous people, Elders, scholars, or communities would drive the process.

To define decolonization, instructors felt that first, an understanding of colonization and its impacts was foundational. Many respondents spoke to the challenges associated with being "the products" of a colonized education system and dealing with the associated biases and assumptions they hold as a result of this socialization. All participants were able to speak to the continuing impacts of colonization in their classrooms, calling it "the norm," and describing,

> Whether it's how we develop our course outlines, learning outcomes, how we assess, how we view success, what is failure, how we engage students, define the hierarchy, it's all a world view and it's a colonized world view, so, how I come in and teach naturally, is probably, even though I don't want to admit it, a result of colonization. (Alek)

Instructors then articulated decolonization as a critical examination of the structures, processes, and "norms" we work within. Kiran described it as, "[not] lazily falling back on colonial structures, and making visible the underlying colonial logic of things, so that it's not going unexamined." Many of the instructors talked about the need to dismantle hierarchies across the institution, and especially those that exist in the classroom. Disrupting Freire's (1985) banking model of education, whereby teaching is a one-way flow of information from teacher (as

expert) to student (as vessel), was a theme, as was the importance of ongoing reflective and reflexive practice, continually examining one's practice, listening to important feedback, and aiming to see how issues of power and identity are exerting their influence.

Identity and Positionality

All of the respondents reflected on the importance of identity and positionality to their teaching practice. Understanding who we are and where we stand in relation to knowledge and each other (and why), given our identities and socialization, is seen as work instructors are responsible to engage in. Puja described the process of unpacking social locations, positionalities, biases, and assumptions as the entry point to being able to engage with acts of decolonization and Indigenization. "I think sometimes we don't even understand or know who we are and why we believe certain things," mused Alek. "If I could spend time working on myself and understanding this, ultimately, this would be the first step in decolonizing a course." Critical self-awareness and understanding who you are as a person and how this positions you as an instructor is crucial to being able to see what you are bringing to the classroom, how you are taking up space, and how you are privileging content.

Respondents acknowledged that their identity and positionality limited their perspectives and dictated how they could participate in Indigenization efforts. There was general agreement that in terms of incorporating Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being, the role of a non-Indigenous person involved listening and supporting, rather than leadership. Respecting and adapting to different cultural environments and world views when working with First Nations Knowledge Keepers and communities as an "outsider" was described by one participant as a vulnerable process that involves making mistakes and accepting discomfort, as it takes time to build confidence and learn the teachings, histories, stories, and ways of the Nations you work with.

Articulated Pedagogies

A number of pedagogies (or ways of being in a teaching practice) emerged as themes through this study. These are outlined in Figure 1. Instructors did not tend to explicitly classify these as Indigenizing approaches or decolonizing approaches (or both), and without Indigenous voice and direction, I refrain from labelling anything as an Indigenizing approach. For the purposes of this study, I categorize these as pedagogical moves towards reconciliation. In Figure 1, the central positioning of identity and positionality suggests a connection between identity and pedagogy (or, more simply, the notion that *who* we are impacts *how* we teach).

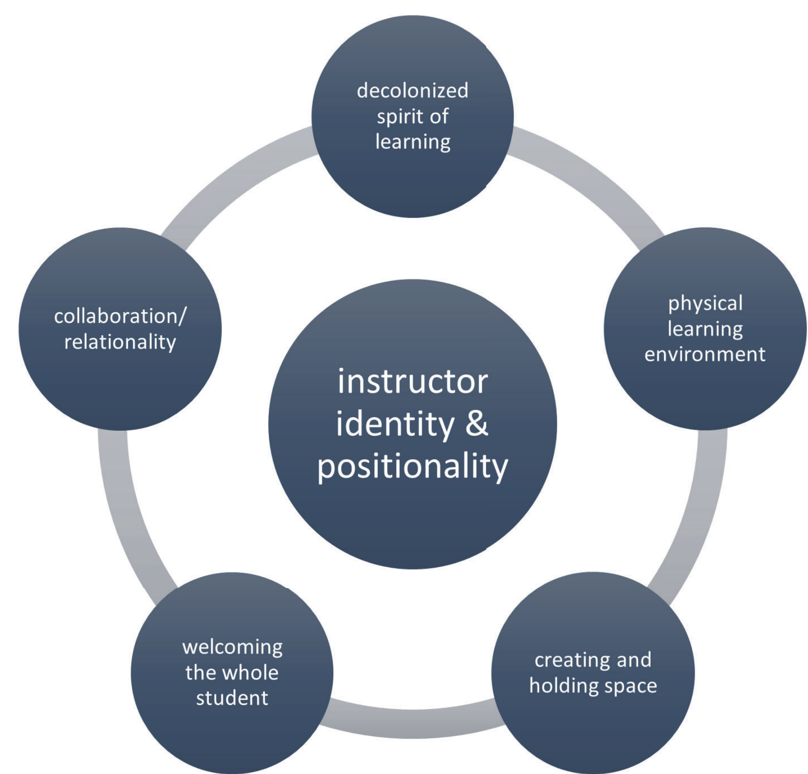

Figure 1. Pedagogical moves toward reconciliation from the perspective of non-Indigenous instructors. Source: Author

Decolonized Spirit of Learning

The hierarchical situation whereby the instructor holds authority over knowledge and unidirectionally transfers that knowledge to the student was referenced as a persistent colonial framework that negatively impacts instructors and students. Kiran described the deference to authority expressed by their students as concerning, describing an expectation that the instructor is the sole expert and director of learning. Sita described this from an internal perspective, indicating that instructors themselves carry this mindset, and feel like they need to "know everything about everything when they're at the front of the room." Both instructors related this mindset to the settler-colonial experience of education. It was noted that dismantling this hierarchy could be facilitated by sharing

power in the learning space through co-developing assignments and assessment with students, co-instructing courses, and encouraging student-directed learning.

> I have definitely tried to put the student far more in the centre of the learning. It's become less about me lecturing or standing at the front of the class talking. It's about building relationships, giving opportunities for students to talk, to share their experiences, and to interact with each other. I have become much more of just a facilitator. (Alek)

This act of flattening the hierarchy in the learning relationship is not an Indigenous pedagogy per se, and likely falls more under a decolonization framework, which is why it has been termed decolonized spirit of learning.

Physical Learning Environment

A number of different instructors spoke of the positive impacts of learning outside the traditional classroom, and specifically participating in experiential, land-based, and culturally-focused learning activities. While some facilitated this learning to build relational and intentional learning communities, others saw that welcoming traditional practices into learning spaces and paying attention to what and who are surrounding students are key components of a culturally supportive learning environment for Indigenous students.

The physical learning space was also referred to in terms of class sizes and the availability of learning spaces at the university. There was frustration expressed that traditional classrooms represent an extension of the settler-colonial context and are not conducive to natural conversation and speaking circles. Sita describes this frustration, "I see that now in the building structures, in our classrooms, in the way the furniture never quite goes the way you want it to, to make a circle, or to feel people are able to look at each other." There was agreement that the physical learning scapes greatly influenced both an ability to decolonize and Indigenize learning.

Creating and Holding Space

Creating and holding space in this teaching and learning context refers to welcoming the unexpected and unplanned-for emergent things to happen in the classroom, whether that is emotion, connection, trauma-related responses, uncomfortable conversations, or the elevation of other perspectives. Puja explained,

> I think the impacts of colonization are reflected sometimes in the students and their experiences. I think it's brought out in conversation, and I think it requires of instructors an ability to hold spaces for those impacts, for what education has perpetuated. When we start to unpack some of that in classes, it comes out in the words, in the experiences, in the emotions of students, and the impacts are very real. (Puja)

Even in the course of the interviews conducted for this research, emotion surfaced for some participants. Sita shared that, in the past "I would often look away or move on quickly if something was uncomfortable in class, but getting more comfortable being uncomfortable, I think, is what I want to keep practicing." Creating "culturally safe classrooms" and learning how to do this was also an idea voiced by one participant. The goal for creating this atmosphere is for all students to feel welcome to authentically be themselves and share their perspectives.

Instructors spoke of creating space personally and in the classroom to "learn the histories and learn the teachings and learn the language and traditions and ceremonies … the parts you're welcome to" (Marty). Sita used the term "witnessing" to describe important learning as a non-Indigenous instructor. They defined this as,

> Listening to Indigenous people and hearing stories—joyful ones and not joyful ones and going to events where people have space to share and sitting and witnessing—and not speaking … Hearing stories about residential schools, hearing stories about families who had joy and who have reclaimed lost language and culture and listening, I think, has helped a lot and I want to keep doing that. (Sita)

For non-Indigenous instructors, being aware of how one takes up space and knowing when to "get out of the way" is important to create the necessary space for Indigenous people to take the lead and for emergent learning to occur.

Welcoming the Whole Student

Respondents felt that welcoming the whole student is a relational pedagogy that puts the students at the centre of learning. It involves considering the student's life context outside of the classroom and acknowledging, honouring, and incorporating lived experience into coursework and learning spaces. Flexible entry, recognizing barriers, and accommodating the challenges that students face in programming is a part of seeing the whole student, according to Liz. Acknowledging the lived experiences of the students that come to the class is important for Sita. For Alek it is about being more student-centric and trying to understand where students are coming from and the challenges they bring.

Welcoming the whole student is about students not feeling like they have to separate their lives and themselves from the learning, but instead, this self-knowledge is welcome to inform and direct the learning.

Collaboration and Relationality

It was clear that this work must be inherently collaborative, and this involves the building of relationships. Instructors spoke of collaboration with respect to co-development with Indigenous people, communities, experts, colleagues, and students. Co-instructing of courses was another recurring theme.

> I've been co-teaching a lot in the last couple of years and for me, I actually think it's one of the ways forward—to have multiple world views demonstrated at a teaching level and made explicit to students that there's always multiple world views and multiple lenses on a particular knowledge area. (Puja)

Marty, Sita, and Alek also spoke of the value of co-teaching in bringing a diversity of world view, voice, and perspective to topics, as well as distributing power.

Equity of knowledges was expressed with respect to instruction as well, with the advocacy of pay equity attached to knowledge versus the colonially entrenched system of credentials. When discussing hiring Indigenous Knowledge Holders to teach courses, Marty explained the challenge, "If you look through who's paid what and how high it goes, it's very much formalized in the westernized world." Fairly compensating the sharing of Indigenous Knowledge by Knowledge Holders was also identified by Rene, who suggested that Elders be given faculty positions for their roles in sharing Indigenous Knowledges in classrooms.

Some instructors spoke of the "responsibility to connect with the community." Kiran mentioned "treating Indigenous organizations not as consultants but partners," continuously putting effort into building and maintaining relationships, which involves showing integrity by following through on commitments made to community partners. Connecting students to community through learning was another key site for collaboration.

Perceived Challenges with Indigenizing and Decolonizing Teaching and Learning

Understanding the Complexities of Indigenization

A number of interviewees spoke of the challenges they face in grappling with the parameters of Indigenization. Questions arose such as, how much one attempts to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge into existing courses before reinventing the course? Are there limits to Indigenizing formal learning? How much do First Nations want formalized through the institution and what do they want to hold as their own? Some questioned whether the Eurocentric institution could ever be Indigenized (and that perhaps it is best to remember that this is an ongoing process and not an end goal, so Indigenizing might be a better verb). The spectrum from incorporating Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, and pedagogies into learning, to reinventing courses, to reimagining a whole new post-secondary system, was overwhelming to some. There was a personal hesitancy on the part of all respondents to apply the term Indigenization to efforts in their practice, given their positionalities.

Some of the instructors struggled with understanding how to Indigenize and decolonize courses that were particularly focused on Western knowledge and based on specific concepts and materials. Liz wondered, are there certain courses that lend themselves more to decolonizing or Indigenizing actions? Rene wondered if perhaps the social science curriculum is better suited to these actions than some of the sciences, such as chemistry or biology.

Representation

The lack of Indigenous representation across the institution was identified as a challenge of primary importance. Rene highlighted this by saying, "It's hard for me to define Indigenization, but part of that is having Indigenous faculty, which means hiring Indigenous faculty at a rate that is competitive with the rest of Canada." Alek spoke of this challenge in saying,

> When you don't have many Indigenous colleagues or voices, when you sit in a meeting, how is it even possible that we can move in a different direction when currently we're very similar to those sitting around the table in terms of our backgrounds and approaches and world views and upbringings? We need a diversity of voices. (Alek)

A recurring pattern that instructors expressed discomfort with was non-Indigenous people within the institution speaking for Indigenous people on matters of Indigenization. One described this as paternalistic and colonial. Another described non-Indigenous faculty who lend their voices to a lot of Indigenization conversations as "icky and disingenuous." Liz mentioned,

> Even with the stuff that we're talking about at the university, in terms of taking these things to faculty councils. Those faculty councils are still, basically, for the most part, a whole bunch of non-Indigenous people and the bulk of them, a whole bunch of White people. (Liz)

Instructors spoke to the issue of the few Indigenous staff having to feel as though they were bearing the burden of Indigenization, acknowledging the exhaustion of being in this role and having their knowledges and perspectives marginalized in most spaces in the institution. One instructor noted this was also a challenge as non-Indigenous instructors want to receive meaningful feedback from Indigenous colleagues without contributing to this burden. Acknowledging the increased workload and pressure Indigenization might place on the minority of Indigenous employees at the university is imperative.

Authenticity: Tokenism and Co-opting

Cooper, Major, and Grafton (2018) define tokenism as symbolic gestures that are inauthentic and serve to appear as though they are directed towards reconciliation, although they do little to provoke change. The term brown-washing was used by Marty to describe non-Indigenous instructors who "want to keep doing exactly what they're doing, and just sprinkle Indigenous things in, like, "'We're going to have an Elder in and we're going to do this or we're going to do that,' and then we're going to say it's Indigenized." It was felt this perspective exists and lacks a deeper questioning of whether the core of what is being taught is from an Indigenous world view and is supporting culture in traditional ways. This sprinkling or peppering of Indigenous content without a deeper connection to Indigenous world views was mentioned by a number of participants as a tokenizing approach.

Liz described some of the challenges around the co-opting of knowledges while supporting an Indigenous student working on a project that involved an exploration of Indigenous Knowledges. Liz described discomfort in guiding the student, given her positionality and limited perspective as a non-Indigenous instructor. Although as an academic, Liz realized a comfort with the colonial reliance on published work to inform learning, questions arose as to the limitations and protocols that exist around accessing oral and community-based Indigenous Knowledges and figuring out how these knowledges can and should be shared outside of community.

Colonial Systems and Institutional-Level Challenges

Colonial systems and institutional hierarchies were seen as a barrier by some of the interviewees. "Everything has to be controlled by the colonial elites," Kiran commented. "When it comes to actually providing people with [resources], [they] don't trust [faculty] to do anything on their own." Alek expressed, "Actually, I feel like this institution does not do a great job of supporting this work. We all say that it is important, but the resources and supports are not provided to actually make it happen in a meaningful way." Being held to colonial (often numerical) definitions of success, facing the barriers of institutional hierarchies and processes, lack of authentic leadership, and working in isolation were mentioned as additional challenges at an institutional level.

Resources and Support

Financial support to involve Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members in learning was a desire expressed by Kiran. Others expressed wanting meaningful professional development to support the necessary individual and team-growth necessary for this work to happen. "If I can dream, it's about time," Puja said. "Time and financial support and space to think together, to grapple, to go beyond." The need to create positions to support faculty with Indigenizing and decolonizing teaching and learning was also identified by a few participants.

The importance of a collective, safe, and supportive approach to Indigenization and decolonization (as opposed to a top-down directive) was clearly supported by Rene:

> Forcing people to Indigenize their curriculum has a lot of drawbacks, because you're making people that don't understand Indigenous cultures and histories and ways of knowing, to put curriculum into their coursework that's supposed to be Indigenous or Indigenized. (Rene)

Some questioned whether the atmosphere and safety existed amongst colleagues and within the institution, to begin deep and meaningful transformations. Others expressed the feeling that this atmosphere does not exist and suggested effort be put into how it might be created. Sita emphasized the importance of finding supports and community among colleagues. They suggested creating space in faculty meetings or communities of practice where faculty could share and receive feedback on their ideas and reflections.

Discussion

The perspectives shared by the group of instructors in this study were related back to the literature of Indigenous scholars to seek connection and supports, and begin to expose gaps in understanding. This extended the themes of the study and started to reveal missing pieces and blind spots beyond the limited perspective of non-Indigenous instructors. The literature review alone did a great deal to emphasize the introductory and limited relationship of non-Indigenous instructors to the complex nature of Indigenous Knowledge and pedagogies.

Styres (2019) indicates that, "The only place from which any of us can write or speak with any degree of certainty is from the position of who we are in relation to what we know (p. 39). To truly consider these topics in a meaningful way, it is important to not only connect to Indigenous perspectives through scholarship, but to connect to Indigenous perspectives from the land where the questions are being asked

When considering the fundamental terminology utilized in this inquiry, some of the challenge the participants felt in articulating what is meant by Indigenization may have come from the assumption that the term has a singular definition. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) develop a more expansive definition. They propose the concept, instead, has three sub-themes: Indigenous inclusion (the increased representation of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff); reconciliation Indigenization (the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledges and Indigeneity in the academy); and decolonial Indigenization (a fundamental shift and transformation of the academy based on balanced power relations). Decolonization can likewise be an esoteric term. It has been described as hopeful work. "For some teachers, decolonization is a refreshing jolt to an education system obsessed with assimilation," muses Chung (2019, p. 14). For others, "the word creates anxiety concerning our vague promises to Indigenous learners and even vaguer promises to ourselves" (p. 14).

Cooper et al. (2018) reinforce that reconciliation requires participation from settlers, newcomers, and Indigenous people. They advocate for a relational approach guided by authenticity and genuine conversation. Non-Indigenous people have an obligation to engage in their own processes of decolonization (Castellano, 2000). This personal decolonizing work, widely acknowledged by the instructors interviewed, requires vulnerability and transparency, and the ability to compassionately face difficult truths (Fellner, 2018). This work includes normalizing that these efforts will be uncomfortable. Seeing this work as "a collective responsibility," and "acting out of love to support each other" (Sita), are starting places of support, collaboration, and care in facing these challenging and deeply reflective movements.

Building on the Articulated Pedagogies

Iseke-Barnes (2008) agrees that decolonizing learning requires instructors to understand the systemic and ongoing nature of colonization. It requires a move away from seeing education as a transactional experience. By flattening hierarchies in the classroom and showing vulnerability in inviting student participation in shaping learning, authentic teaching spaces can be created. hooks (1994) calls this engaged pedagogy. In their work on relational learning and reconciliation, Cooper et al. (2018) validate the challenges for instructors in creating these decolonizing spaces, claiming that specific knowledge and experience is required by instructors to unlearn the status quo, create relational space, build relationships with community and authentic voices, provide space for Indigenous pedagogies and knowledge, facilitate learning, and assess it.

The notion of welcoming the whole student to learning is reinforced by Marshall (2023), who emphasizes that each of us possesses unique gifts that are needed here on earth, and we are responsible for realizing these for the good of the whole. Tanaka (2016) adds that we each have our own path of learning to travel and that uncovering "each person's work" is an individual venture in learning, supported by Indigenous rites of initiation and vision questing. Given this perspective on the development of self, and considering the whole student, the connections to community beyond self are evident in Kirkness and Barnhardt's (2016) work, which poses that Indigenous students want an education that respects them for who they are, provides relevancy to their world view, and helps them to exercise responsibility over their own lives while respecting capacity building and self-determination within their nations. The goal in post-secondary education then, is not for Indigenous learners to come out having assimilated to Eurocentric knowledge systems, but that they have gained increased perspective (through the development of two-eyed seeing), while honouring and developing their own Indigenous Knowledges. A learning environment that promotes a larger sense of belonging, trust, relevant program content, and pedagogy, matters (MacKinnon, 2013).

In Goulet and Goulet's (2014) model of effective teaching via Indigenous pedagogy, relationality extends to include the teacher's interpersonal relationship with the student, the relationships among students in the learning environment, connection to the process of learning, and connection to the content being shared. These relational categories interact to support Indigenous learners. The model stresses the importance of connection between community and learning, where the instructor must build the necessary relationships to bring in community-based expertise when they do not hold the positionality or ability to include Indigenous Knowledges (Cooper et al., 2018). This reinforcement of the overlapping notions of relationality and collaboration in teaching and learning also highlights the complexity of who/what the relationships are to, and who/what we are meant to collaborate with. The naming of these pedagogies in this study is the tip of the iceberg, hiding a deeper world of exploration around them.

Similarly, the emphasis on physical teaching and learning spaces is an acknowledgement of much more complex areas of consideration. Yes, the colonial construct of the classroom and an instructor placed at the front of the room is a significant limitation to decolonized and Indigenized learning. Taking learning beyond the walls of the classroom, to the community, and to the land, involves

a number of Indigenous pedagogies, each with deep roots and much to be understood, such as experiential learning, land-based learning, community-based learning, learning in circle, and storytelling, to name just a few.

Potential Missing Pieces for Non-Indigenous Instructors

Figure 2 attempts to build on the pedagogies articulated in this study, with a shift in wording for welcoming the whole *person* to the learning environment. Potential missing pieces for non-Indigenous instructors are noted alongside the model and not incorporated into it, to acknowledge significant limitations in perspective and positionality in this study. In starting to reveal some of these, the model becomes a picture of limited perspectives, emphasizing the imperative of further learning from Indigenous people, communities, and educators in expanding understanding.

This article cannot, by nature, begin to provide a picture of the incredibly deep and complex world of Indigenous pedagogies. Instead, it provides a picture of the problematic nature of limited perspective. The literature provides support for extensive thought on the addition of land as pedagogy (Kiskinwahamākēwina, 2020), the incorporation of spirituality and subjectivity into learning (Ermine, 1995; LaFever, 2016), welcoming the whole person (Fellner, 2018; FNESC, 2014), and specialized regional pedagogies such as language, ceremony, ritual, storywork, and arts (Tanaka, 2016). As a non-Indigenous person, this inquiry helped me see the vastness of the "blind spots" I have with respect to seeing and understanding a full range of Indigenous pedagogies. It has deepened an awareness of the dominant nature of Eurocentric knowledge and my need to walk alongside and support Indigenous colleagues and communities in positioning myself as a learner. It has humbled me.

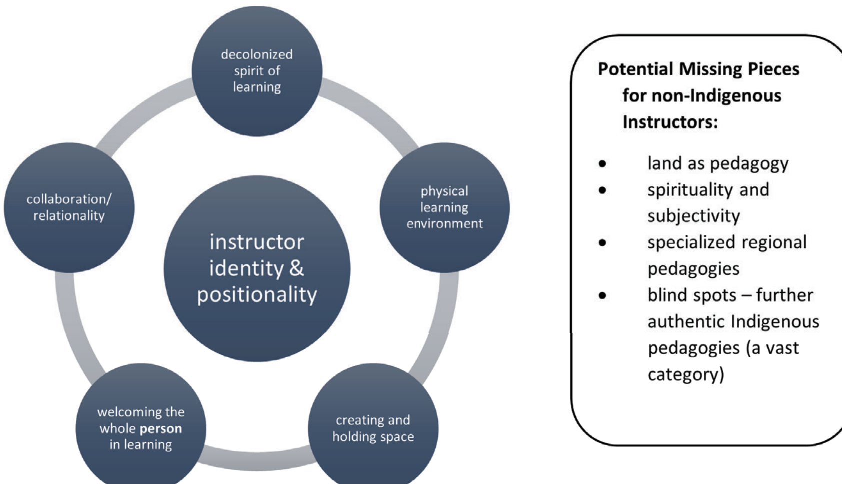

Figure 2. Pedagogical moves toward reconciliation (a beginning conversation). Source: Author

I see Pepion's seventeen ways of learning, supported by Little Bear (2009), as an example of distinct Indigenous pedagogies. Pepion lists the following: learning from visions, learning from the origin stories, learning from the Elders, rites of transfer, experiential learning, developmental learning, holistic concept, critical thinking, environmental thinking, protocols and taboos, extended family and community, learning from symbolism, effects of oppression and cultural conflict, spirituality, revitalization, language, and philosophy. In considering these, I reflect on our current systems of education and how some of these do not even include notions of the colonized perspective of a "teacher" in learning. I think back to a quote from a participant in this study, who said,

> One thing I don't feel like I integrate at all is an understanding of land—of physical land. Place, yes, but land, I just find that's one aspect of Indigenous world views that's over my head ... As much as I love being outside, it's not the same thing as being connected to the land in the way that I hear Indigenous people talking about it. (Kiran)

Kiskinwahamākēwina (2020) begins to reveal that land represents a relationship between people and place, and the essence of land-based pedagogy stems from the belief that "the land and all within has power" (p. 13). They indicate that enacting land-based pedagogy involves "collaboration and interaction with land, community, *kēhtē-ayak,* the old people, and traditional knowledge keepers" (2020, p. 14).

Spirituality and subjectivity are also concepts that reside mainly outside of our current post-secondary frameworks of teaching and learning. While subjective experiences and introspection are foundational to Indigenous epistemologies (Ermine, 1995), Western thought has tended to focus on external exploration and explanation. LaFever (2016) advocates for the addition of the spiritual component to both pedagogical and curricular approaches. For example, proposing honouring as a learning outcome would involve the acts of considering, meditating, becoming aware of, listening, observing, and so on. Self-actualization, and connecting learning to family and community, expand beyond self-interest (2016).

Including regionally specific pedagogies such as language and ceremony in learning is an integral part of place-based Indigenous Knowledge. Stories, mythology, ceremonies, land, and language hold important curriculum and pedagogy for Indigenous learners (Ermine, 1995). Incorporating deep listening, sharing circles, storytelling, performance, and dance to celebrate the historical and lived experience of Indigenous people is a necessary component of learning (Louie et al., 2012). Although non-Indigenous people have a responsibility to provide

space and support for this resurgence in the academy, it is inappropriate for them to take on the content development and the delivery of this learning.

The shift to welcoming the whole person in learning from welcoming the whole student emphasizes that *both* students and instructors are much more than these roles. Each may also be a partner, a child, a parent, a community member, an employee, a Knowledge Keeper, and so on. Recognizing and honouring the complexities beyond the student/teacher roles requires authenticity, relationality, and an ethic of care. The respondents in this study can be admired for their student-centred approach to learning, but Fellner (2018) implores instructors to be self-compassionate as learners themselves. By encompassing this whole person, or whole self, from both a learner and instructor perspective, our pedagogies further interweave, for it requires a decolonized spirit and an awareness of identity and positionality to begin to see ourselves and each other wholistically. By welcoming the whole person in learning, we are also encouraged through the First Peoples Principles of Learning, which indicate, "Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors" (2014, p. 1). Perhaps our whole person learning could consider how each of these pieces is supported in the classroom.

Sites of Action

Participants in the study spoke of work that needs to be done at the level of self, community, and institution. These sites of action are shown in Figure 3 as overlapping. There is unique work to be done at all levels, and yet the interactive, collaborative, and relational work is also integral. At the individual level, self-reflective and reflexive practice can support growth for non-Indigenous instructors. An awareness of identity and positionality is critical, as is a spirit of vulnerability and a willingness to make mistakes. For non-Indigenous educators, there is a need for "constant self-questioning, including openly admitting their own lack of knowledge, biases, racisms, and complicity in colonial ideologies and practices" (Davis et al., 2018, p. 22). The Yukon University Elders tell us, "Transforming ourselves is a prerequisite to transforming our institution" (2024, p. 10). Spending time with Indigenous people and perspectives is also a key site of learning at the level of self (Mooney, 2021, p. 235).

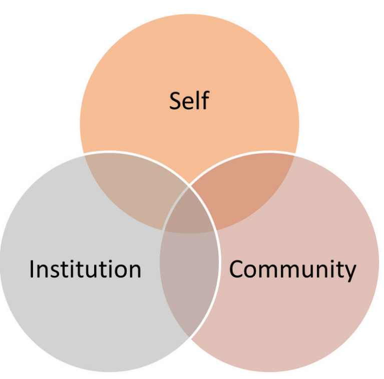

Figure 3. Reconciliation will involve work at the individual, community, and institutional levels.

Communities of practice and collaboration built around this learning will give instructors a collective space to deepen through relation. Instructor collaboration is hinged upon faculty feeling like the institution is a safe and welcoming space, and that there are opportunities and supports available for them to develop professionally and make mistakes. Finding these safe spaces and communities of practice will help facilitate dialogue and foster a culture of collaboration (Davis et al., 2018, p. 24). As we come together in instructor collectives, supporting and celebrating our Indigenous colleagues and creating welcoming space for Indigenous Knowledge, resistance, and scholarship will be important. Respecting the unique burden placed on our Indigenous colleagues in their roles is also key.

At the institutional level, increasing the number of Indigenous faculty will provide more critical depth of Indigenous Knowledge in learning spaces (Brulé & Koleszar-Green, 2018). To do this, Indigenous people must also feel welcome by the institution and remain empowered in their self-determination and cultural integrity while there (Pidgeon, 2016). Towards an equality of knowledges, Ball (2004) suggests we redefine concepts of teaching credential and work towards engaging Indigenous community members in co-instruction and partnership. Initiatives that involve Indigenous communities in conceptualization, delivery, application, and evaluation should be elevated by leadership. Decolonization will require continuous and critical conversation about relationships of power and hierarchy within the institution, providing support, training, and resources for the work, building and maintaining relationships, and fostering authentic dialogue and action.

Implications: Reimagining, Renaissance, and Representation

Fellner (2018) provides us with medicines of love, good relationships, Indigenous Knowledges, living a good life, responsibility, relationality, a sense of belonging, and land to draw upon in Indigenizing and decolonizing, so that we can better embody this work. They suggest that drawing upon these medicines as guiding principles positions us to approach this work with humility. Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) also provide guidance in terms of suggesting post-secondary systems focus on respect for identity and cultural integrity, learning that is relevant to world view, reciprocity, and responsibility through participation.

As an instructor on this path, I connect with my colleagues in their feeling that there are real gaps in institutional efforts towards Indigenization with respect to teaching and learning. Many of these efforts do not adequately address the deeper, more interpersonal level of transformation required for decolonizing and Indigenizing (Mooney, 2021). This reflects the current situation, as we are still attempting to understand the knowledge and abilities educators should possess in order to engage in this work. As a non-Indigenous educator, Mooney (2021) emphasizes that post-secondary teaching is dominated by non-Indigenous people who "are not only unfamiliar with, but likely ignorant and mis-informed about Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies," and being left to navigate this without support is inadequate and harmful (p. 232).

Representation in terms of Indigenous educators and leaders in the academy becomes glaringly imperative. The growth of the Indigenous Renaissance offers hope and is steeped in irony. Given the history of educational trauma for Indigenous people and the pervasive domination of Eurocentrism in education, suggesting that Indigenous learners must be assimilated to Eurocentric systems of learning and credential in order to be invited to challenge and dismantle the platform is an inadequate response. The revolution must somehow break free from assimilation, but power continues to find comfort in the status quo.

The work of reconciliation is complex, challenging, painful, hopeful, and filled with emotion and vulnerability. It involves deep and complex trauma and cross-cultural challenges. It involves self-work. Learning how to create safe and ethical space around us will take time and cross-cultural thought and communication. We have to figure out the ethical space, before we enter it. Loving and caring for ourselves and each other, while developing a deeper knowledge of self and other will be foundational. Perhaps the first step will be to embrace the heart in this learning, and move beyond the focus of intellect.

Acknowledgements

I am still learning how to move toward reconciliation in a good way. I am learning to seek guidance and acknowledge supports. I sincerely cherish, love, and respect the land and Nations of the Yukon. I am grateful for those who have been my mentors. I especially acknowledge Northern/Southern Tutchone Elder Louie Smith for his teachings. Sha ẅ̀ níthän to former Associate VP Indigenous Engagement and Partnerships Robin Bradasch for supporting the methodology and purpose of this research and to the First Nations Initiatives team at Yukon University for helping me to shape the research questions and for believing in this work. Thank you to Yukon University's Scholarly Activity Grant funding program. Thank you to the three anonymous reviewers for helping to reveal limitations in my own perspectives, and to editor Deanna McLeod for her incredibly kind and relational support in helping me to develop my first journal article and see it to publication. I appreciate the generosity of the participants in this study, for giving their time to join in a conversation. As I continue to ask questions (and sometimes hear hard answers), I am ever grateful for the Yukon University Elders, who uphold instructors and students, in walking forward with love.

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Research Article

Alaska Native Sovereignty and the Federal Trust Responsibility: A Cultural Interpretation of Historical Relationships

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Abstract: Alaska Native Sovereignty and the Federal Trust Responsibility to Indigenous Peoples in Alaska are two principles that have evolved through time. Interpretation of their meanings and application of government policy reflects basic cultural differences between the settler and Indigenous populations.

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Introduction

Two major principles guide the relationship of the United States federal government to Indigenous Peoples in Alaska.[1] The government recognizes the sovereignty of Alaska Native Peoples over a range of their affairs. The federal government's trust responsibility is the government's commitment to Indigenous Peoples. In most of the United States this is recognized in the programs it provides as well as in how it upholds the conditions established in treaties. In Alaska there are no treaties although there are laws and court rulings that define the government's responsibilities with respect to Alaska Native people.

Both the extent of sovereignty (Indigenous jurisdiction) and the government's trust responsibility have evolved through time based on court rulings, federal legislation, government policy, and Native drive to control their own rights. Settlers in Alaska have sought to exert their place in the state through their interpretation of legislation and resolutions favourable to how they think Alaska Native people should be treated. Up until the 1970s, federal legistation and policy favoured assimilation of Alaska Native people with little understanding of their needs and ways of living on the land. The result has been a struggle played out between different cultural ways of framing and resolving Indigenous sovereignty. In recent years there have been efforts at the federal, state, and Tribal levels to overcome the divides, particularly in areas where the federal and state governments and Native communities work together to support village governance and the statewide delivery by Tribes of services such as health care.[2]

One way to understand the cultural divides between settler and Indigenous cultures is to consider the historical evolution of Western laws and policies that mark the impact on Alaska Native people. While much of the record demonstrates ignorance of Indigenous ways, neglect of federal responsibility, and racial prejudice, the most significant factor that emerges for most of the history is a lack of understanding of Alaska Native Peoples' cultures, sovereignty, and the federal government's responsibility to Indigenous Peoples. There was a marked change in 1970 when President Nixon ushered in a shift in federal response from termination to self-determination.[3] Most Alaskans are less informed of this shift in policy and fail to recognize how Indigenous people in Alaska have used the changes to gain greater control of their affairs. This is because these changes do not directly affect most non-Indigenous people.

The history of the United States government's recognition of Indigenous sovereignty can be traced back to Supreme Court Justice John Marshall who ruled in 1831 and 1832 that the federal government has a responsibility to recognize Aboriginal title to land.[4] The relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the government was defined by Chief Justice Marshall as one of "domestic dependent nations."[5] In the continental United States, the federal government recognized the sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples within the boundaries of their reservations and the conditions established in treaties between the government and the Tribes, but ultimate determination of the extent and limits of sovereignty was determined by Congress.

In Alaska, the government's responsibility to Alaska Native people was not limited to questions of land although land was central to the settlers' concerns and basic to Alaska Native Peoples' subsistence economy and ways of life. Beginning in the early years of the American period in Alaska, Alaska Native people expressed concerns about their rights and relationship to the government.[6] So, while land was central and the basic legal question prompting rulings on Indigenous sovereignty, for Alaska Native people, their concerns and expression of rights extended to a vision of what they needed to survive and participate in new opportunities under American administration.

The history presented here demonstrates the Alaska settlers' narrower interest in solving Alaska Native Peoples' land claims with the legal tools and cultural approaches central to their ways of life so they could proceed with clear title to land. Throughout this history, Alaska Native people were eager to preserve their land and control their own affairs while availing themselves of rightful opportunities under the law.

What follows is an overview history that reflects the evolution of relationships and interpretations of Indigenous rights reflected in federal, state, territorial, and settler approaches to sovereignty—a story that until recently reflected years of misunderstanding, paternalism, and unwillingness to support self-determination. Native Peoples' responses throughout the history have demonstrated their efforts to maintain their cultural interests and to seek opportunities within the context of new realities. The hope is that this work may also serve as a basis for comparison with the experiences of other Indigenous populations globally.

The Early Years (1867–1936)

The Treaty of Cession in 1867 recognized the relationship of the United States government to Alaska Native Peoples. Article III states:

> The inhabitants of the ceded territory, according to their choice, reserving their natural allegiance, may return to Russia within three years; but if they should prefer to remain in the ceded territory, they, with the exception of uncivilized [sic] native tribes, shall be admitted to the enjoyment of all the rights, advantages, and immunities of citizens of the United States, and shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion. The uncivilized [sic] tribes will be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States may, from time to time, adopt in regard to aboriginal tribes of that country.[7]

Under this treaty, the United States assumed responsibility for the Indigenous people living in Alaska. That meant virtually all Alaska Native people.[8] In the early years of the American period this trust responsibility[9] was reflected in federal policies and rulings characterized by paternalism and reflected in an attitude that the federal government knew what was best for Alaska Native people—and that was assimilation. In the kindest interpretation of this policy, the government saw a responsibility to assist Indigenous people to become like White settlers in attitudes, vocation, and settlement because that was perceived to be in their best interest regardless of their different backgrounds.[10] This attitude permeated public thinking and government policy. In the eyes of the federal government and settlers in Alaska, it was impossible to be an Indigenous person while also enjoying the rights and benefits of full participation in American society. Federal policies and laws were therefore designed to provide avenues for individual Indigenous people to adopt settler ways. This is exemplified in the provisions for acquiring an allotment (title to land) and citizenship.[11]

Despite the emphasis on changing Alaska Native people to be like settlers, there was always a legal recognition that the extent of Indigenous rights, particularly as they related to land and access to subsistence resources had not been determined nor abolished.[12] Therefore there existed this tension between legal recognition that there were Indigenous claims, the federal government policies toward Native people, and strong sentiment directed at changing Alaska Native people to become settlers in custom, livelihood, and settlement.[13] The focus was on replacing group identity, settlement, and cultural practices with settler values based on the nuclear family, and rejection of identification with their cultural group.

The Middle Years (1936-1956)

The middle years are marked by contrast—settlers sought resolution of Indigenous land claims so they could secure their land rights while the United States Department of the Interior advanced its trust responsibilities in an aggressive effort to secure Indigenous reservations and village-based governance.

In 1936, the Alaska Reorganization Act (ARA) was a broad attempt to provide village-based government fashioned after Western governance and to provide economic incentives by way of money for village development projects. This was a well-meaning effort, but one defined by policy makers without understanding and direction from Alaska Native people.[14] To the credit of the ARA planners, they used their federal trust responsibility to create new opportunities within Alaska Native communities for economic development and Western style local governance.[15] In the long run, the village councils, while reflecting a Western legal framework, were a precursor and introduction to Indigenous directed corporate business.[16]

Reservations established by the secretary of the interior as part of the Alaska Reorganization Act proved particularly controversial, especially when these involved fishing grounds important to commercial fishermen and cannery operators. The Department of the Interior saw reservations as a way to provide Alaska Native people with land and waters that could be dedicated to their hunting, fishing, and trapping, but reservations became a lightning rod for those who questioned the right of the federal government to allocate large areas of land exclusively for Indigenous use.[17] Alaska Territorial Governor Ernest Gruening was an outspoken critic of reservations. He claimed that they would segregate Alaska Native people from the larger society and from opportunities such exposure could provide. Alaska Territorial Delegate Bob Bartlett agreed with him that reservations were not a good idea.[18]

Others objected to reservations by saying that the 1884 Organic Act, which created the district of Alaska and is often referenced as a basis for recognition of Indigenous claim to the land, was enacted at a time when Indigenous people were living a "traditional" life and that now many were moving into wage labour and less expansive land use, a reason to disavow reservations.[19]

Outside of Alaska, the argument over ancestral land was legally challenged in a court case involving the Hualapai people and the Santa Fe Railroad in 1941. The courts found that Indigenous land claims were not limited to actual land in use but could extend to lands they had once used. This finding became an important basis for considering Indigenous land claims in Alaska.[20]

In response to the establishment of reservations, Alaska Territorial Attorney General Ralph Rivers wrote an opinion piece to Secretary of the Interior Harold

Ickes on August 17, 1945, "Opinion of Alaska Attorney General Ralph J. Rivers on Aboriginal Rights of Alaska Indians."[21] The piece provides a reasoned response to the secretary's policies and is also instructive because it demonstrates the cultural divide between settlers and Indigenous people. Rivers was in a unique position to comment. He grew up in Alaska, knew the law thoroughly, and was responding to the secretary in his role as attorney general of the territory. Rivers, like other Alaskan political and business leaders of that time, recognized that Alaska Native people had unresolved claims to land but disagreed with the establishment of reservations as a way to address the claims. He believed that the best way to address the claims was through the US Court of Claims and he held that there should be monetary payments, as opposed to a land grant. He sought payments as the ultimate goal to resolve Indigenous claims.[22] He followed the well-worn path of offering money for land claimed; fair by settler standards but a policy that ignored the value of the land to Alaska Native people as homeland imbued with fish and wildlife critical to their life. The wider dimensions of Indigenous sovereignty as they might relate to governance of village affairs were not part of his response since his primary focus was on securing equal opportunity for all Alaskans to land and what he recognized as a fair settlement of Indigenous claims.

He further argued that Tribal or group recognition had not been investigated, was undocumented at the time, and therefore could not be claimed. Referencing the 1884 Organic Act he stated: "Only now, 60 years after enactment of the measure, is the Department of the Interior attempting to ascertain what their claims were."[23] Rivers pointed out that Tribal recognition was the prerequisite for Indigenous group rights. He stated: "Tribes or bands are of course, the basis upon which the conception of Indigenous rights is founded."[24]

Tribal recognition for much of the United States was codified in treaties that recognized their territory and extent of sovereignty. Because treaty making ended in 1871 shortly after the purchase of Alaska, there were no treaties with Alaska Native people and therefore no established agreement on land and other rights. While this is true, it obscures the more important point that Rivers was making about the lack of knowledge by the government concerning Indigenous group composition and collective ties to the land.

At issue was the fact that Alaska Native people did not have legally recognized documents (treaties) that described the limits of their claims and the government did not have any detailed investigations that could address the question.[25] So for Rivers the immediate issue to be settled was land, a common concern of both settler and Indigenous person despite the differences in how they viewed the land.

Despite the lack of information about Alaska Native people, even in the 1940s, the federal government attempted to meet its trust responsibilities through a series of government agencies.[26] Rivers's opinion piece attempted to make sense of Indigenous claims within the framework of Western legal tradition. From a settler's standpoint this is an understandable response to their land problem, but settlers tended to dismiss the fact that Indigenous land claims extended beyond the individual to the cultural group and were based on how that group, band, or Tribe defined and managed their land rights. This approach was different from the nuclear-family oriented land ownership that was the settler concept.[27] Of course, without learning more about Indigenous societies there was no empirical basis to determine the role of tradition and the different cultural ways of managing the land or clarifying the extent of Indigenous rights to self-govern.[28] Despite the lack of documentation and understanding of Indigenous ways at this point in Alaska history, the US Congress, in passing the Alaska Reorganization Act, recognized Indigenous rights and the possibility that a person could be simultaneously a citizen of a Tribe, nation, territory, or state.[29] How this could work is still evolving.[30]

Statehood (1956-1959)

Many Alaskans looked forward to the prospect of statehood and economic development. Framers of Alaska's constitution (1955-1956), like the leaders of the earlier period, cherished equal opportunity for all. Critical to the course of Alaska Native history are the common use provisions embedded in article 8 of the constitution. Under "Natural Resources," section 1, the "Statement of Policy" states: "It is the policy of the State to encourage the settlement of its land and the development of its resources by making them available for maximum use consistent with the public interest."[31] Sections 3 states: "Whenever occurring in their natural state, fish, wildlife, and waters are reserved to the people for common use."[32] Section 4 states: "Fish, forests, wildlife, grasslands and all other replenishable resources belonging to the State shall be utilized, developed, and maintained on the sustained yield principle subject to preferences among beneficial uses."[33]

The key concept reiterated here is that Alaska state management of subsistence resources will not be allocated based on users or user groups. Decisions on allocation must ensure equal opportunity for all citizens. Therefore, there can be no Indigenous or rural resident priority despite the obvious differences in needs between those who live a subsistence life and those who depend almost exclusively on wage labour.[34] Alaska Native people and other rural Alaskans were to be treated the same as urban dwellers despite the sharp differences in how they make their living and survive.

It is true that today many urban based Alaskans also hunt and fish every year, some depending to varying degrees on the resource, for others this is a supplement while also holding down full- or part-time jobs. It is also true that a growing number of Indigenous people in Alaska now are employed, some year-round, others seasonally. The argument for a rural Alaskan subsistence preference

is, however, based on the premise that life in rural Alaska depends on access to subsistence for most rural residents and urban residents do not have this extent of dependency to sustain them; they have other resources. Further, the argument has a cultural dimension. Subsistence in rural Alaska is a way of life rooted in places that have generations of meaning for people who live there, and who recognize the values of that life to their identity and well-being. They want to protect it for the present and future generations. If the citizens of Alaska value a diversity of ways of life, then the question is whether these should be accommodated in law? This question was not asked at the time the constitution was written, but it became a key issue after statehood when the State of Alaska began to select lands.

Compounding the problem at the time the Alaska constitution was written, was the fact that urban dwellers had little understanding of rural residents and Indigenous people in particular. At this point in history, Alaska Native people travelled to the city infrequently and had little interaction with most of the settler population, except government workers who went to rural Alaska on business.

The disconnect between rural and urban life was compounded by conflicting language in the Alaska Statehood Act (1958), which both confirmed the right of the State of Alaska to select lands to develop, and the necessity of not selecting lands that may be claimed by Alaska Native Peoples:

> As a compact with the United States said State and its people do agree and declare that they forever disclaim all right and title to any lands or other property not granted or confirmed to the State or its political subdivisions by or under the authority of this Act, the right or title to which is held by the United States or is subject to disposition by the United States, and to any lands or other property (including fishing rights), the right or title to which may be held by any Indians [sic], Eskimos [sic], or Aleuts [sic] (hereinafter called natives) or is held by the United States in trust for said natives;…[35]

Then, under "Selection from Public lands,"

> For the purposes of furthering the development of and expansion of communities, the State of Alaska is hereby granted and shall be entitled to select, within thirty-five years after the date of the admission of the State of Alaska into the Union, from lands within national forests in Alaska which are vacant and unappropriated at the time of their selection not to exceed four hundred thousand acres of land, and from the other public lands of the United States in Alaska which are vacant, unappropriated, and unreserved at the time of their selection not to exceed another four hundred thousand acres of land, all of which shall be adjacent to established communities or suitable for prospective community centers and recreational areas.[36]

Section 6 is specific as to the responsibility of the secretary of the interior: "Such lands shall be selected by the State of Alaska with the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture as to national forest lands and with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior as to other public lands."[37]

Both the potentially contradictory provisions of the Act and the common use provisions in the Alaska constitution laid the foundations for conflict with Alaska Native peoples over land and subsistence rights.

At first glance it is remarkable that the Secretary of the Interior at the time, Fred A. Seaton, did not intervene before passage of the Act as written.[38] It was not until 1966 that then Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall issued a "land freeze" on State of Alaska selections until Native land claims were settled.[39]

The conflicting language in the Statehood Act set the stage for the state to proceed with land selections before the claims of Alaska Native Peoples were settled. This signalled a clear override of Indigenous concerns and created a backlash throughout the Alaska Native communities. When Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall declared state selection halted until land claims issues were settled, this created resentment toward the federal government among settlers.

The Alaska Statehood Act was passed during a period of federal government policy to terminate services to Indigenous people, a low point in the administration of trust responsibility. On April 1, 1953, House Concurrent Resolution 108 was passed by Congress proclaiming the federal policy of terminating services and protections to American Indians.[40] In many respects, termination was a continuation of the assimilationist model that advocated Indigenous "advancement" through replacement of their identity with settler identity. The claims court route to settling Indigenous claims was a long process, and its successor, the Indian Claims Court, often struggled to recognize the cultural aspects of settlement and land use that were inherent in the claims.[41]

In retrospect, Alaska statehood both ignored and clouded land rights and this period reflected a continuation of assimilation policies detrimental to the social, educational, and economic development of Alaska Native Peoples. This laid the groundwork for the response to the question of land rights and the host of other concerns that would be reflected in the testimony of Alaska Native people in regional meetings leading up to passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971.[42]

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (1959-1971)

The land issue came to the forefront because it was an early impact of statehood on the lives of Alaska Native people, and an impediment to settlers' desire to secure title. The land question gained momentum when the state began to select land under provisions of the Statehood Act. Native land issues took on urgency with the 1968 discovery of oil at Prudhoe Bay on the North Slope of Alaska, north of the Brooks Range, and the desire of the nation to drill and build a pipeline to transport the oil to port. From a settler perspective, it became urgent to settle land claims. From the perspective of Alaska Native peoples, this was the opportune time to push for settlement.

At the first statewide meeting of Alaska Native leaders in 1966, delegates formed committees to deliberate not only on land, but on education, health and welfare, housing, transportation, and employment.[43] That statewide meeting evolved into the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) and became an ongoing voice for Alaska Native concerns. At that meeting a paper was distributed to the leaders, "What Rights to Land Have the Alaska Natives?: The Primary Issue." It was written by Iñupiaq leader Iġġiaġruk Willie Hensley, and in that document he made the case for land claims referencing the legal foundations from Western law and the basis for Indigenous rights. This marked one of the first examples of how the Alaska Native community used the legal tools of the government to present their claims.[44]

In the testimony by Alaska Native leaders to Congress in 1969, leading up to the final ANCSA bill, land and other issues such as poverty, housing, and employment, were seen as connected and, in some testimony, linked directly to acquiring title to the land.[45] For instance, leaders from the interior of Alaska testified and some took pains to draw the connection between land settlement as a resource to gain economic independence, a way to improve their standard of living, and an opportunity to manage their own affairs. Senator John Sackett, born at a spring camp on the Huslia River, a tributary of the Koyukuk River in the Interior Alaska, told the congressional delegation:

> Let me stress further that the bill before you is not just a question of land. It is a grasp, a handhold, for the development of our future. Again, how many programs has the Federal Government instigated for us—each has met with failure. We have had countless men come up and tell us what to do and how to do it, and each has gone home lacking accomplishment.[46]

Indigenous leader Emil Notti, born in Koyukuk, told the gathering:

> The condition of the native people is desperate. They need relief in the worst way. Settlement of the land problem is the remedy for solving the problems. I visualize sawmills coming into being to start a housing program. I visualize native businesses beginning to alleviate unemployment. There is a whole economy to be developed in rural Alaska and outside capital is reluctant to take the risk.[47]

For many who testified, the land was a bridge connecting a well-known way of life with economic opportunities that would enable development on their own terms. Claude Demientieff, a barge operator on the Yukon and Tanana rivers, who was born in Holy Cross on the Yukon River, told congress:

> When I go to the banker, he says, I don't have title to my land and you cannot take a mortgage out on it. Now I think that if we had the title to this land it would place something in us that I don't know what you call it—initiative maybe that would promote private enterprise.[48]

In the lead up to land claims, Governor Hickel assembled a task force to propose solutions to the settlement. Willie Hensley chaired that task force, and in the report they supported a corporate solution to settling land claims—regional Native corporations that would receive a cash settlement that they would then invest for shareholders in their region. Alaska Federation of Natives president Don Wright, speaking for the statewide organization, supported a corporate solution. Wright also emphasized the importance of a corporate solution in a March 28, 1971, memo. Wright concluded: "we stand ready to assist in any way possible with the drafting of appropriate language to incorporate the regional concept into the Administration bill prior to its transmittal to the Congress."[49] In testimony to Congress for s2906, Willie Hensley and Byron Mallott (Tlingit and later lieutenant governor) also spoke in favour of a corporate solution.[50]

ANCSA settled the question of land claims and gave the state a clear path to move on state selections and development unhindered by possible lawsuits from Alaska Native land holders. The federal government got authorization to study and propose new national parks and wildlife refuges (D-2 lands).[51] The Alaska Native community received 44 million acres of land and close to one billion dollars. The corporate solution that created for-profit regional corporations proposed and endorsed by prominent Alaska Native leaders has proven, in Western terms, to be an economic success.

Ironically, subsistence protections and Indigenous control over the "traditional" land base has proven elusive. The land selected by Native corporations would be subject to state and federal fish and game laws just like any other private landholding.[52] This was a significant blow to Indigenous control of their traditional way of life. The federal government recognized the loss and promised to address subsistence needs. Unfortunately, the federal solution has created additional problems and exacerberated the divide between urban and rural residents by creating different management mandates on Alaska state and federal land.[53]

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (1980)

In Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act (ANILCA) the federal government attempted to address its trust responsibility to protect Indigenous subsistence. Title VIII gives rural subsistence users a subsistence priority on federal land.[54] The initial hope was that the State of Alaska would follow with a rural preference on state land. The state tried but the effort was thwarted by lawsuits and extended debate among Alaskans. At issue was, and still is, the common use provisions of the Alaska constitution that prohibit priority to any user group. Efforts to amend the constitution failed.[55] This demonstrates the deep divide between urban settler values and rural, mostly Indigenous, subsistence-oriented values. Today, Alaskans are left with two subsistence management systems, one on federal land with a rural subsistence preference, one on state-managed land with no rural preference, even in times of resource shortage.[56] The divide exposed two important things: lack of knowledge of rural community needs by urban Alaska, and the struggle by many Alaskans to reconcile equality of access for all with special consideration for the subsistence needs of rural Alaskans, most of whom are Indigenous.

If there had been more understanding of Indigenous lifeways at the time of statehood, there might have been accommodation for a rural and Native Alaskan subsistence preference. The urban population either simply did not anticipate and appreciate the impending conflict, or quite purposefully did not want to establish any priority. Title VIII proved an inadequate fix to a problem that has roots in the failure to consider Indigenous sovereignty at the time the State of Alaska constitution was drafted and the continuing impact of the common use provisions on Alaska Native people.

Federal and State Positions on Native Sovereignty in the Post-ANCSA Era

Indigenous sovereignty over subsistence has been impacted, but in other areas there are signs of greater recognition of Indigenous rights. The 1970s marked a change in federal response to Native concerns. In addition to the Nixon Administration's new "Indian policy," ANCSA in 1971, has created great economic opportunities through the investments of the regional corporations. The Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act (ISDEA) in 1975[57] and the 1994 Tribal recognition listings for Alaska[58] each paved the way with new opportunities for Alaska Native organizations, communities, and even corporations to assume administrative control of their affairs under Tribal management with support from the federal government. Examples include federal funding to Tribes for medical programs and village courts with authority to hear certain types of legal cases such as child welfare. As noted by Katchen and Ostrovsky, the recognition by the federal government that the Alaska Native Regional Corporations (ANCs) could receive funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act of 2020 (CARES) is another area where Tribal rights have been recognized. This was possible through an interpretation of language in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.[59]

In an announcement from the Alaska Native Justice Center, December 7, 2023, they reference the authority of the Tribes to administer justice with respect to domestic violence with specific reference to the federal Violence Against Women Act. The announcement states: "The memorandum underscores what Congress made clear in the 2022 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act." Further, it notes the authority to exercise criminal and civil jurisdiction over all Indigenous people "present in the village."[60] Further still it states authority to "issue and enforce civil protection orders involving all people within the village" (Indigenous and non-Indigenous).[61]

These recognitions of jurisdiction also include the area of child welfare cases where Tribal courts play a role in adjudicating claims. Tribal status has also had a positive effect on the ability of Tribes to establish contracts with the federal government in areas such as health care. The Alaska Tribal Health Consortium representing Tribes across the state now administers health care under a contract from the Indian Health Service.[62]

Most significantly, in 2017, the State Attorney General Jahna Lindemuth, in a memo to Governor Walker, outlined the extent of Indigenous sovereignty in Alaska, "Legal status of Tribal governments in Alaska." This was a major step by the State of Alaska to formally recognize Tribal rights. The memo to the governor begins with the statement that Tribes exist in Alaska and are governments with inherent sovereignty.[63] Further on, in reference to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act she states: "Alaska Tribes may enter into agreements with the federal government to take over federally administered programs and services as a matter of self-governance."[64]

On the question of law making, she states: "A tribe's authority to adopt laws flows from the status as a sovereign political entity. This authority includes the power to enforce laws and administer justice systems such as courts."[65] Then,

in terms of power to terminate rights, she states: "Tribes' inherent sovereignty includes a 'colorable and plausible claim to jurisdiction' to terminate parental rights to tribal citizen children, even when the parent is not a citizen of that tribe."[66]

In the area of education, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Childhood Development announced in July 2021 a grant of one million dollars to the Alaska Federation of Natives to "scope" Tribal compacting of education. The grant funds came from CARES and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP). The grant was scheduled to end June 30, 2024.[67] It is significant that the state legislature had added its support to the development of Alaska Native education by passing the "State-Tribal Education Compact" law on July 28, 2022, supporting development of Tribal run K-12 public schools.[68]

In summary, these areas of US federal and Alaska state recognition of Tribal authority now provide legal opportunities for the Indigenous administration of justice, and eligibility for funding opportunities for Tribal-directed programs to serve their communities.

Conclusion

Canadian Justice Thomas R. Berger chose "Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland" for the title of his 1977 report on the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry.[69] The inquiry was on the impact of a proposed gas pipeline on the Indigenous people of the Mackenzie Valley, an area culturally not too dissimilar from Alaska Native communities. His choice of the words "frontier" and "homeland" captures the conflict in culture that I have tried to describe in this article. The early settlers to Alaska saw it as a frontier to be explored, settled, and developed. These very terms denote an attitude of new opportunity. Rivers put it succinctly in his response to the US secretary of the interior when he wrote:

> We are all aware that the Natives have been pushed aside by the onward march of civilization, without their wishes having been consulted. This was not so because of moral dereliction on the part of individual white pioneers, but because of the social forces and necessity that made white men surge with aggressiveness into new country.[70]

The phrase "onward march of civilization" speaks to the cultural divides that shape attitudes and approaches. The phrase reflects the movement to bring a way of life to a frontier. This is in opposition to the Indigenous concept of homeland that depicts a place imbued with intimate knowledge of the land and resources forged over generations, and a belief in the sustaining value it has always supported.[71] This was what Alaska Native leaders expressed in testimony on the land claims bill before Congress. They talked about the land as a source that had always sustained them, a concept captured in the title of Lael Morgan's book *And the Land Provides*.[72] Some of the leaders spoke of the land as a bridge to new opportunities, all recognized what it had povided. The cultural differences in perspectives centre around an attitude of making something new in a land of unexplored opportunity, versus drawing on the knowledge of what has been possible based on experience and tradition and approaching future opportunities in a place known well.

For the federal government, their obligations to Indigenous Peoples have always been complicated by dual responsibilities: to recognize the sovereignty of Alaska Native people and to also meet conditions under the Treaty of Cession to take responsibility for the future of Alaska Native people. The Alaskan story is about how this tension plays out through history while simultaneously recognizing settler rights to land and resources in the territory. For instance, the early implementation of the Citizenship Act and the Allotment Act sought to provide incentives for Alaska Native people to change cultural practices in lifestyle, settlement, and association, to assimilate as a precondition to receiving benefits enjoyed by settlers, invoking the standards of Western "civilization" as the cost. Similarly, the well-meaning programs and policies of the Alaska Redevelopment Authority (ARA), in speaking for Indigenous Peoples, failed to ask how they wanted to govern their affairs.[73] Settlers and commercial interests feared that the policies of the ARA would block them from land, resources, and livelihood. They resented the government actions because it would affect them. Some also showed resentment toward Alaska Native people, asking why they should be given special protections and pointing out that Native life had undergone change and so their needs for large areas of land had also changed, and they might not need all that previously had been the case. This signalled a further extension of the divide between settlers and Indigenous people and led some to question why Alaska Native people should be treated differently from others.

Some politicians called for the Western value of equal treatment for all Alaskans irrespective of their culture. They saw "equality" as a value in its own right and as a goal that could be reached when Native land claims were finally settled. In their mind, settling land claims would put all Alaskans on an equal footing. This was one of the reasons the settlers and politicians were so active during the 1930s–1950s to settle land claims. Once claims were settled and all Alaskans were on equal legal footing, then the territory could remove the cloud of unsettled land ownership and move without interference on development of the territory. This point of view contrasted with Alaska Native claims and federal recognition of the special jurisdictional rights Indigenous people have to control their own land, resources, and internal affairs subject to the ultimate interpretation and control of Congress. Some Alaskans could never fathom that Alaska Native people have jurisdictional rights that extend beyond land claims and in addition to

their rights as citizens of the state and the nation. "Equal opportunity" became the basis of the common use provisions of the natural resource section of the Alaska constitution and this set up a direct threat to any attempt by the state to recognize an Indigenous or rural subsistence priority, unless there was an amendment to the constitution. The new state was not ready to do this nor is it ready today, and the tension between rural and urban Alaska reflects this impact. It also points to the lack of understanding and appreciation for cultural differences, but also the strong support for "equality." At the federal level, starting in the 1970s, things developed quite differently.

President Nixon's 1970 address to Congress on his new federal Indian policy marked a major sea change in how the federal government would meet their trust responsibilities and how they would recognize Indigenous sovereignty. Nixon moved the country from a policy of termination to one of self-determination. This was followed by the Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act in 1975 (ISDEA) that put into place the avenues for Tribes to secure funding and administrative authority to run programs that affect their lives. The Tribal recognition list for Alaska in 1993 and 1994 gave Native entities in Alaska the federal recognition to activate Tribal access to the opportunities in ISDEA. "Tribal status" has become the key to federal recognition of jurisdictional rights. The most recent state position paper on Indigenous sovereign rights (from Attorney General Jahna Lindemuth in 2017) now clearly defines the areas of Alaska Native jurisdictional authority as they relate to Alaskan state jurisdictional authority. Previous state administrations have not always viewed Tribal rights as important.

These developments, as Nixon's term "self-determination" implies, shifted part of the discussion from the federal government seeing its responsibility to dictate opportunity, to one of Native organizations defining where and how they might want to take on programs and responsibilities from the federal and state governments—"self-determination" and "Tribal" recognition" mean opportunities at the community and regional levels with financing, and under Native cultural control with positive impacts in areas such as health care and village justice. This is a chapter that is still emerging and an important window into how Alaska Native cultural groups want the programs and services that affect them to be run. Key to this evolution has been the defining of "Tribal jurisdiction" as it relates to jurisdiction of the Alaskan and federal governments.[74]

Notes

1. Indigenous Peoples in Alaska include eleven distinct languages and cultures: that reflect the various different Native Peoples of Alaska: "Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian peoples live in the Southeast; the Inupiaq and St. Lawrence Island Yupik live in the north and northwest parts of Alaska; Yup'ik and Cup'ik Alaska Natives live in southwest Alaska; the Athabascan peoples live in Alaska's interior; and south-central Alaska and the Aleutian Islands are the home of the Alutiiq (Sugpiaq) and Unangax peoples." Alaska Federation of Natives. *Alaska Native Peoples*. https://nativefederation.org/alaska-native-peoples/.
2. This article is not a legal analysis of the issue of sovereignty and readers seeking such a legislative history are invited to consult Donald Mitchell's volume, *Tribal Sovereignty in Alaska, How it Happened, What it Means* (Carolina Academic Press, 2022), and David S. Case and David A. Voluck, *Alaska Natives and American Laws* (University of Alaska Press, 2012). See also a panel discussion: David Case, Alex Cleghorn, and Rosita Kaaháni Worl, *Alaska Native Sovereignty* (Critical Issues Lecture Series, Alaska Historical Society, Anchorage, October 16, 2023), https://alaskahistoricalsociety.org/lecture-and-discussion-series.
3. "President Nixon Special Message on Indian Affairs, July 8, 1970," Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard Nixon, 1970, 564-567, 576-76. https://epa.gov/sites/default/files/2013-08/documents/president-nixon70.pdf.
4. Felix Cohen provides an exhaustive review of court cases establishing rights of Aboriginal title to the land and the government's responsibility to protect their interest until such time as the government makes settlement either in payment, or other form of compensation. Cohen recounts the record of court cases affirming the rights of Indigenous people as fully human beings with legal claim to the land they currently occupy and land that they may have occupied in the past. Further, Cohen demonstrates that the government had been diligent in compensation to Indigenous Peoples up to the time of his writing in 1947. Felix Cohen, "Original Indian Title," *Minnesota Law Review* 32, no. 1 (1947): 28–59. https://scholarship.law.umn.edu/mlr/1296.
5. Justice Marshall termed Tribes "domestic dependent nations," with the federal/Tribal relationship resembling "that of a ward to his guardian." United States Department of Justice, "Federal Trust Doctrine First Described by Supreme Court." See also Case and Voluck, *Alaska Natives*, 1. The original language is articulated in Cherokee Nation v. State of Georgia, 30 U.S. (5 Pet.) 1.1 (1831), https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/30/1/.
6. One of the earliest Alaska Native records from Interior Alaska is a letter composed by Chief Ivan of Cosjacket and Chief William of Tanana where they point out the impact of settlers on the land, particularly noting the cutting of timber: "Half of the white people are doing nothing but trapping and fishing where we have our hunting grounds for years and now we can not only depend on hunting, but have to cut wood, etc. … At the present we are making our living by cutting wood mostly, but the white people are cutting wood all around our villages which we do not want and wish to have it stopped. We are self-supporting Indians and all

we want to ask of you is to stop the whites to cut wood around our grounds. We wish to hear from you…". The Chiefs are indicating that they must cut wood to sell, presumably to the steamboats on the river and perhaps also to the Army post at Fort Gibbon. Letter from Chief Ivan of Cosjacket and Chief William of Ft. Gibbon and Tanana to the Secretary of War, August 18, 1906, Box 9, Folder 47A, Record Group 22, Entry UD-91, Records of the US Bureau of Fisheries, Division of Alaska Fisheries Administration, College Park, Maryland. In 1915, at the Tanana Chiefs Conference in Fairbanks with Judge Wickersham, the Chiefs voiced concern about employment opportunities, their relationship with the government, educational opportunities for their children, and health care. William Schneider et al., *The Tanana Chiefs, Native Rights and Western Law* (University of Alaska Press, 2018): 77–111. See also Wickersham Historic Site Manuscript Collection 1884–1970, Alaska State Library Historical Collection, ASL-MS-107-38-001: 31, https://vilda.alaska.edu/digital/collection/cdmg21/id/2277/rec/5.

7. Alaska Purchase. The Treaty concerning the Cession of the Russian Possessions in North America by his Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias to the United States of America, June 20, 1867, Article 3. https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_16743/?st=gallery.
8. Describing the designation of Indigenous people under Russian influence, Case and Voluck point out that the "inhabitants" were divided into three groups: those who had adopted Russian ways of life and were subject to the Russian Czar, those who were semi-independent and associated with the Russians but did not accept the Russian Orthodox faith, and the independent inhabitants over whom the Russians exercised no control: Case and Voluck, *Alaska Native*s, 63–64. In reality, under American rule most Indigenous people were treated the same at this point in history until and unless they demonstrated they had given up their Tribal affiliations. Secretary of State William Seward indicated in an undated memorandum that the Indigenous people in Alaska should be treated the same as the Indigenous people in the rest of the United States: cited in David Hunter Miller, *The Alaska Treaty* (The Limestone Press, 1981), 71. In reality, there was considerable debate in the federal government over which department should administer to Alaska Native Peoples: Stephen Haycox, "Races of a Questionable Ethnical Type: Origins of the Jurisdiction of the U.S. Bureau of Education in Alaska, 1867–1885," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (1984): 156–162. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40490449.
9. The federal trust responsibility to Indigenous Peoples derives from John Marshall's ruling in Cherokee Nation v. Georgia where he wrote: "Their relations to the United States resemble that of a ward to his guardian. They look to our Government for protection, rely upon its kindness and its power, appeal to it for relief to their wants, and address the President as their Great Father": Justia US Supreme Court, Cherokee Nation v Georgia, 30 US. 1 (1831), 30.
10. Anthropologists describe this as a belief in a unilineal theory of cultural evolution. Field studies in the early years of the twentieth century disproved this theory, but public recognition and respect for cultural differences has taken much longer to be accepted. Felix Cohen also dismissed the notion of ranked levels of civilization. Stephen Haycox, "Felix Cohen and the Legacy of the Indian New Deal," *The Yale University Library Gazette* 68, no. 3/4 (1994): 135–156, 141–142.
11. Under the Alaska Native Allotment Act of 1906 (34 Stat. 197), Alaska Native heads of household could apply for up to 160 acres of land but needed to live on that land continuously for five years. This represented a renouncement of traditional settlement dictated by a yearly cycle of far-ranging subsistence pursuits. Under the 1915 Alaska Native Citizenship Act, in order to acquire citizenship Natives had to abolish tribal ways and embrace "habits of civilized society" (ASL-KFA-1225. A3-1915).
12. The 1884 Organic Act, section 8, stated that Alaska Native occupancy and land use rights are to be respected (23 Stat. 24). In the United States v. Berrigan, Judge Wickersham upheld Aboriginal claims while maintaining that dispossession of Native held land remained a federal prerogative: United States v. Berrigan, 2 Alaska 442 (D. Alaska 1905), June 21, 1905.
13. During the early period, before 1936, the pressure was on for Alaska Native people to take up a settled existence, which would require abandoning traditional patterns of their yearly subsistence cycle.
14. Kenneth R. Philp concludes, "Instead of carefully studying the social implications of contemporary native culture, New Deal reformers imposed their ideas of social justice on the Aleuts, Eskimos, and Indians. The Alaskan Reorganizational Act was drafted without native input and when many natives resisted the creation of reservations, the Interior Department issued legal rulings that enabled the Secretary of the Interior to set aside extensive areas of land and water. This well intentioned policy led to confusion within the Roosevelt administration…": Kenneth R. Philp, "The New Deal and Alaska Natives 1936–1945," *Pacific Historical Review* 50, no. 3 (1981): 309–327, 326. https://doi.org/10.2307/3639602.
15. During the New Deal era of United States history, US Department of the Interior solicitor Felix Cohen suggested that instead of "wardship," the term "trustee" best describes the relationship of the government with Indigenous people because it emphasizes that the federal government should be responsive to Native interests and not predetermine and dictate how they should be treated: Haycox, "Felix Cohen," 148. This interpretation took on additional significance years later in President Nixon's new Indian policy that proclaimed a change from "termination to self-determination." See Nixon, "Special Message."
16. Stephen Haycox notes the influential role that Anthony Diamond played in shepherding the Indian Reorganization Act for Alaska through Congress and his support for the establishment of village based governance: Stephen Haycox, "The Uneasy Relationship of Biography and History in Alaska: Anthony Diamond, Ernest Gruening, and Bob Bartlett," *Alaska History Journal* 34, no. 2 (Fall 2019): 44–59, 46.
17. Reservations in Southeast Alaska proved particularly controversial with representatives of the fishing industry who saw their livelihood threatened: Jessica Leslie Arnett, "Unsettled Rights in Territorial Alaska: Native Land, Sovereignty, and

Citizenship from the Indian Reorganization Act to Termination," *Western Historical Quarterly* (August 2017): 233–254, 244. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26782857.

18. In hearings on reservations, Bartlett stated: "I think that it is extremely important because the reservation policy, once adopted for Alaska, can lead on, I believe, to disaster, and I subscribe entirely to Governor Gruening's view that the disaster will be felt chiefly by the native people": Hearings Before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, United States Senate, Eighty-First Congress, Second Session on Order of Secretary Jules A. Krug, "Creating Certain Indian Reservations in Alaska," February 2, 1950. E. L. Bob Bartlett Collection, Series, "Native Land Claims," Box 2, File number 16. Alaska and Polar Regions Collections and Archives (APRCA), University of Alaska Fairbanks.
19. Arnett, "Unsettled Rights," 246.
20. United States v Santa Fe Pacific Railroad Company, 314 U.S. 339 (1941). Haycox writes, "… the case confirmed the extraordinary principle that abandonment by Indians of land they had once used but which they used no longer did not constitute extinguishment of the Indians' title to that land…": Haycox, "Felix Cohen," 146. Native land rights were further reinforced by the Marigold ruling on the rights of the Secretary of the Interior to establish reservations with extensions to include adjacent water bodies. See Nathan Marigold, To United States Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Subcommittee on Indian Affairs, March 1, 1948. Eighteenth Congress, Second Session on S. 2037 and S.J. Res. 162, 1948, 421. [Original brief dated February 13,1942, to Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes].
21. Ralph J. Rivers, "Opinion of Alaska Attorney General Ralph J. Rivers on Aboriginal Rights of Alaska Indians" (1945), Bob Bartlett Collection, Series A, Subsection 1, Box 1, Folder 2, APRCA.
22. Rivers, "Opinion," 14.
23. Rivers, "Opinion," 4.
24. Rivers, "Opinion," 7.
25. In part as a reaction to this perceived need for information about the extent and nature of Native land use and cultural use rights, the US Department of the Interior initiated a major study of Native land use in Southeast Alaska. The study is noteworthy because it was conducted by Walter Goldschmidt, an anthropologist, and Theodore Haas, a lawyer. Together, they completed investigation of current use and traditional use areas of Alaska Native people in Southeast Alaska and a small portion of the Interior. This study laid the groundwork by demonstrating Native claims both for the Tlingit-Haida lawsuit that was in court and the larger statewide Alaska Native Land Claims that would follow years later. Their report was published years later: "Possessory Rights of the Natives of Southeast Alaska," in *Haa Aaní / Our Land: Tlingit and Haida Land Rights and Use,* ed. Thomas F. Thornton (University of Washington Press, 1998).
26. Despite the lack of legal resolution of sovereignty during this period, the federal government defined its trust responsibility through the Bureau of Education and later the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The 1905 Nelson Act (chapter 277, section 7) established schools funded by the federal government for "Indians" and "Eskimos." The federal government also offered limited educational and health services, in the early years with the assistance of religious groups who set up missions. Stephen Haycox points out that before 1885 the federal government argued over which government agency should administer to Alaska Native people since they questioned whether the Native people in Alaska were Indians. This led to the Bureau of Education having responsibility until the 1884 Organic Act that called for the Secretary of the Interior to "…make meaningful and proper provisions for the education of children of school age in the Territory of Alaska…" (Section 13, Organic Act of May 12, 1884). Presbyterian Minister Sheldon Jackson was appointed Commissioner of Education in 1885 and he worked to support the development of schools in Alaska. See Haycox, "Races," 162**.** The Bureau of Indian Affairs was in charge of schools until 1986. See Carol Barnhardt, "A History of Schooling for Alaska Native People," *Journal of American Indian Education* 40, no. 1 (Fall 2001): 1–30.
27. Speaking of the Iroquois Confederacy, Dorothy Jones describes how the Iroquois concept of land differed from the British in the early years of Empire. The Iroquois concept emphasized relationship and "mutually acknowledged rights and obligations." Dorothy V. Jones, *License for Empire: Colonialism by Treaty in Early America* (University of Chicago Press, 1982), 19. Her observations while distant in time, place, and cultures seem apt in pointing out expanded dimensions of the Alaska Native relationship to the land, what we would recognize in Alaska as commonly understood use rights among Native groups. These are exemplified in, but not limited to, rights to fishing sites and traplines. The contrast between settler concepts of land ownership and use and the group use rights recognized by Indigenous people is an important difference in how each saw issues of land.
28. Perhaps the most influential American anthropologist of the twentieth century was Franz Boas. Boas and his students documented societies around the world and championed appreciation for cultural differences and the importance of understanding the value of each culture on its own terms. In a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 at the time the president was considering who to hire as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Boas reflected on prospective candidates and previous policy. He wrote, "… one fundamental error in their attitude was the same as the one made by Carl Schurz when he was the Secretary of the Interior, namely to assume that by administrative measures the Indian can be changed immediately into a White citizen. I believe they fail to understand the impossibility of overcoming the deep influence that the old ways of Indian life still exert upon the Indian community. Whomever is in charge of the Bureau of Indian Affairs ought to understand this fact": Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, Vol. II (University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 939.
29. In 1924 the United States Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act granting citizenship to Natives in the United States. Public Law 68-175. 43. Stat. 253.

30. In an essay by historian Frederick Hoxie Swandlund for the 75th year review of the IRA, he points out that: "Congress endorsed the idea that individuals could be both U.S. and tribal citizens." "The Indian Reorganization Act 75 Years later: Renewing our Commitment to Restore Tribal Homelands," Hearings before the Committee on Indian Affairs, United States Senate, 112th Congress, First Session, June 23, 2011: 3–4.
31. Alaska State Constitution, "Natural Resources," section 1, Statement of Policy.
32. Ibid., section 3.
33. Ibid., section 4.
34. William Schneider, "When a Small Typo has Big Implications," *Alaska History Journal* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 1–30.
35. Alaska Statehood Act, 48 USC Ch. 2, section 4.
36. Alaska Statehood Act, 48 USC Ch. 2, section 6(a).
37. It is unclear why the secretary of the interior did not object.
38. Stephen Haycox reports how Gruening tried to get the Native disclaimer removed from the final language in the statehood bill and how Bartlett also wanted the disclaimer removed with the promise Congress would soon address the question of Native land claims: Haycox, "The Uneasy Relationship," 56–57.
39. The secretary of the interior reflected on the land freeze at the sixth anniversary banquet of the *Tundra Times*, "Excerpts of Remarks by Stewart L. Udall at 6th Anniversary Banquet of the *Tundra Times*," US Department of the Interior, Indian Affairs, Oct 6, 1968. https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/opa/online-press-release/excerpts-remarks-stewart-l-udall-6th-anniversary-banquet-tundra.
40. "House Concurrent Resolution 108 which formally announced the policy of termination, directed that the end of reservations and federal services and protections be completed 'as rapidly as possible'": Charles Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations* (W. W. Norton and Company, 2005), 53.
41. Nancy Oestreich Lurie, "The Indian Claims Commission," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 436, no. 1 (March, 1978): 56–70. https://jstor.org/stable/1042172.
42. Two events in Arctic Alaska galvanized Native leaders to organize and express their concerns: Project Chariot, the plan to detonate an atomic bomb to create a port in Northwest Alaska, and the attempted enforcement of a ban on spring waterfowl hunting by villagers in Utqiagvik. These led to a gathering in 1961 at Utqiagvik to express resistance and to air concerns about access to hunting, education, housing, employment, and transportation. *Indian Affairs*, the newsletter of the Association on American Indian Affairs, December 1961, in Bob Bartlett Collection, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections and Box 2, Folder 18 (APRCA). See also Dan O'Neill, *The Firecracker Boys: H-Bombs, Inupiat Eskimos, and the Environmental Movement* (St. Martin's Press, 1994). Similarly, concern over incursion on Native hunting and fishing areas spurred the Interior Alaska Native people to organize. In a meeting in Tanana, June 24–26, 1962, they met to discuss their grievances. Protecting access and use of the land was primary but again, education, jobs, and the economy were discussed at length. "Chiefs' Conference," Tanana, Alaska, June 24-26, 1962. *Dena' Nena' Henash (Our Land Speaks)*, Alaska Native Rights Association. In Alfred R. Ketzler Sr., Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Collection, Box 7, Folder 10, APRCA.
43. First Statewide Native Conference, October 18–22, 1966. In Ernest Gruening Papers, Series 5C1, Box 243, Folder1978, Indians-2-General 1966-1967. APRCA.
44. The paper written in May 1966 outlined the rights of Alaska Native Peoples in Western legal terms. It is widely circulated today and is a primary reference in the words of a respected young Native leader on Native legal rights: William L. Hensley, "What Rights to Land Have the Alaska Natives?: The Primary Question." With 2001 introduction, https://alaskahistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/Hensley-paper-of-1966.pdf.
45. Senate Hearing, 90th Congress: Alaska Native Land Claims. Hearings before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, United States Senate, Ninetieth Congress, second session on S2906, A Bill to Authorize the Secretary of the Interior to Grant Certain Land to Alaska Natives, Settle Alaska Native Land Claims and for Other Purposes, and S1964, S2690 and S2020, Related Bills. February 8,9, and 10, 1969. https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CHRG-90shrg92002p1.
46. Senate Hearing, 90th Congress, 366
47. Senate Hearing, 90th Congress, 33.
48. Senate Hearing, 90th Congress, 382.
49. Neil Risser Bassett Papers (1940-1991), UAA/APU Consortium Library Archives and Special Collections, University of Alaska Anchorage, Box 3, Folder 7.
50. S2906 testimony: Hensley, 65, and Byron Mallott, 55.
51. This is in reference to section 17D of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 43 U.S. Code, Chapter 33.
52. In an extensive legal opinion written by Solicitor Thomas Sansonetti, he determined that Native "territorial reach" did not extend to their corporate holdings. This means that Alaska Native people do not exert special rights on lands granted under ANCSA. In relation to control of fish and game, this means that Alaska Native people do not control resources that are reserved under the State constitution for control by the State. US Department of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor, Memorandum to the Secretary of the Interior, "Governmental Jurisdiction of Alaska Native Villages over Lands and Non Members," American Indian Policy Review Commission, Final Report, 95th Congress, First Session, 489 (1977), M-36975 (1-133). Report signed by solicitor and approved by the secretary, January, 1993. Native corporation land managers do have the power to restrict trespass. See https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/m-36975.pdf.
53. Congress's ANCSA Conference Committee report states: "The Conference Committee, after careful consideration believes that all native interests in subsistence resource land can and will be protected by the secretary through the exercise of his existing withdrawal authority": Case and Voluck, *Alaska Natives*, 292.
54. Title VIII of ANILCA sec. 802, under Policy: "…consistent with sound management principles, and the conservation of healthy populations of fish and

wildlife, the utilization of the public lands in Alaska is to cause the least adverse impact possible on rural residents who depend upon subsistence uses of the resources of such lands; consistent with management of fish and wildlife in accordance with recognized scientific principles and the purposes for each unit established, designated, or expanded by or pursuant to Titles II through VII of this Act, the purpose of this title is to provide the opportunity for rural residents engaged in a subsistence way of life to do so; … "

55. A key legal challenge to the State of Alaska when it attempted to establish a rural subsistence priority was raised by Sam McDowell in a case finally settled in State Superior Court in 1989 (785 P24 1989). The decision held that the State could not uphold a rural subsistence preference because it violates State law, noting in particular the common use provisions of the State constitution. During Governor Tony Knowles's administration, he convened several legislative sessions to resolve the dilemma between federal and State management of fish and game and attempted to get a ballot initiative that would allow the public to decide on the question of a rural subsistence preference: Governor Knowles and Lieutenant Governor Fran Ulmer interview, September 16, 2020, Oral History Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage. See also timeline of events: "Subsistence—Alaska's Contentious History," *Anchorage Daily News* (Anchorage, Alaska), May 12, 2002.
56. The most recent example of the conflict over management of fish and game is the legal ruling by federal judge Sharon Gleason that federal officials were within rights to extend a special hunt on federal land during the first year of COVID-19. Reporter James Brooks writes: "A federal judge in Anchorage has ruled that U.S. government officials did not overstep when they allowed an emergency hunt near the Southeast Alaska town of Kake during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic": James Brooks, "Federal Judge Rules Against State of Alaska in Lawsuit Challenging COVID Emergency Hunt," *Alaska Beacon*, November 8, 2023. https://alaskapublic.org/2023/11/08/federal-judge-rules-against-state-of-alaska-in-lawsuit-challenging-covid-emergency-hunt/.
57. Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDAEAA), Pub.L 93-638.
58. First in 1993 and then in 1994, the Department of the Interior published a listing of villages in Alaska that qualified for Tribal status, a recognition of jurisdictional status.
59. Katchen and Ostrovsky point to the wording in the ISDEA Act that was used to justify the interpretation: "The term 'Indian Tribe' was defined in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) as any Indian tribe, band, nation or other organized group or community including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (85 Stat. 688) 43 USC 1601–1629b which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians": Jon W. Katchen and Nicholas Ostrovsky, "Strangers in their Own Land. A Survey of the Status of the Alaska Native People from the Russian Occupation through the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Alaska Law Review* 9, no. 1 (2022): 1–47, 2–3. https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/alr/vol39/iss1/10.
60. Tribal Jurisdiction in Alaska, 25 U.S.C. § 1305(a).
61. "Department of Justice Confirms Tribal Jurisdiction," Legal and Policy Updates, Alaska Native Justice Center. December 7, 2023. https://anjc.org/2023/12/department-of-justice-confirms-alaska-tribes-inherent-authority-to-exercise-criminal-jurisdiction-over-all-native-people-within-their-villages/.
62. "The Alaska Area Indian Health Service (IHS) works in conjunction with Alaska Native Tribes and Tribal Organizations (T/TO) to provide comprehensive health services to 163,835 Alaska Native people: Indian Health Service, US Department of Health and Social Services." https://www.ihs.gov/alaska.
63. Attorney General Jahna Lindemuth to The Honorable Bill Walker, Governor of Alaska, "Legal Status of Tribal Governments in Alaska," October 19, 2017 (1-16), 2.
64. Ibid., 12.
65. Ibid., 12–13.
66. Ibid., 14.
67. Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, https://education.alaska.gov/news/releases/2021/7.15.21%20DEED%20partners%20with%20AFN%20to%20scope%20tribal%20compacting%20of%20education.pdf. For an overview of Alaska Native education issues see Diane Hirshberg and Alexandra Hill, "Indigenous Self-Determination in Education in Alaska: How Can Communities Get There?" in *Alaska Native Studies Conference Proceedings, 2014. Transforming the University: Alaska Native Studies in the 21st Century,* ed. Beth Ginondidoy Leonard et al. (Two Harbors Press), 96–117.
68. *Fairbanks Daily News Miner,* July 29, 2022. The language for the Act, Senate Bill 34 states: "An Act relating to a demonstration state-tribal education compact; relating to demonstration state-tribal education compact schools; and providing for an effective date." The bill was signed into law on July 28, 2022.
69. Thomas R. Berger, *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland: The Report of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, Vol 1* (Supply and Services Canada, 1977). https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/bcp-pco/CP32-25-1977-1-eng.pdf.
70. Rivers, "Opinion," 2.
71. See Richard Frank: "There is no question in my mind that this was my ancestor's land. They used to hunt and fish the same way it had been done for hundreds of years. We didn't have any maps or Bureau of Land Management, or anything like that. People just knew who belonged to what land," page 384, Senate Hearing, 90th Congress: Alaska Native Land Claims. Hearings before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, United States Senate, Ninetieth Congress, second session on S2906, A Bill to Authorize the Secretary of the Interior to Grant Certain Land to Alaska Natives, Settle Alaska Native Land Claims and for Other Purposes, and S1964, S2690 and S2020, Related Bills. February 8,9, and 10, 1969. https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CHRG-90shrg92002p1. And from page 386,

Richard Frank: “It has taken 84 years for us to sit down across the table from each other and talk about land claims. In the old days, and even today, a lot of the old people cannot understand what it is about. We know that this is our father’s land. We know that for our children to be part of the new America we have to live in villages or in the city for them to go to school. But that doesn’t mean that we have forgotten about our land …. We have a right to our ancient land.”

72. Lael Morgan, *And the Land Provides: Alaska Natives in a Year of Transition* (Doubleday, 1974).
73. It is important to note the role of Felix Cohen, a brilliant lawyer who served in the Interior Department during this period and went on to write the *Handbook of Federal Indian Law*. Of his many contributions was the distinction he drew between “wardship” and “trusteeship” as it relates to Native rights. Cohen argued the government relationship with Indigenous Peoples was more akin to trusteeship because of the “inherent rights of self government.” This was an historically early and significant shift toward “self determination.” Haycox, “Felix Cohen,” 148.
74. This point was emphasized by David Case in his presentation at the Alaska Historical Society Critical Issues Lecture Series: “Alaska Native Sovereignty,” October 16, 2023. https://alaskahistoricalsociety.org/lecture-and-discussion-series/.

Research Article

Breaking New Trail? First Nations and Municipal Government Cooperation in Rural Yukon

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Abstract: Rural communities in the Yukon tend to be very small, most with fewer than 1,000 people, with mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Although small, these communities face economic, social, and environmental issues similar to larger centres. These problems are complex and require a collective response from multiple governments or organizations. This research project explored the factors of inter-organizational collaboration and examined the status of cooperation between Self-Governing First Nations (SGFNs) and municipalities in rural Yukon in order to understand the factors that strengthen collaborative processes and any barriers to these processes. The project involved interviews with six key informants who are, or were, directly involved with a municipality, territorial government, or an SGFN. The research found that while most SGFNs and municipalities engage with each other, the trend is towards minimal cooperation, although relationships are improving slowly. All respondents agreed that SGFNs and municipalities in rural Yukon should collaborate more, for reasons including the need to make the best use of resources and social justice such as reconciliation. Frequently cited barriers to collaboration include a lack of human resource capacity and staff turnover. Other barriers are community histories and Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships. The enabling factor of common understanding has some unique features in the Yukon. The region is a complex myriad of jurisdictions—territorial, First Nations, and municipal governments—with conflicting, competing, and separate mandates. However, the informants felt that a common understanding for First Nations and municipalities should be working together to benefit their entire communities.

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Introduction

Yukon communities present an interesting opportunity for research that explores inter-organizational collaboration between different orders of governments in small, rural communities, specifically self-governing First Nations and municipalities. Rural communities in the Yukon tend to be very small, with most having populations fewer than 1,000 people, and mixed populations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Although small, these communities face similar economic, social, and environmental issues as do larger centres. These complex problems require a collective response with collaboration between more than one level of government or group. Therefore, a collaborative ecosystem is a critical component before beginning any community development process.

Creating a collaborative ecosystem in rural Yukon communities is complicated by Canada's colonial history with Indigenous Peoples and the socio-political development of the Yukon. Given the socio-political evolution of the Yukon, First Nations and municipal collaborations are still an emerging concept. Community members and government institutions, such as self-governing First Nations (SGFNs) and municipalities, struggle with the issues associated with the inequalities and trauma of colonialism. However, this tension creates both a barrier and an opportunity for reconciliation.

Since the dominant government actors in several rural Yukon communities are SGFNs and municipalities, the relationship between these two actors is key to community collaboration. Due to their shared geographical community space, rural Yukon communities have the potential to be at the forefront of intergovernmental collaboration between First Nations and municipal governments in Canada.

The purpose of this research study was to conduct an environmental scan of collaboration between SGFNs and municipalities in rural Yukon.[1] It explored the factors of inter-organizational collaboration and examined the status of cooperation between Self-Governing First Nations (SGFNs) and municipalities in rural Yukon in order to understand the factors that strengthen collaborative processes and any barriers to these processes. The study sought to understand whether the past poses too significant a barrier for collaboration between First Nations and municipal governments—or, alternatively, whether the desire to work together and co-create their futures for the betterment of their respective communities provides the impetus for grassroots reconciliation.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six key informants who are, or had been, directly involved with a municipality, territorial government, or an SGFN. Several themes emerged from the interviews: the state of collaboration, motivations, barriers, Yukon's socio-political evolution, leadership, and trust and relationship building. The informants agreed that self-governing First Nations and municipal government collaboration is mostly moving in the right direction in the Yukon, albeit slowly. However, the speed, quality, and degree of collaborations range from minimal to very collaborative.

The research also explored the starting conditions for collaboration, six enabling factors, and the role of historical tensions and conflict between Indigenous Peoples and settlers to the territory.

Researcher Positionality

I am a non-Indigenous person educated by Western-centric institutions and raised outside the Yukon. Since arriving in the Yukon in the fall of 2008, I have lived in the rural community of Teslin. My first position in the community was working in the executive office at Teslin Tlingit Council (TTC), an SGFN. In 2011, I moved to the Teslin campus of Yukon College, now Yukon University. In 2012, I was elected to the Village of Teslin (VOT) municipal council, and in 2018 I was elected as mayor, and was acclaimed for a third term in 2024. VOT and TTC have a long-standing collaborative relationship aimed at the betterment of the community as a whole. This remarkable relationship is the inspiration for my interest in inter-organizational collaboration between municipalities and First Nations governments in the Yukon.[2]

Background: Rural Yukon Community Context

With a population of over 46,500, the Yukon has a low population density but a striking urban–rural divide. The capital city of Whitehorse, where over three-quarters of the population resides, dominates the territory (Coates & Graham, 2015; Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 2024). The remaining population is spread over fifteen small communities, with the second and third largest communities—Dawson City, with 2,391 people, and Watson Lake, with 1,513 people—dwarfed by the capital city. The rest, except Haines Junction, have populations under 1,000 people (Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

Outside of Whitehorse, local governance is a mix of SGFNs and municipalities. Eleven of the fourteen First Nations in the Yukon are self-governing, with nine in rural Yukon. Of the eight municipalities in the Yukon, seven are in rural communities, with all but two sharing at least some geographical space with an SGFN.

Table 1 depicts the total population of rural Yukon communities with a percentage of the Indigenous population for each community.

Table 1. Rural Yukon Communities—Total Population and Percentage Indigenous Population

Rural Community	Total Population	Indigenous Population
Pelly Crossing	381	88%
Old Crow	222	89%
Ross River	403	80%
Burwash Landing	120	61%
Carmacks	602	64%
Teslin	510	63%
Mayo	466	56%
Carcross	495	63%
Watson Lake	1,513	42%
Beaver Creek	111	44%
Haines Junction	1,055	35%
Other	80	32%
Tagish	396	19%
Dawson City	2,391	19%
Destruction Bay	66	18%
Faro	454	23%
Highlighted: Communities with both an SGFN and municipality		

Source: Yukon Bureau of Statistics. (2024). *Population report second quarter 2024*. Government of Yukon. https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/fin-population-report-q2-2024.pdf

The municipalities of Faro and Watson Lake do not share space with an SGFN. Liard First Nation is located in Watson Lake but is not self-governing. Faro is adjacent to Ross River, home to the Ross River Dena Council, which is also not self-governing.

The Indigenous population of Whitehorse is 14% of the city's total population, and it is 21% of the territorial population. SGFNs receive substantially more funding than municipalities, but they also have much larger mandates and more programs and services than municipal governments.[3] They are also considered a government on level with the federal and territorial governments. SGFNs play a significant role in the politics of the Yukon, and this is particularly noticeable in most rural communities. As a result, they exert more influence and power than municipalities.

The Yukon's eight municipalities cover only 0.2% of the territory's landmass, but over 80% of the population resides within a municipality. Municipalities are established under the Yukon Municipal Act, and therefore are a subset of the territorial government, and focus on delivering critical core municipal infrastructure services such as water, wastewater, recreation, and solid waste.

While there is a strong government presence in rural Yukon, the governance structure is complex. Although rural communities have small populations, the territorial, First Nations, and municipal governments all have a presence with different jurisdictions, resources, and infrastructure (Crawford, 2021). However, the concept of working together is embedded in the 1993 Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA)—signed by the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Government of Canada, and the Government of Yukon—and in each SGFN's individual Final Agreement (FA). Clause 24.7 of the UFA contemplates the creation of regional or district structures that allow for common administrative or planning structures by Yukon First Nations, the federal government, the territorial government, and municipalities (Council for Yukon First Nations, Yukon Territory, and Canada, 1993, p. 264). Although this clause exists, no order of government has taken advantage of it yet.

There are also higher-level reasons for working together. Of the ninety-four recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action released in 2015, five refer directly to municipal government, recognizing its importance in successful reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015; Wuttunee, 2018).

Given the small size of Yukon rural communities, their strong local governance presence, potential legal mechanisms, and the nature of complex problems, there appears to be a significant impetus for rural SGFNs and municipalities to collaborate. All signs point to the need and opportunities to work together.

However, Canada's colonization of Indigenous Peoples has left deep scars and severely damaged relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Furthermore, parallel, yet separate, self-government initiatives in the Yukon, one by the First Nations and one by the non-Indigenous settlers in the latter part of the twentieth century, may have also created additional tension, which continues to this day and presents a barrier to creating trust (Sabin, 2014).

First Nations and Municipal Government Collaboration in Canada

Research into First Nations and municipal government collaboration in Canada is an emerging field. Alcantara and Nelles (2016) claim that most studies focus on conflicts and adversarial relations between First Nations and federal, territorial, and provincial governments. In contrast, most of the information about

progressive local partnerships, which Alcantara and Nelles characterize as quiet and "highly productive and beneficial" (p. 4), is buried in grey literature sources such as government reports and intergovernmental agreements. A report for the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) (Apolonio, 2008) concurs, stating that while community non-Indigenous and Indigenous governments see the value of coming together to deal with common concerns for the benefit of the broader community, the research on these collaborations is sparse.

The UBCM report examined local and First Nations government partnerships in British Columbia. It concluded that the province has many notable local relationships in the areas of collaborative governance, land and resource co-management, and economic development (Apolonio, 2008). The report also cited seven enabling factors for successful Indigenous government–local government collaborations, including triggers, environment, purpose, principles, structures and process, capacity, and evaluation (Apolonio, 2008). Triggers include third-party processes, such as a treaty, and Wuttunnee (2018) also points to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as potential trigger.

Epp (2016) suggests that Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in rural communities in Canada need to work together to renew their ageing infrastructure. He draws attention to their similarities. They both have common characteristics of being in a place and a landscape, with an increasing feeling of distance from decision makers in far-off urban centres. However, Epp advises that to work together, they must also bridge the historical divides, including mutual isolation, racism, and rivalry for land and resources.

Principles and values play a vital role in guiding partners. While specific values vary depending on the community, the UBCM report points to trust, commitment, consensus, and recognition of Indigenous Traditional Territory and cultural sites, as principles that stood out across the board. Trust and commitment are also significant factors. In this context, trust takes two forms. Trust building is a crucial enabling factor that is usually the first step in a successful partnership. Trust is also an outcome of successful collaboration. A genuine and robust commitment to the partnership, particularly by leadership, is cited as an essential principle (Apolonio, 2008).

Informal and formal structures and processes are essential for collaboration. For example, Morris (2008) identifies board and committee meetings as important formal structures, while task groups, sub-groups, ad-hoc groups, and workshops provide more informal structures.

Alcantara and Nelles (2016) evaluated First Nations and municipal cooperation using case studies of four communities in Canada, including two from the Yukon. They used a relationship-type matrix with two dimensions—

engagement and intensity, classified as either high or low to categorize their findings. The authors conclude that neither is better than the other. Instead, individual communities need to decide when and how to cooperate and whether their nature is high or low engagement and intensity. The authors recommend that collaboration should only be used as a strategic tool for specific issues and, for some communities, no cooperation is an acceptable strategy. This conclusion also connects to Huxham and Vangen's (2000a; 2005) warning that organizations should not engage in collaboration unless they must.

Wuttunee (2018) states that leadership is critical for First Nations and municipal collaboration, even when players change through election cycles. She adds that the relationship building and consensus building process needs time and attention, but building trust-based relationships through collaboration is a significant outcome and key to building a foundation for long-term sustainable success.

It is important to underscore the potential need for communities to address historical conflict between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. The 2018 National Indigenous–Local Government Partnership Forum found that the barriers to cooperation include historical issues that inhibit trust and reconciliation, including the lack of acknowledgement of past wrongs and colonial history. This work extends to understanding the history and cultures of the partner communities (Alderhill Planning Inc, 2018). Gray and Wood (2018) also warn that profound value differences pose complex challenges for Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaboration.

The process of addressing historical community conflict and Canada's colonial legacy with Indigenous Peoples may also take time. While conducting a participatory research project in community economic development in rural British Columbia, Markey et al. (2005) found that one of the communities realized that leaving unresolved historical conflict between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people jeopardized the community planning process and presented a critical barrier. As a result, the intervention included a series of well-managed community workshops to promote dialogue to address the conflict. In this case, conflict resolution was a critical step to starting collaboration. Given the socio-political evolution of the Yukon and Canada, it may also be a necessary step for some Yukon communities.

Methodology

This qualitative research study involved data collection through semi-structured interviews with six key informants with past or current experience in an SGFN, a rural municipality, or within the Government of Yukon's Department of Community Services. The selection criteria focused on current or former senior employees or political representatives with experience across different organizations.[4] All six informants had a broad range of experience in multiple positions across different organizations that gave them a "landscape" view of First Nations and municipal relations: two with First Nations elected official experience; three with municipal elected official experience; three with First Nations senior administration experience; two with municipal senior administration experience; one with territorial elected official experience; and one with territorial senior administration experience. Three of the informants identified as Indigenous.[5]

A conceptual framework based on factors relevant to the Yukon was designed to guide inquiries with informants (see Figure 1).

Conceptual Framework: Factors of Inter-Organizational Collaboration		
Starting Conditions	Process	Outcomes
Context Motivation & purpose	Structure Capacity & resources Principles & values Information & evidence Evaluation	Trust Sustained partnerships Problem-solving Capacity learnings Achievement of goals
←	Enabling Factors	→
	Facilitative Leadership Relationship-Building Trust-Building Commitment Common Understanding Conflict Resolution	

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Factors of Inter-Organizational Collaboration
Source: Author, based on the antecedent-process-outcome model from Thompson and Perry (2006). The factors draw heavily on the work of Morris (2008) and Apolonio (2008) and may be inspired by elements in other works.

Results

This study aimed to understand the factors that support inter-organizational collaboration or pose potential barriers, informed by lived experience and shaped by context. The specific research questions of the study were as follows: What are the critical enabling factors for inter-organizational collaboration, and what additional factors may need to be considered for relationships between First Nations and municipal governments? What enabling factors or restrictive barriers contribute to the current collaborative environment for First Nations and municipal governments in rural Yukon? Several themes emerged from the interviews: The state of collaboration, motivations, barriers, Yukon's socio-political evolution, leadership, and trust and relationship building.[6]

State of Collaboration

The informants agreed that self-governing First Nations and municipal government collaboration is mostly moving in the right direction in the Yukon, albeit slowly. However, the speed, quality, and degree of collaboration range from minimal to very collaborative. There may be some superficial interest in some communities but no action by the municipality or First Nation for various reasons. As one of the informants stated, "Practice may differ from intention." In some communities, the collaboration may be more transactional and does not extend beyond service agreements or perfunctory joint council meetings and administrative meetings on minor operational issues. In some cases, the political meetings are more about updating the First Nation on specific municipal initiatives and issues rather than a dialogue around shared concerns or community issues. Full collaborations on community planning and common issues of concern exist but are rare. The reasons for this spectrum of collaboration are varied, although individual personalities as both a catalyst and a barrier came up frequently.

Several informants observed that rural Yukon communities with both a First Nation government and a municipality have an advantage, regardless of the state of the relationship. Municipalities provide value to First Nations by alleviating some obligations in providing drinking water, fire protection, sewer, and solid waste services. Without a municipality, these responsibilities are left to the First Nation governments to deliver themselves or advocate for their delivery by the Yukon Government, which manages services from afar. One informant also pointed out that First Nation governments performing municipal services do not receive compensation for these services from either the territorial or federal governments. In other words, even if the working relationship between the governments is minimal, in communities with a municipality that focuses on providing essential

municipal services, First Nation governments can concentrate energy and capacity on other priorities, many of which are complex problems.

Several informants noted that strong working relationships between First Nation governments and municipalities have a tremendous positive impact on Yukon's small rural communities, even more so when it is a deep relationship involving common areas of concern or joint community planning.

The interviews made it clear that all communities are in unique places for different reasons. All the informants agreed that it is vital for municipalities and SGFNs in these small communities to work together, and although there are signs of improvement, it is not enough. However, wide variations in the history, composition, strengths, and degree of trust and interest in collaboration in each community mean that every community is in a different place and, therefore, requires a different starting point. All informants recognized that collaboration is complex and that there is no uniform approach for this work, especially for First Nations and municipal collaboration in the context of reconciliation. As one informant, who views First Nations and municipal collaboration as an essential part of reconciliation, stated, "I think every community is different. Everyone is different. Everyone is in a different place. And, yeah, there's no roadmap for this work."

Motivations

As expected, the motivations for collaborating are varied. While the informants provided some concrete examples of why municipalities and First Nation governments work together, many of the reasons were more aspirational. The motivations ranged from pragmatic reasons such as efficient use of resources and leveraging better funding opportunities to addressing significant external threats such as climate change, the pandemic, and social issues such as the opioid crisis. Some informants suggested a more principled approach by stating that collaboration is integral to reconciliation. Along the same lines, some informants pointed out that the intention of the land claims process was about all Yukoners working together for a better future. Almost all informants said that the primary motivation for collaboration is, or should be, to serve the community better and benefit all community members. The overall feeling is that small Yukon communities are always better off when First Nation and municipal governments work together, and the outcomes are even better when the central motivation is a shared sense of community.

There are some specific advantages for each organization. One of the advantages for small rural municipalities is that SGFNs have significantly more influence and power in territorial politics and policy development. SGFNs provide unique value by giving rural Yukon a more prominent voice on the territorial and national stage. As one informant stated, "In a lot of ways, there's de facto representation from First Nations for the rural perspective." Furthermore, First Nation governments are likely the most significant economic driver in rural communities and the largest taxpayer and consumer of municipal services. Therefore, partnering with First Nation governments is usually in the municipalities' best interests.

For First Nation governments, in addition to the benefits of municipalities taking on the responsibilities of essential municipal services, there is an advantage to building up the broader community, which creates prosperity for their citizens. More than one informant stated that collaboration creates opportunities for the entire community.

Several informants identified the efficient use of resources as a fundamental reason for collaboration. Community collaboration helps municipalities and First Nation governments avoid working at cross-purposes on programming and projects, which wastes time and energy. Without cooperation, communities may expend considerable effort and not achieve their goals. Communities that collaborate make better use of resources and can achieve their goals quicker. As one informant stated, "When everybody's working in that direction, you see movement a lot faster."

From another pragmatic perspective, several informants pointed to First Nations and rural municipalities' limited human resources and vast responsibilities.With small populations in rural Yukon, the labour pool is limited, especially in relation to the diversity and range of skills need for governments. One informant pointed out that over twenty municipal or First Nation governments—counting SGFNs and Indian Act First Nations—are in rural Yukon, plus Yukon Government offices in most communities. All orders of government frequently cite capacity issues related to recruiting and retaining staff, coupled with overwhelming responsibilities.

Several informants identified the role that external events such as the pandemic, the opioid crisis, or climate change have, or could potentially have, in creating the starting conditions for collaboration. In particular, the pandemic provided the spark for several municipalities and First Nation governments to work together. For example, several municipalities and First Nation governments released joint travel advisories or worked on local, joint interagency groups to support their respective communities. The Yukon Government also played a role by reaching out to chiefs and mayors to dialogue with community leaders about the territorial government's response and understand the rural community perspective.

The pandemic also exacerbated a growing opioid crisis that one informant pointed to as a potential and urgent catalyst for municipalities and First

Nation governments to work together for the well-being of their communities. Climate change is another opportunity for collaboration since it directly impacts infrastructure that the First Nations and municipalities own, not to mention community assets. These issues on their own, being dealt with by a single order of government, are overwhelming. However, by taking a more collaborative approach to these issues from a territorial and community perspective, there is more potential for solutions.

Finally, several informants cited higher-level reasons for collaboration, including land claims and reconciliation. Reconciliation provides an opportunity for both First Nation governments and municipalities to understand different world views and perspectives, address the past, strengthen the social fabric in their communities, and create social capital, which is commonly seen as a key ingredient to relationship building.

Barriers

The list of barriers that informants identified was significantly longer than the motivations for collaboration. Barriers included the different orders of governments, an unclear understanding of mandates and agreements, capacity and turnover issues, the inertia of systems, and racism. While all the participants felt that collaboration is a worthwhile initiative, they recognized that the barriers pose significant impediments.

There were some potential high-level barriers associated with the development of SGFNs. Several informants speculated that SGFNs may be reluctant to collaborate with municipalities since they are still trying to establish their sovereignty and gain recognition from other orders of government. After many years of fighting for self-determination and recognition as a nation, SGFNs may not want to risk being viewed on the same level as a municipality, which is considered a subordinate to the Yukon Government. Furthermore, since they are relatively newly established governments in the Western style of governing, SGFNs may also be preoccupied with organizational development while simultaneously dealing with complex nation-building issues.

The different mandates of each government may also pose another potential barrier. The primary goals of SGFNs are nation-building and establishing sovereignty, with responsibilities on par with those of the Yukon and Canadian governments, which are their primary partners. On the other hand, municipalities are subordinate to the territorial government and deliver typical municipal services—water, wastewater, solid waste, and recreation—under a much more defined mandate. While municipal services are an essential part of community building, the goals and aims of municipalities are very different from SGFNs, which are involved in issues specific to their members or more complex issues, many of which fall outside the scope of direct services that municipalities deliver. Therefore, municipalities may not be viewed as community partners on other community-wide problems, such as health and social issues and community well-being. Sometimes, neither organization can see where their goals intersect if they do not explore issues that may be perceived as being outside their respective mandates.

Part of the challenge may also be an unclear understanding of the mandates of the respective governments. The inability to see commonality is sometimes a result of a lack or minimal knowledge of each other's organizations, respective mandates, and the Final Agreements. Some informants stated that First Nation governments understand municipal mandates and that the municipality's role is appreciated but viewed with limitations. It is sometimes narrowly viewed in the context of what is visible to the community—recreation and public works—forgetting that the municipality can also advocate to other orders of government in areas where they do not offer services, such as those related to community well-being.

Municipal employees, especially those new to the territory, may also not fully understand self-governing First Nations and their mandates and responsibilities, not to mention the intent of the agreements. Several informants mentioned that they were less concerned about staff knowing the text of the agreements than understanding the larger context of the agreements' history and the narratives behind the road to self-government.

Since First Nation governments are larger, and with broader responsibilities, some First Nations and municipal meetings may feel like more of an update on municipal services to the First Nation government with minimal dialogue or seeking common ground on broader community concerns. Furthermore, one informant offered that the long, hard-fought land claims process may have created an adversarial mindset: "I think thirty years of negotiating agreements has created a 'one side of the table' and the 'other side of the table.'" This mindset does not lend itself to collaboration.

From a practical perspective, staff capacity was viewed as a barrier in almost all the interviews. As rural organizations, both First Nation and municipal governments carry huge responsibilities in relation to their scale, with significant staff workloads, a shallow workforce pool, and constant staff turnover creating challenges for sustained collaboration. In particular, Whitehorse and the Yukon Government serve as magnets for career-minded professionals. The turnover is so acute that one former Chief said the council decided to turn it into a benefit for intergovernmental relations, stating, "Let's make their experience a good experience. Let's train people because if we're going to be the grooming ground, we want people who are going into YG to be aware of First Nation issues and to actually have some cultural understanding."

However, the high turnover also means that many highly-skilled workers shoulder huge workloads, a situation that does not lend itself well to staff investing time into collaboration. As one informant from a municipality stated, "We just don't have the capacity to find ways to work collaboratively because we're just too busy doing what it is we need to do on a daily basis." Doing what has always been done is easier and more expedient, even if it is not necessarily more practical.

Several informants cited community division and racism as a barrier. Even though the Yukon appears very progressive with the modern land claims agreement and a long history of settler and Indigenous people interactions, there remains division in some communities. As one informant stated, "Because that relationship is not there in every community, and the challenges that I've seen are from long-standing animosities, division, between First Nation communities and the settler community." Related to these tensions is racism, which cropped up differently across several interviews. One informant described the subtleness of racism as:

> It's also this piece of an underlying tension of racism that is palpable in some communities. You can actually feel it, and there's others that have kind of seen the light that it's better to work together than not. And it's just little pockets throughout the territory.

There was also a recognition of institutional racism embedded in Western-style institutions across Canada, including municipalities and the territorial government, which has created deep-seated prejudices that most people within those institutions are unaware of. As one informant stated, "One of the problems of systemic systems like that, or biases—deep-seated prejudice—is that you don't even notice them when they're happening." In some cases, SGFNs are not recognized as legitimate governments by some non-Indigenous people, and there is a general lack of recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Racism can also result from fear or trauma from a history of marginalization and discrimination, and Canada's colonialism and residential schools' legacy has created a deep-seated distrust of non-Indigenous people, which needs healing and reconciliation in accordance with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

In whatever form racism takes on and to what degree in each community, it takes time and energy away from other activities that contribute to collaboration. As one informant stated, "So, combating that racism, and the legacy of it, takes a lot of energy away that you could have otherwise put towards building better infrastructure or better policies." However, each informant felt racism needed to be addressed in one way or another.

Yukon's Socio-Political Evolution

The question about the Yukon's socio-political evolution is rooted in the parallel, or two solitudes, land claims process for First Nations, which led to self-government, and the federal government devolution process, which led to responsible government for the Yukon Government. The critical question is whether the tensions from parallel processes created a barrier to cooperation between First Nation governments and municipalities. The answer is that there are tensions. However, the parallel processes, particularly the land claims, have created a unique governance model that gives the Yukon an advantage when appropriately leveraged.

The question about the impact of these parallel processes caused all the informants to reflect a little more deeply on the underlying tensions in the Yukon. Not all informants had contemplated this factor beforehand, although several concluded that these processes created tension. One Indigenous informant was succinct in his appraisal of the difference in the processes, noting, "The Yukon government got their land claim for free when we had to pay twenty-five years of sacrifice and suffering and hard negotiations, just to get to where we are."

Another informant with municipal and First Nations experience pointed out that at the time of the land claims process, there was significant and very vocal opposition in some quarters of the settler population who felt that the land claims were impinging on the rights of settlers. This opposition was paternalistic with racist undertones, with the attitude that the land claims were "a nice treat to mollify" the Indigenous population. As a result, some did not take the process seriously, and the expectation was that self-government would fail. This attitude may have contributed to SGFNs struggling to achieve recognition from some in the territory.

However, the same informant pointed out that this opposition underestimated the "political endurance" of the Indigenous people who exhibited "patient capital" by taking a long-term view of the future. Due to this long-term view, First Nations persevered, weathering the many setbacks along the way. The informant acknowledged that the opposition to land claims represented old, outdated attitudes that are mostly fading, although other informants pointed out that old settler attitudes persist in some communities. These concepts came up in varying degrees in most of the interviews. However, most informants acknowledged that people are generally less aware of the history of land claims and devolution processes than in the past. Therefore, today's opposition may be more attributable to institutional racism or a lack of understanding of the governance landscape. The attitudes and tension exist, but most informants felt they are slowly starting to shift, although more work remains.

While there was a frank acknowledgement of past tensions, complex negotiations, and lingering negative attitudes by settlers towards the road to Indigenous self-determination, and by Indigenous people towards the devolution, almost all of the informants preferred to talk about the potential of the Final Agreements and a vision of "one Yukon." The agreements were frequently referenced as being for all Yukoners. In a region like the Yukon, composed of a large urban area and small communities dispersed across a wide geographical area, rural communities are much stronger working together than independently.

Although the informants were generally optimistic about the future, several informants also acknowledged that the Yukon's complicated and government-heavy structure leads to jurisdictional opaqueness and control struggles between the different orders of government. However, the agreements also help counteract top-down governance by forcing First Nations, territorial, and municipal governments to discuss issues and find solutions that benefit all parties. This is a work in progress, but almost all informants agreed that the Yukon is much better off with the land claim agreements, especially rural communities, since the SGFNs give rural Yukon a stronger voice in the territory.

One informant also pointed out that the settler population is currently more stable than the transient population of the past, which cycled with the boom and bust periods. They are more likely to stay, and this more permanent settler population bodes well for relationship-building and community-building.

None of the informants saw the Final Agreements as a barrier. Despite past and current challenges, several informants felt that they put Yukon well ahead of many other jurisdictions in collaboration and co-governance. However, several informants pointed out that the agreements are poorly understood in the municipal, territorial, and First Nations governments. They emphasized that the agreements need to be seen as a guidebook, and the focus should be on understanding the intent and narratives behind the road to self-government rather than a strict interpretation.

While the struggle for land claims and devolution were different processes, they were steps in the same direction and have resulted in a better governance model than in the past. While there is residual tension from these dual processes and jurisdictional struggles between the Yukon Government and First Nations governments, there are more decision-making powers in the Yukon than when a far-off federal government managed the region. Due to this autonomy, the Yukon also has a stronger voice at the federal level. Plenty of challenges are still inhibiting progress, including Western-style approaches to legislation, governance, and administration designed for much larger populations. However, the region has more autonomy in its direction than in the past. It has also created a unique governance model that provides the potential for collaboration between municipal and First Nation governments.

Leadership

Not surprisingly, all informants agreed that a facilitative leadership style at different levels is more conducive to collaboration. The First Nation or municipality bringing an authoritative style or attempting to be directive puts up walls between the governments, and thwarts attempts to understand different perspectives and build trust. It creates resistance and kills any creativity that a collaboration might create.

Facilitative leadership is often about the vision and inspiring people, not assuming or dictating the outcome. As one former Chief said, "I love getting people excited about the projects and doing all the stuff, but I also love finding people who are excited about doing the projects … you need to have people who are those operational wizards." For several informants, political leaders must provide vision, understand their role, create a team to complement their strengths, build capacity, and give administrative leaders and staff space to develop solutions.

Equally important, facilitative leadership at the administrative level is also required to execute the vision and find solutions. More than one political informant acknowledged that the best solutions come from the administrative professionals. Listening and understanding are key attributes of administrative leadership as well.

Those with a collaborative mindset in a First Nations and municipal context tend to have the welfare of their community in mind and a forward-looking approach. As one informant stated, "You know, the ones who seem to make it work are ones that have people who are, you know, friendly, amiable, have concerns about the community."

In some communities, one or two people can make a difference. While the political people must be on board, the "key people that help or hinder" collaboration can be at the administrative or political levels. In the Yukon, because of its small size, the role of personality and attitude, both as a barrier and catalyst, came up in almost all the interviews. As one informant noted, "It comes down to personalities, who's at the table. Who wants to build that collaboration?" Another informant stated, "In most of the communities of the Yukon, we're talking small populations. So, at that level, one individual can make a difference—both ways—can make a positive difference, can make a negative difference." There are probably as many collaborations occurring in the Yukon due to strong personalities at different levels as there are not happening because of personalities who are not interested nor see the benefit.

Trust and Relationship Building

All informants stated that trust and relationship building are essential for collaboration. In the Yukon, trust and relationship-building are vital between First Nation governments and municipalities due to the colonial history of Canada and the treatment of Indigenous people, the socio-political development of the Yukon, and the specific histories of communities.

Several informants indicated the importance of formal and informal trust building. Within small communities, informal interpersonal relationships tend to be very important. Attending social or community events, engaging in recreational activities, or simply visiting people can provide opportunities to build relationships and social capital in the community, which are essential for building trust that sees results in formal meetings. In a small community, it is essential to invest time into the community to make these connections and build relationships since this is an indicator of interest in being part of the community.

One informant pointed out that there is also a different dynamic for elected officials and senior administrators. Elected officials generally come from the community, so many informal relationships already exist. However, senior administrators may come from elsewhere and may need to build informal relationships in addition to the formal relationships that are part of the job. Strong informal relationships will move initiatives along quicker, whether due to comfort level or the ability to have sidebar conversations.

Relationships benefit when non-Indigenous people show interest in Indigenous culture and ways of doing and knowing. One Indigenous informant explained that Indigenous people like sharing some of their culture, but the interest from non-Indigenous people has to be genuine and in the spirit of understanding different perspectives and ways of doing. It is also important to know when the invitation to share is open or not—some things are public, others are not. Building trust with Indigenous people and their governments also needs to be built with extra care. Colonial governments and settlers have mishandled trust in the past. Therefore, it may take a long time for non-Indigenous people to build trust with Indigenous people, and trust can be harder to earn and easier to lose than in other environments.

One Indigenous informant also acknowledged that in his community, many non-Indigenous people have contributed to community building by organizing events for the whole community. It may have been just a movie or game night, but it was a part of the overall process. Exchanging and understanding different world views and simply getting comfortable with each other is an integral part of the process of building cross-cultural trust, and it frequently starts on a personal level.

While informal relationships are important, and almost all informants agreed that this is where the best collaborations start in small communities, at some point, these relationships need to progress into more institutionalized and formalized arrangements. A land acknowledgement is a common practice now, and co-organized annual events such as community clean-ups, BBQs, or Canada Day events occur in many communities and are highly visual events that provide community-building and relationship-building opportunities.

Collaboration can be formalized in other ways, such as joint meetings with agendas where both organizations provide updates or memorandums of understanding to work together, followed by agreements for specific issues or projects. Collaboration capacity and trust can be built through more formal community planning processes that build on smaller planning processes. Several informants discussed the importance of an external event or small project as a starting condition for more formal collaboration. Even the smallest community project can be crucial to building trust that expands into larger projects. One informant suggested that municipalities work towards understanding their community from an Indigenous viewpoint by including Indigenous perspectives in their projects and bylaws. To do this, the informant suggested a walk around town to understand the community and heritage buildings from an Indigenous perspective: "A couple of years ago, we did a big sort of a community tour where we walked in and looked at all the colonial buildings from the past, and reinterpreted them from a First Nation perspective, and that was really super interesting."

A couple of informants pointed to the cross-pollination of organizations as a valuable relationship-building tool. Within the small populations of rural Yukon, people may work for both the First Nation and municipality during their careers, sit on respective councils at different times, or work in one administration of one and sit on the council of the other. It is a bit of a conflict-of-interest quagmire. However, this cross-pollination allows people to understand the value that the respective governments provide to their communities and the different perspectives of each organization. A lot of movement between the organizations is a benefit when it happens.

For several informants, the most important activity for building trust and relationships is dialogue. As one informant stated:

> To me, the only way to make that happen—the trust and/or respect—is to continue to have dialogue, have discussions. You know, be respectful of each other and as you have those discussions and come to an understanding of where each other is at. I mean, you may disagree on some things, but at least you can understand where each other's at and have the ability to negotiate at some level. I think that's where the trust comes in.

As another informant stated, "It's an effort, right? Maybe they don't want to put in the effort, you know." The same informant stressed the importance of champions to overcome inertia.

These champions can be at the political or administrative leadership level, and they are essential to starting the dialogue, building relationships, and committing to the long-term vision as the collaboration inevitably hits bumps and setbacks. Champions are also critical to ensuring that a collaboration withstands the inevitable changes to personnel and political leadership—the more champions and the more success, the more resilient the collaboration over the long term. Without champions or resiliency, it is simply too easy to do nothing.

Successful collaboration is also about having the right people in place and some intention. As one informant stated about a successful collaboration they participated in, "Where our journey has gone has been based on having the right people, in the right place, at the right time to make things happen." There has to be some will to collaborate and have the people at several levels willing to engage and actively participate.

Discussion

While all the informants acknowledged, in theory, the benefits of collaboration for the small communities in rural Yukon, they also identified a long list of reasons why SGFNs and municipalities do not do it more. There are many reasons why it is not happening as often as it should, many of which mirror what has been found in other research, but some specific to the Yukon. This analysis reviewed the starting conditions shown in the conceptual framework in Figure 1. It then compared the findings of this research study to the six enabling factors identified in the collaborative framework, which support collaboration engagement from beginning to end: Facilitative leadership, relationship building, trust building, commitment, common understanding, and conflict resolution.

Starting Conditions

The conceptual framework includes the following two starting conditions—context plus motivation and purpose. All informants identified sharing scarce resources, specifically human resource capacity, as an important reason for collaboration. Other pragmatic reasons also included combining efforts to avoid duplication and wasting time and energy or increasing chances to attract funding for joint public projects or infrastructure. Working together also allows communities to reach their goals together quicker.

Several informants identified wicked problems such as climate change, pandemic response, and the opioid crisis, problems identified by other researchers as ideal collaboration opportunities (Gray & Purdy, 2018; Huxham & Vangen, 1996). In the Yukon context, reconciliation arose several times, as did the pandemic as an impetus for better collaboration. Although these are worthy projects for cooperation, most informants trended towards pragmatic reasons such as efficient use of scarce resources such as staffing.

Through the interviews, the concept of community, as motivation and purpose for Yukon communities to work together, arose consistently (see also Apolonio, 2008). Several informants pointed out that when collaboration happens to its fullest, the SGFN and municipality have a common understanding of community and commitment to its well-being. There may be differences in the organizational authorities, values, and mandates. However, there is a recognition that their interests intersect on specific issues that are important to the community as a whole. Common understanding and commitment are important enabling factors found in other research (Apolonio 2008; Morris 2008), but the shared concept of community and commitment to it is vital to successful collaboration in rural Yukon.

The UFA and the subsequent Final Agreements and Self-Governing Agreements are unique to the Yukon as a context factor under starting conditions. The UBCM report identified treaties as external third-party triggers for collaboration (Apolonio 2008). To a degree, these agreements create a unique governance structure for the Yukon that enables collaboration by forcing different orders of government to resolve issues. However, this structure also creates a complex governance structure with overlapping mandates with uncertainty on how all levels of government should work together, creating a barrier at times.

The role of the UFA in the context of SGFN and municipal collaboration is interesting to discern. Many practitioners do not necessarily refer to the agreements in their everyday operations. However, it is a crucial tone-setting document for some political representatives since the agreement's vision is about all Yukoners working together. However, several informants acknowledged that the lengthy negotiation of the agreements also created an adversarial environment that needs to shift to a more collaborative mindset. Above all, very few people in all orders of government truly understand the intent of the agreements. Finally, municipalities are only mentioned in one clause.

So, what is the role of the agreements? It is unlikely the agreements trigger relationships between SGFNs and municipalities independent of other factors, but they are a context factor unique to the Yukon. They give elected officials something to use when articulating a vision for their community. At other times, they are used to force parties to the table to resolve a specific issue and potentially spark a partnership. All informants felt the agreements were an essential part of

intergovernmental cooperation, although the documents do not overtly address First Nations and municipal relationships.

The same could be said about reconciliation with Indigenous people, which some informants cited as an essential principle for collaboration. While it may not be enough motivation to start a relationship independently, and partnerships may be created for other, more pragmatic reasons, reconciliation is an enabling factor that falls under conflict resolution in the conceptual framework (Wuttunee, 2018; Apolonio, 2008).

Facilitative Leadership

All informants agreed that facilitative leadership is an enabling factor that sets a favourable environment for collaboration. In the context of the Yukon, several informants added the trait of community-oriented leadership—that First Nations and municipal leaders see community building as important. While not mentioned specifically, this has also been alluded to by Apolonio (2008) and Wuttunee (2018).

Informants also saw the need for leadership commitment at both the political and operational levels (see also Morris, 2008). They also agreed that the goal is different for each level—political leadership is about vision and inspiration, and administrative leadership is about finding solutions and execution. However, they are both essential. The one slight difference is that several informants saw the need for champions at both levels.

Political leadership is crucial in First Nations and non-First Nations relationships because it signals trust or a willingness to start building trust if it does not exist. In the Yukon, the administrative champions sometimes initiate a collaboration, which may be unique to Yukon communities due to the small populations that enable more informal relationships, allowing for more accessible communication between the political and administrative spheres. However, having political leadership on board is still critical.

The leadership approach is essential. However, the right approach is particularly vital in relationships with First Nations governments, where historically, other orders of government have dictated terms or ways of doing things. A collaborative mindset by being open to listening and understanding are critical attributes for First Nations and municipal leaders since the organizations have different values and come from very different contexts, powers, and perspectives.

One of the most interesting aspects of the interviews was the role of personalities in leadership and relationship building. In Yukon's small communities, personalities in leadership play an outsized role in helping or hindering collaboration between SGFNs and municipalities.

Due to this reliance on personalities, the sustainability of collaboration in some communities is questionable and susceptible to election cycles and staff turnover. However, one informant noted that continued success results from the development over time of a solid stable of council and administration champions in both organizations. These champions built resiliency into the collaboration that withstood the inevitable leadership changes. This informant's observation concurs with Wuttunnee's (2018) view about the importance of leadership, the process of relationship building, and building trust-based relationships as the key foundational pieces for withstanding leadership cycles. Without champions or resiliency, it is simply too easy to do nothing or let the relationship slip into collaborative inertia (see Huxham & Vangen, 2000a; Huxham & Vangen, 2005) and do things the same way as in the past.

Trust and Relationship Building

Trust in the Yukon context frequently begins with discussing Indigenous and non-Indigenous historical relationships at the national, territorial, and community levels. The situation is different for each community, but local leadership must address this history in their communities as part of trust and relationship building.

What was striking about the informant interviews was the importance of informal relationship-building in the Yukon. Most collaboration research focuses on the importance of formal and informal structures for relationship building. In the Yukon, developing casual relationships through community activities and at a personal level plays a prominent role. Much more gets done through informal channels than formal channels. Elected officials tend to be an advantage since they generally come from the community and have long-standing relationships. Senior administrators need to intentionally develop these relationships within the community, more so than in other larger centres.

The socio-political evolution of the territory provides additional barriers in the Yukon. These are inter-organizational barriers to trust and relationship building that need to be overcome by community leaders, who may not have directly been involved in these histories. Several informants identified community tensions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as a barrier to cooperation. Some of this relates to racism and residual tension from the Yukon's socio-political evolution. For example, some informants suggested that SGFNs still need to be acknowledged as legitimate governments in some communities.

If Yukon community leaders are interested in collaboration, addressing historical divides and racism in their communities is a part of trust and relationship building. Community leaders could adopt the high-level recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a starting point for working through

local issues. Or, they could begin the process of reconciliation with smaller steps. This means building enough trust to disagree but continuing to communicate to begin problem-solving. Building trust is a long journey, regardless of the strategy.

With the unique history of the Yukon and its small mixed populations, leaders must pay special attention to the national, territorial, and local historical relationships between First Nations and non-First Nations when building a collaboration. Each community's history is different and requires those interested in collaboration to be open to exchanging world views and perspectives and taking genuine steps toward reconciliation. Most importantly, those interested in collaborating need to come into it with the mindset of working together for mutual benefit. While this seems obvious, it carries unique connotations in the Yukon due to a long history of adversarial negotiations between First Nations and other orders of government and residual bitterness over the road to responsible government for the Yukon Government.

Commitment

Although there were no direct research questions on commitment, the theme of commitment came out when discussing barriers with informants. As stated previously, commitment from leadership is crucial and plays an integral role in the initial commitment to collaboration. However, commitment also means the degree to which one is willing to commit and the ability to devote time and resources.

At a minimum, most communities host joint council meetings and operational meetings on specific issues as they arise. So, the intent is to work together, but the desire and ability to commit significant operational time and resources may be limited. Time and commitment are significant costs for any collaboration due to the degree of trust and relationship building required to achieve a collaborative advantage (Huxham & Vangen, 2000a; 2005).

The reasons for the limited commitment of resources are varied. Several informants cited capacity as an issue, although informants recognized that collaboration helps address capacity issues. However, getting to that point is difficult when the daily tasks are overwhelming.

As stated above, a lack of time and staff turnover also create barriers to dialogue, an essential part of relationship building. All informants acknowledged that dialoguing takes time and commitment. However, for most communities, getting to that point means overcoming hurdles.

Common Understanding

Most informants felt that SGFNs and municipalities do not always understand their respective mandates, which is complicated by overlap with the Yukon Government. While the socio-political evolution of the Yukon created an advantage, it also created a labyrinth of jurisdictions and unclear mandates, creating a barrier for the different orders of government to work together. Trust issues due to the socio-political development of the Yukon may also hamper the desire to seek a common understanding.

Understanding each other's mandates is complicated by a lack of understanding of the land claims process and the resulting agreements by all parties. It is challenging to understand how each partner can help each other without a clear understanding of their respective mandates.

According to the informants, there is clearly an advantage when SGFNs and municipalities work together to benefit their communities. To an extent, SGFNs and municipalities are different enough to complement each other if they can establish where their interests intersect. To do so requires understanding each other's mandates and identifying common areas of concern where they can work together. There may be some sense that working together is good for the entire community but finding that balance is elusive in practice. One option is more training in the respective mandates, although that has limitations since training sessions are usually only about basic knowledge, not a fuller understanding. However, training can be designed to provide a much fuller understanding of the governments and how they intersect rather than just providing basic knowledge.

A lack of trust does not help find a common understanding, and likewise, a lack of understanding does not help with trust. Trust is not easy to achieve due to differences in aims, culture, working practice, language, and perceived power (see Huxham and Vangen, 1996). This is especially true in SGFNs and municipalities' contexts, as there could be a wide difference in values and practice in all these areas. A couple of the informants who were part of successful large-scale SGFN and municipal collaborations confirmed that the partnerships started with small projects that built trust and understanding that later snowballed into more significant initiatives. Again, it takes time to put into a joint project, but as the informants observed, the time investment had future payoffs.

Conflict Resolution

There is still lingering tension from Canada's history of colonization, the socio-political evolution of the Yukon, and specific histories of communities. As stated previously, the degree of tension is different in all communities and requires various measures to address. Gray and Wood (2018) emphasize recognizing profound

value differences in First Nations and non-First Nations collaboration. This aspect was touched on briefly by some informants who remarked that there are very different perspectives, but this study did not explore the differences in any depth. It is safe to say that value differences exist between First Nations and municipal organizations and the people employed in each organization. This aspect needs further exploration, and expanding on a common understanding of the past may be helpful.

The community's leadership needs to identify tension and address it. However, leaders need to understand that resolving some of these tensions may take a long time, depending on their history. Most informants suggested signs of improvement and a willingness in Yukon communities to start addressing conflicts, although much work remains in some communities. Informants in communities with less tension acknowledge reconciliation remains an ongoing effort. The job of addressing the past never ends, nor does the role of conflict resolution.

Conclusion

Given the few people residing in rural Yukon, one would think that collaboration should be easy. However, it is not easy due to a complex governance model that includes self-governing First Nations, First Nations under the Indian Act, municipalities, and the Yukon Government. The situation is further complicated by the overlay of the history of colonialism, which has impacted the relationships between settler and Indigenous Peoples, and the varied state of reconciliation at the national, territorial, and community levels.

This study discovered that while most SGFNs and municipalities engage with each other, the trend is toward minimal cooperation. A few collaborations are extensive, where the SGFN and municipality are engaged in joint community planning and discussing shared goals for the community. However, these examples are rare.

All the informants agreed that there are significant reasons for SGFNs and municipalities to start collaborating, starting with practical reasons such as the size of the communities and the need to make the best use of resources. Social justice reasons also rank high for some informants who cited the spirit of reconciliation and addressing historical community divides. According to the informants, the relationships are improving slowly and are optimistic about the future of collaboration in the Yukon.

There are barriers to collaboration in the Yukon related to a lack of commitment, with frequently cited reasons including a lack of human resource capacity and staff turnover.

Another inhibiting reason is the history of communities and Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships. Although each community is different, this aspect and the subtext of racism require attention in some communities in the Yukon. As stated in the literature, relationship building and trust need not be in place to start a collaboration, but these factors must be part of the process. Conflict resolution as an enabling factor takes a whole new meaning in a First Nations and municipal context due to the impact of colonialism compared to the broader collaboration literature. It may also be a longer process than typical conflict resolution processes.

The role of leadership in addressing historical conflict within a community cannot be understated either. Hence, the importance of facilitative leadership as described in the literature and confirmed by the informants.

The enabling factor of common understanding has some unique features in the Yukon. The Final Agreements vision of "one Yukon" and the intention for all orders of government to work together should provide the impetus for different levels of government to work together. However, municipalities are barely mentioned in the agreements, and First Nations governments are a more senior level of government. Furthermore, the region is a complex myriad of jurisdictions between territorial, First Nations, and municipal governments with conflicting, competing, and separate mandates, and all levels frequently misunderstand the respective mandates. However, all agree that if First Nations and municipalities can reach a common understanding that they need to work together, their entire community benefits.

This small study helps close a gap in the collaboration literature documenting the collaboration and status of cooperation between First Nation governments and municipalities. Additional studies are required to fill more of the gaps. While all starting and enabling factors apply to varying degrees, the Yukon's unique history and governance structure highlight distinctive aspects of collaboration between SGFNs and municipalities. Having these factors confirmed as crucial in the Yukon and identifying additional considerations is a step forward for the broader field of collaboration and contributes significantly to understanding these types of partnerships in the Yukon.

While the current state of collaboration in the Yukon can viewed as nascent and slowly emerging, the territory also holds great promise as a pivotal region to inform theory and practice in the rest of Canada on how First Nation and municipal governments can collaborate for the benefit of all community members. Most informants were optimistic that the Yukon and its communities are forging new collaboration models since the Yukon has more SGFNs than any other Canadian territory or province.

As previous research and the informants in this study suggest, there is no blueprint or roadmap, making collaboration challenging and time-consuming. However, when an SGFN and municipality in rural Yukon take on this challenge and begin to build stronger and deeper partnerships, it is then that they are breaking a new trail.

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Notes

1. Through my municipal activity, I am also active as a board member of the Association of Yukon Communities (AYC), and was president from 2020 to 2022. Our membership consists of the eight Yukon municipalities. SGFNs can join as associate members, although currently none have done so. While I interviewed current or former mayors and chief administrative officers, the role of the president is to run meetings, facilitate collaboration, and be the voice of our membership. It is not a hierarchical reporting position.
2. Both the Yukon and Canadian governments play a significant role in annually funding rural governments, whether SGFNs or municipalities. The Government of Yukon's support to rural areas is characterized as more than other jurisdictions in Canada (Coates & Graham, 2015, p. 82). This support includes annual block funding to municipalities as Comprehensive Municipal Grants (CMG) and heavy subsidization of infrastructure projects (Government of Yukon, 2016). The Government of Canada also provides considerable support to rural communities through the annual funding of SGFNs. As part of their self-governing agreements, SGFNs receive annual financial transfers, through a Funding Transfer Agreement (FTA), to operate their governments and deliver services.
3. The researcher used a network of contacts and the snowball technique to identify possible candidates. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the researcher's location, the interviews were conducted in one-on-one meetings using Zoom and were recorded and transcribed, and then coded and organized into themes (Saldana, 2021). The analysis was conducted using a database of findings that catalogued the interviews, investigator notes, and document-analysis results. The data were coded and organized by themes and then compared and contrasted to allow for patterns to emerge fully (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Merriam, 2009).
4. The research received approval from the Research Ethics Board of Cape Breton University. The consent form acknowledged the historical colonialist approach to research, and when interviewing someone of Indigenous ancestry, the researcher brought this section to the informant's attention before starting. Historically, the research concerning Indigenous Peoples has not been respectful nor for the benefit of Indigenous communities, to the point that "the history of research from many Indigenous perspectives is so deeply embedded in colonization that it has been regarded as a tool only of colonization" (Smith, 2005, p. 87). This study was neither an ethnological nor in-depth research into Indigenous ways of knowing, Traditional Knowledge, values, or heritage. The research highlighted some differences in communication or values between SGFNs and municipalities, but it did not analyze the differences to any significant degree. The Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) (Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018) guided the researcher's questioning when interviewing Indigenous participants. Given the small population of the Yukon and the researcher's positionality, the researcher potentially knew the participants previous to the study. Therefore, the study research parameters clearly articulated and defined which communications were part of the study, including requests for interviews, interviews, and post-interview follow-up by phone or email.
5. Informants were asked about the Yukon Government's role since it has a common relationship link to both First Nations and municipal governments. Since collaboration between First Nations governments and municipalities is primarily a local decision, most informants did not see much of a role for the Yukon Government other than supporting collaboration when it happens.

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Research Article

Emergent and Regional: Networked Climate Governance Across Northern British Columbia

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Abstract: Cities and municipalities have emerged as important actors in climate governance, building capacity and leverage through networks. City networks have led to increased agency for local governments at national and international scales but fail to represent northern, rural, and remote geographies. In response, the Northern British Columbia Climate Action Network (NorthCAN) emerged out of a desire to generate connections in the region and across public and private sectors. This research examined NorthCAN as a regional and multi-sector organization that has the goal of accelerating low-carbon transitions in northern British Columbia. It was informed by data collected via survey and qualitative interviews with active NorthCAN members. Our discussion explores the barriers and opportunities at play in this case of networked climate governance, while exploring equity, policy mobility, and community-centred transition as key themes.

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1. Introduction

Local governments and municipalities have emerged as important actors in climate governance, building capacity and leverage through networks. City networks have emerged that are national in scope, such as the Canadian Partners for Climate Protection network (PCP), managed and delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). Others are transnational such as the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, one of the largest global alliances for city climate leadership, alongside other initiatives like the C40 Cities group. These forums have led to increased agency for local governments at national and international scales (Acuto and Rayner 2016; Haupt et al. 2020; Colombe, Maya-Drysdale, and McCormick 2022), yet primarily serve large urban centres. These networks fail to represent rural, remote, and northern geographies in Canada, and the many non-governmental actors who are engaging in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In response, the Northern British Columbia Climate Action Network (NorthCAN) emerged in 2022 out of a desire to generate connections between rural and remote places and across public and private sectors. Some of the early mobilizers included elected government officials who recognized the need for a platform where northern perspectives could be expressed and heard. The Community Energy Association (CEA), a non-profit organization with a history of community energy planning in the region, also played a central role as they started to increase staffing and engagements (such as regular presentations to the North Central Local Government Association). NorthCAN's formation was also driven by the need to coordinate a forum that went beyond city-to-city learning. The key emblems of the network are its multisectoral, regional, and northern foci. This article uses NorthCAN as an example that brings new perspectives to multi-level governance literature and the role of northern communities in low-carbon transitions.

A singular northern perspective is impossible to define, and this article presents northern British Columbia (BC) people and places as heterogenous and diverse. They are all, however, situated in a settler colonial context where resource economies have shaped landscape and culture in major ways. Aldred et al. (2021) describe the region in ways that resist the dualities and oppositions so central to colonial logics, pointing to the diverse "socio-cultural and physical geographies that comprise the present-day states of coloniality that are northern BC" (84). This article explores north–south relations, primarily through a policy lens, but it also aims to resist dichotomous framings.

Another important northern characteristic is that resource regions are crucial in efforts to tackle climate change. Demands for critical minerals and electricity are forecast to increase sooner than previously expected (Government of British Columbia 2023b; Government of Canada 2022), placing new pressures on northern communities. Mining and hydropower infrastructure, for example, is expanding, while small town infrastructure is ageing (Markey, Halseth, and Manson 2013). This prompts questions about historical and future allocations of benefits and burdens derived from resource extraction activities. Gislason et al. argue (2021) that climate initiatives in northern BC need to be community-informed, reflect local realities, and address the role of industry in regional economies. There are many trajectories low-carbon transitions can take, some that may reproduce existing patterns of injustice, particularly where historic planning policy and spatially inequitable land uses have had lasting socio-economic impacts (Garvey et al. 2022). Thus, this article also explores networked climate governance as an opportunity to reflect local realities and advance social and spatial equity for northern communities. NorthCAN is an example that can be used to explore equity in low-carbon transitions from a geographical perspective.

This article adds to multi-level governance literature by going beyond a discussion of inter-jurisdictional dynamics, to include informal, non-governmental, and local actors that have chosen NorthCAN as a platform to exchange ideas and resources. Capacity challenges surface as major barriers for small towns, and regional organizing has emerged to overcome these challenges. The article argues that networked governance de-silos people and institutions, embedding them in a more open system that, it is intended, will allow them to better adapt to climate change. What remains unknown, however, is if and how networking translates into climate action. Still, a clear understanding of why this case of networked climate governance emerged will help to ascertain the contexts through which confidence, capacity-building, implementation, and measurement can occur.

The article begins by introducing NorthCAN and situating it within its northern context. It then describes the research methods and presents the results under four themes that emerged: intersectoral action, quality of life, northern rural leadership, and collective voice and purpose. The discussion integrates the results with the concepts of policy mobility and community-centred transition in ways that help to better understand climate governance in rural and resource-based economy contexts.

2. Northern BC Climate Action Network

NorthCAN's inaugural meeting in April 2022 brought together eighty participants from two-dozen communities across the region. In under three years, the network has grown to include more than 300 people on its distribution list, including representatives from local governments, Indigenous communities, business and industry, health care, education, and other non-governmental organizations. The Community Energy Association has been the primary administrator for the network, coordinating speakers, the virtual platform, and hosting meeting summaries and resources on their website. The network convenes quarterly online with at least one additional meeting per year as an in-person or a hybrid event. To acknowledge regional representation and share responsibilities, the network uses a rotating chair to introduce presenters and facilitate the meeting.

The drive to establish the network came from a recognition that assets, actors, and passion exist in northern communities, but capacity to advance climate action was limited and a forum for collaboration and sharing might help to address this. The CEA had history in the region, developing community energy plans, establishing electric vehicle infrastructure (e.g., the Charge North campaign), and coordinating training for builders adapting to the revised BC Energy Step Code (requiring higher levels of airtight construction and energy efficiency of new buildings). The CEA also identified a lack of northern representation in climate-related networks across British Columbia and directed BC Hydro funding toward the coordination of NorthCAN meetings starting in the spring of 2023. The story of how NorthCAN came to be is simplified here, but there was a constellation of people and institutions that had long-standing interests in fostering local leadership and relationships for the region, all orienting themselves towards climate issues at the same time. Coordination included those from multiple sectors: industry, the Health Authority, local government, and education, among others. The University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), for example, has had a significant impact on the network's reach and orientation. Alumni work across all sectors and comprise approximately one-quarter of the NorthCAN membership.

NorthCAN has no explicit geographical boundaries for membership, projects, or speakers, but priority is given to presenters who live and work in northern BC. Approximately 290,000 people live in northern BC, spread out over two-thirds of the provincial land mass, and nearly 20% of the population is Indigenous (Northern Health 2022, 8). Participants have come from Secwépemc Territory as far south as 100 Mile House, Haida Gwaii and the Village of Old Masset in the west, Denendeh Territory and Fort Nelson in the north, and Dane'zaa lands and the Peace Region in the east. The region is diverse in culture and ecology across the landscape and, as is evident in the results of this research, includes distinct communities that require climate solutions that reflect place-based needs. Northern latitudes are disproportionately impacted by climate change (Gill et al. 2001; Gislason et al. 2021) and much of the impetus to connect across the North is linked to increases in the intensity and extent of climate impacts, such as wildfires, animal and plant species migrations, and extreme winter and summer temperatures.

Political factors also played a role in network formation. The region has been framed as the Provincial North by numerous scholars who discuss these areas of Canadian provinces as forgotten political or administrative entities that also serve provincial and federal governments as sites of intense, extensive, lucrative, and long-standing resource extraction (Coates and Morrison 1992; Hall and Donald 2009; Piper 2010; Coates, Holroyd, and Leader 2014). Thus, this research considers NorthCAN and the region as nested within provincial and federal jurisdictions. As foreground, it is also a region where Indigenous rights holders continue to uphold their governance systems and assert their enduring relationships with ancestral lands. The dynamics of power, politics, and sovereignty are complex within the settler colonial context.

NorthCAN also defines its reach in relation to institutional support from various northern organizations. The Northern Health Authority (NHA)[1] is the only institutional body that defines northern British Columbia as an administrative unit, and NHA's participation in the network has been significant from the outset. Other institutional participation has come from the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT),[2] Northern BC Tourism Association, and the Canadian Homebuilders Association of Northern BC. In addition, there are other groups that operate beyond the region but have shown long-standing leadership in the North on environmental matters, such as the Fraser Basin Council (FBC) and the New Relationship Trust (NRT).

Another aspect of early NorthCAN conversations was that the regional focus should be undertaken with an attentiveness to global connections and concerns. There was importance placed on hearing from others who are mobilizing to act on climate change across Canada and internationally. For example, hearing from Albert Edman of Viable Cities and the Research Institute of Sweden (RISE) oriented much of the discussion during NorthCAN's first in-person workshop in 2023. The Viable Cities model of local-level communities of practice, under the banner "sustainable, beautiful, together" (in the form of climate city contracts), has resonated within NorthCAN (Viable Cities 2024).

3. Methodology

The objective of the research was to offer current and future members important insights on the role of NorthCAN as an organization amplifying and encouraging climate action in northern BC. Thus, there is an action research orientation at play. The combination of action and research implies a move beyond conventional studies that aim to understand a problem, or applied research that aims to improve. The purpose of action research is to increase cognitive understanding *and* improve, prioritizing collaboration, experiential practices, and reflexivity (Bradbury 2015). It is a process-oriented approach that enrolls all those involved (research team, community organizations, and policy-makers) in social learning, shifting the focus from discussion of problems to facilitation of solutions. This often allows researchers to document and respond to research findings in an immediate way, relecting the need to alleviate the severity of ongoing climate impacts.

The action research framework reflects NorthCAN's goal of connecting across public and private spheres. Municipal representatives use policy and planning to address the twin issues of mitigation and adaptation, yet climate change governance is a matter of both public and private authority. Urban response to climate change often happens at sites and in spaces that are "off-plan" (Bulkeley, Castán Broto, and Edwards 2015). An action research framework allows us to understand NorthCAN as an organization that brings perspectives from multiple sectors to the fore, with potential to improve the environmental policy process.

Data collection for this study included a member survey (n=18) and qualitative interviews (n=13) with highly active[3] NorthCAN members. From a members list of 191, thirty-nine requests to interview were made and thirteen were conducted; in addition, eighteen surveys were completed. The survey was designed largely as a feedback tool for meeting administrators, asking respondents to identify when and how they wanted meetings to occur and topics of interest, but it also included questions about relationship building within the network and the application of knowledge gained in workplace settings. The interview questions were designed to solicit broader information about network purpose and composition, regional challenges and opportunities, and collective action. Survey and interview data have been anonymized, and quotes are referenced using codes (e.g., A5 for interviewees and Q14 B2 for survey respondents). We used a speech-to-text transcription application (Otter.ai) for the interviews, and then created edited transcripts (removing grammatical errors, pauses, run-on sentences, and so on) to increase clarity and readability.

To identify the themes featured in the discussion we followed an inductive coding approach, starting with a list of open codes derived from survey responses and interview transcripts. We then used these to identify recurring ideas, patterns, and relationships between concepts through an axial coding process, with further consolidation into selective codes. We used these observations to ground our analysis of NorthCAN's purpose and potential within the social, political, and climate context in northern BC. As we present our results, we have chosen to rely on frequent and extensive quotes in an effort to centre participant voice.

4. Results and Discussion

Four key themes emerged from what we heard through the interviews and the survey: intersectoral action, quality of life, northern leadership, and collective voice and purpose. We explore each theme in turn, integrating the data into our discussion. In conjunction with literature on the role of networks and socio-spatial justice, we explore policy mobility and community-centred transition through the lens of the NorthCAN network perspective. It is also relevant to note that there is an overarching tendency in the data towards opportune and hopeful ideas. Most interview respondents conveyed that they see the network as a source of hope in the way that it showcases examples of people who are leading in their own communities. Simply by meeting people and encountering projects (planned or realized), significant hope and inspiration is triggered. We acknowledge that as highly active network members, respondents are self-selected; they are people who have voluntarily "come to the table" because of personal or professional interest. Still, we think it is instructive to identify the formative period in network formation as one viewed positively.

4.1. Purpose and Possibilities across a Northern Region

4.1.1. Intersectoral Action

NorthCAN's cross-sectoral composition presents challenges, with diverse rights holders and stakeholders defining low-carbon transition in their own ways, yet the network allows for connections across a broad spectrum of issues and institutions. Members are thinking about how to connect across jurisdictions, which means "respect the jurisdictions but find ways to share resources. Regional districts, municipalities, province, federal government, First Nations, they all have a stake in this whole thing. So, just respecting them but find ways to share, find better ways to share" (A3).

Resource-based communities play a unique role in low-carbon transitions, meaning that private sector actors are also important collaborators. According to one interviewee, we need to:

figure out how that looks for the resource sector that so many of the communities are dependent on. So, making sure that the policy or those types of things that need to happen for the low carbon and resilient transition, don't preclude or kind of limit those necessary industries that are going to be required for that transition. We're going to need wood products to build low carbon buildings and we're going to need mines to get the ... precious metals that we need for all the computers and batteries, and all those other types of things that are going to be required for this. (A4)

There is a role for corporate leadership in the resource sectors, but there are also many small business owners active in the network, including tourism operators, home builders, and clean energy consultants. Non-governmental organizations, not-for-profits, and energy cooperatives have also been vocal, seeking dialogue with others that might share mutual social and economic goals.

Still, representation from the public sector and local government in NorthCAN is high. Respondents stressed the importance of municipalities and regional districts as important bridging agents between policy dictates and implementation. As one interviewee noted, "I don't like using that word downloading because I think municipalities and local governments are actually really well positioned to tackle these issues meaningfully" (A10). Respondents stressed local empowerment, seeking a wider and more equitable distribution of capacity-building mechanisms and resources than what currently comes from provincial or federal agencies. Furthermore, there is potential for reciprocal learning within a multi-sector constellation:

> I think the way to local governments is through industry, business, post-secondary education, health care, all those community actors who can influence local government on one hand, but also so that local government can feel some courage in passing legislation that they feel that the rest of these people are there to deal with it, to implement the rules, and they don't feel that they're out on a limb. So, I think the two things really work together. (A13)

The research also revealed that staff, elected representatives, and community leaders are often bound by size and remote location. Many of the services and infrastructure taken for granted in larger centres are of compromised quality or do not exist in remote places. For example,

> one of the things that's missing in our First Nations communities, and even some of the other remote places, is setting up a process of approving designs and structures, energy advisors, plan checks. That doesn't happen on reserve much, a little bit, but it's not the same as a regional district or a municipality. It's not at the same level. First Nations are, they're all small governments. The capacity to do all of this is, it's too much. (A3)

Creating opportunity for people to connect across sectors and across communities is essential; "local governments, I think, are incapable of charting this course in isolation, or individually. They can only do this as a collective" (A13). The network can support local government through its collective capacity-building and knowledge-sharing approach with various sectoral actors.

4.1.2. Quality of Life

Interest in a co-benefits approach was common, with many respondents speaking about the ancillary benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions such as improved air quality, healthier communities, energy access, food security, poverty reduction, and adequate housing, among others. In other words, the benefits that come from climate change mitigation have other benfits too, which improve quality of life. Socio-economic factors and access to basic services influence what types of challenges northern BC communities face, and how they might work to address them. As expressed by one interviewee,

> having a healthier population overall makes you more resilient to the impacts of climate change, right? And so, when our health has already been compromised in the north, because of remoteness, or lack of resources, or staffing shortages, or certain environmental factors too, right? The cost of food, the cost of housing, poverty is such a big issue in the north, and yeah, makes us less resilient to when we have these big events like heat waves or wildfire smoke episodes. And extreme cold is even something that the health authority's looking at too in terms of what is the health burden there. (A11)

A co-benefits perspective prompts a different way to think about what low-carbon pathways might work for northern communities, with a focus on increasing qualities of life and health.

As examples, the digital equity gap is growing in Canada with disproportionate impacts in Indigenous, rural, and remote communities (SFU Public Square 2021). Communications infrastructure and connectivity are not to be taken for granted and there are large areas with insufficient internet speeds or no cell service. Lack of connectivity is a real barrier: "I don't know how many times you get into a Zoom meeting, and you get someone in a Band office somewhere and they're going in and out, missing out on all kinds of stuff" (A3). From a

transportation perspective, northerners living in rural and remote communities emit more carbon to access basic services, such as health care provision or educational programs. Residents often must travel, if they can, hundreds of kilometres to larger towns or cities to access services. One interviewee's vision of a low carbon future starts with access: "I feel like once you get the basic services to each of these communities or within a manageable range, I feel like that'll hugely help low carbon climate resilience in the North" (A12).

Respondents discussed equity in several dimensions: social equity, spatial equity, and procedural justice. From a representation perspective, they suggested how future membership might expand: "From an economic and social standpoint, people that are inequitably impacted by climate change impacts should be at the table and groups that maybe work with those portions of the population" (A5). Ultimately, discussions about quality of life need to be carefully navigated, keeping in mind that race, class, gender and other social indicators make some people and communities more vulnerable than others. From a co-benefits lens, there may be new ways to think about how to promote change at the local government level. For instance, "I think it's just gotten to the point now where [climate change is] not really about environmentalism, it's really about the economy and about quality of life. And it's gone way beyond it being a fringe issue, it's just embedded now in everything (A13).

4.1.3. Northern and Rural Leadership

We also heard from respondents that what defines quality of life needs to be informed by northern inhabitants. The network acts as an opportunity to hear from small, rural, and remote communities, and to create opportunities for leadership that stem from those places. Northern British Columbia is a large area with a dispersed population, and "there's this big disparity in the amount of resources we have for the size of the region. [My workplace] does have to do things a little bit differently because of that, and yeah, working with others is so essential" (A11). In other words, existing geographies require collaboration, and NorthCAN has embraced that as a positive thing: an opportunity to connect, share knowledge, and treat climate change as a chance to come together to develop solutions that work for northern communities. Rather than a barrier, NorthCAN is repurposing the common narrative of northern isolation and disconnect in constructive rather than debilitating ways: "I'd love to see something where collaboration was actually celebrated. I'm not sure our governance systems, our corporate systems truly celebrate collaboration, they talk about it, but are we really celebrating it?" (A13).

NorthCAN coordinated its first in-person workshop in April 2023 titled "Leading from the North: Connections across the Region for Climate Action." During the workshop, there was a palpable and distinctly northern pride, rooted in people's attachment to specific places, while also celebrating diverse landscapes and cultures across the north. As one interviewee describes, "there's an identity in the north that is peculiar, it's hard to put your finger on, but it's there" (A13). How these pieces of identity intersect with climate change will influence community response:

> I think when I say familiarity with the landscape, with the challenges we face, with each other, I also am thinking of that certain quality of being from the north which is resilient and adaptive. We all make something work. We're innovative and there's an appreciation for unique solutions. More even than an appreciation, there's a drive. There's a knowing that there's not going to be a blanket approach that works here (A10).

Despite important differences across the region, the results also indicate that there is a shared identity. Recognition and growth of this shared identity enables northern leadership through NorthCAN.

There are also misconceptions associated with a region whose inhabitants have relatively high per capita carbon emissions. Several interviewees spoke about the association between "the north" and a stereotyped reluctance to move away from fossil fuels that are a large economic driver in the region. In contrast, as one participant described, there is a "real opportunity for reframing the conversation. Why is it that all of these changes to be more green and clean have come so negatively? Like the attitudes here are so negative about environmental action, when actually the people here can get really excited about it. It just feels like we're always getting told off" (A10). Given the community focus that NorthCAN carries, it would be beneficial to see an increase in representation from smaller places. As one interviewee noted: "I'm always a big advocate for going to the smaller communities because not very many people go to the smaller communities and that's really the way to build relationships with people" (A6). Furthermore, people are seeking solutions that fit local contexts. Local resources and local solutions were commonly referenced. For example, "it's about strengthening local connections, utilization of local resources, food production, utilization of waste" (A13).

Northerners want to participate and actively design a climate resilient future. Yet, respondents noted some of the policy barriers:

> We've got unlimited renewable energy resources all around the world, but really strong up here in the north. Why can't we use it? Boy, what's going on there? I'd like to see those roadblocks eliminated, and the flow of energy really get cracking, from house

> to house, municipality to municipality, city to city, region to region all across the province. That would be fantastic. And that's exactly what's gonna have to happen if we're going to do this. (A7)

Interviewees were asked what a regional approach to climate action offers that organizing at other scales (municipal, provincial, international) does not. In many instances, dialogue is made easier:

> You're dealing with the same, similar problems. Geographically, between the coast and northeastern BC the climate is drastically different at times, but they're still dealing with the same challenges in terms of remoteness, and availability to services, that kind of thing ... So, I think having that regional approach, really, you're talking to someone who knows what you're dealing with. (A9)

Network members are relieved to be in the same "room" as others they can relate to: "[there are] common factors that you're all facing, so it's easier to communicate, and there's more benefit from having that regional aspect" (A1). The regional approach to climate transition also reflects the contexts of place. According to one member, "because it is a specific geographic region, with its own climate and landscape, unique to itself, it probably requires a unique approach. So, what does regional offer to people? I think it just offers more appropriate action because you have to take into account ... the landscape, the population density, the unique climate that we have in the north, that's very different than the south" (A7).

One interviewee described north–south relations as such:

> I'm sick and tired of the north following and I think we deserve to lead. We're the place where the energy comes from. We're the place that supplies the wood products that allow buildings to be built without steel. So, it bothers me whenever we lag and we were clearly lagging in this area. And part of it, I think, is because the solutions that we had in front of us, EVs, [heat pumps], being two good examples ... are primarily southern solutions, and southern and urban solutions. (A13)

The desire to increase representation from northern, resource-based communities in climate action is apparent. Yet, as described above, it goes beyond increased representation to thinking about how climate governance can be led by actors working at the local level. To do so, those local leaders need to work together to increase their critical capacities to enact change.

4.1.4. Collective Voice and Purpose

Commentary on small communities and isolation was recurring and surfaced as a two-sided coin: as both restricting and requiring cooperation. Isolation pulls communities towards collaboration, and the network has filled a gap in collective voice that no other climate-related organization has done at a regional scale. This research helps to answer several questions for NorthCAN: What purpose does the network serve? Why did the network form at this point in time (i.e., the drivers)? How will the network function to fulfill what its members are looking for? The final theme of collective voice and purpose speaks directly to functionality, while also admitting that this is not easy; "collective action is particularly difficult in a rural area with a sparse population. It's hard to bring people together" (A7). These spatial dimensions make NorthCAN's early achievements in membership numbers and regional representation significant.

Despite CEA's activity in the region, there is still concern that with mobility and built-infrastructure issues, "the north is not under the same amount of focus, or even proportional focus for me, that other regions get from the centres of power, so to speak, in government" (A1). There is dissatisfaction with "broad legislation that does not account for unique circumstances in remote, rural communities" and does not indicate "the ability to communicate with vulnerable populations" (Q15 B4). Appropriate action is something members do not necessarily associate with provincial level policy, and coordinating collectively might help to voice their concerns.

Northern geographies call for policies that are better designed to serve place-based needs. For instance,

> to run a home, to heat a home in the north, I don't know exact numbers, but I'm gonna say it's probably three times more than it is in the Lower Mainland, at least. And so, if we build a more energy efficient home, just by doing that, like a net zero or a step five home, is at least 50% more efficient. So, if we cut our emissions by 50% just by building a more energy efficient home, then we're actually reducing our carbon output more than a house in the Lower Mainland that goes to zero carbon. Just because of where we are ... I keep saying one size cannot fit all. It just doesn't, you know, it's not fair. (A2)

Respondents are expressing the need to be recognized as a distinct region from a regulatory perspective.

People across sectors also want to play a more active role in the policies that affect their everyday lives. NorthCAN members are interested in developing a shared focus, not necessarily on the complexities, tensions, or deficiencies of north–south relations, but on climate action coming from northern people and regions. There is "an opportunity … for the north to be a little bit more proactive instead of just following along with regulations and sort of being seen as the, you know, needed to be dragged along and resource dependent, and nothing's happening up there" (A4). Some members expressed a sincere need to play a larger role in the policy process:

> We end up in a position where not only are we left behind because the voices of the north aren't adequately represented where the legislation is being written. Not only are we left behind, but we're actually in a position to be punished by the new legislation. So that's kind of what rings out for me is that it feels like there was a need. People are seeing that need to make a stronger voice more than ever. (A10)

Participants described how they have been left out of front-end dialogue that influences policy design, and marginalized through consultation or commentary. There is discomfort in this: "We get opportunities to comment on provincial initiatives, but we don't often get opportunities to say this would work in our area. And if we do, it's only in the form of a comment on something they've already done and have already got in place" (A10). There are significant opportunities for co-creation or co-production in climate policy that derives from "local customs, is community informed. And when I say community, I mean our frontline people, our residents and our Indigenous communities that are in the region. Community informed solutions and ideas" (A10).

Local government representatives and staff in northern communities are responsible for more complex portfolios, and resources are spread more thinly than in urban centres. As one local government staff described, "I jump in a day from healthcare, to accessibility, to animal control, to sustainability … Everybody has so many files that they're juggling" (A10). They are often "left to [their] own devices," there are fewer staff and high turnover rates (A1), making it hard to engage in regional or provincial conversations. Capacity and ability are fundamental building blocks in transition. Barriers specific to small, rural, and remote communities need to be better understood, and regional collaboration recognized as a way to work beyond such barriers. The conversations around pride of place, identity, and shared values that surface in the data are precursors to a community-centred transition that NorthCAN might be able to facilitate. Respondents stressed the importance of collective voice and purpose where members can reinforce each other.

4.2. Implications for Climate Governance

The NorthCAN data shows how communities in northern BC need to collaborate so they can generate the capacity needed to respond to climate change. Northern BC is an extensive area with low-population density and ecological complexity, where climate change has ongoing impacts on the region in unpredictable ways. Here, we explore how the network is repurposing the common narrative of northern isolation and disconnect; smallness and remoteness is pulling communities toward knowledge-sharing opportunities. The discussion also explores policy dynamics through the lens of social and spatial equity. Climate change impacts all communities differently; the results in this study indicate that climate solutions need to be place-based but also that regional dialogue can facilitate this. The discussion concludes with an exploration of what is needed within policy processes to reflect place-based needs and support community-centred transition.

4.2.1. From Isolation to Collaboration

Cities and municipal governments are increasingly recognized for their potential to fill the governance gap resulting from government inaction and lack of support on climate change at national and international scales (Dow et al. 2013; Acuto and Rayner 2016). Theoretically, large cities are well-positioned to develop innovative, experimental, and relevant mitigation and adaptation solutions at the local level, but barriers related to political jurisdiction, institutional structure, intergovernmental relations, and capacity limitations inhibit implementation (Gordon 2016). In response, city networks (comprised primarily of cities and local government associations) have emerged as a tool for coordinating climate action. Networks facilitate collaboration, city-to-city knowledge exchange, and policy learning between local governments facing common barriers (Acuto and Rayner 2016).

The ultimate purpose of city networks, as described by Gordon (2016) and Haupt et al. (2020), is to close the implementation gap between local-level commitments and tangible results, and to connect local actions to aggregate impacts across urban centres. At their core, networks function to mitigate the capacity barriers of local governments. Yet, network composition is largely made up of medium to large-sized population centres[4] that have the staffing capacity to work on climate portfolios. In their review of the scholarship, Coulombe, Maya-Drysdale, and McCormick (2022) found a focus on large "climate leader" cities and on transnational linkages, leaving local-level perspectives underrepresented. City networks have led to increased agency for local governments at national and international scales, but rural and remote places remain isolated in relation to climate governance because they do not have the same level of capacity to

participate. Decentralization in multi-level change governance has opened the door for government actors, but impact is limited without wider coordination across sectors. As Tosun and Schoenfeld (2017) explore, networks that involve hybrid public–private partnerships (such as those triggered by NorthCAN) have different motivations and benefits. They often have more diverse citizen participation and a focus on collective action, serving a different role than city-to-city networks.

For example, Aylett (2013) presents the case of the Solarize Portland project highlighting the success of community driven partnerships between municipal governments, community members, NGOs, and local businesses. Central to the project's success was the ability of community members to leverage their social capital and personal networks, as well as experiment with risk-taking strategies not typically available to municipal governments or staff members who face political constraints and agendas. Wagner, Torney, and Ylä-Anttila (2021) analyze Ireland's 2019 Climate Action Plan as a product of a multi-sector, multi-level policy implementation network, but one that was led and coordinated by the state. These examples are about inner-city collaboration or state-led initiatives. The NorthCAN case offers similar commentary on multi-sectoral work, but at the regional scale and from a non-governmental network.

Intersectoral action has been advanced by health-related agencies and researchers to better understand the complexities of the social determinants of health that implicate actors and agencies beyond traditional health sectors. In health, it is generally accepted that intersectoral approaches are necessary, but "knowledge around how to support, achieve and sustain multisectoral action is limited" (Amri, Chatur, and O'Campo 2022, 3). Similarly, climate change is a societal challenge that belies allocation to one sector, and there is plenty to learn from ecohealth researchers who have championed this approach. Such alignment may also be why the Northern Health Authority is keen to engage, and why health practitioners see NorthCAN as a network with the potential to achieve and sustain multi-sectoral action.

The intersectoral and economy-wide approach taken by NorthCAN provides opportunities for diverse actors from rural, remote, and small towns to engage. Such an approach elevates perspectives from workers and businesses closely tied to resource sectors in resource-based communities. Similar perspectives are present in just transition strategies; labour and the resource communities that workers call home play a key role in the disruptive political-policy actions that will overcome carbon lock-in (Healy and Barry 2017).[5] Resource workers are not "passive bystanders, but agents of change able to develop new pathways to sustainability" (Galgóczi 2018, 3). It is from resource peripheries that many cities issuing climate emergency declarations (such as those in the C40 Cities coalition) obtain their material and energy needs. As part of a resource-based economy, northern people and places are critical in efforts to tackle climate change.

Parag and Janda (2014) offer a new perspective on the literature surrounding intermediaries within intersectoral constellations, often defined as entities that emerge to achieve a specific and desired outcome, and therefore, have an implied sense of impermanence. Their "middle-out" approach highlights the role of the overlooked middle actors; not those at the top with government decision-making authority like elected or staff officials, or those at the bottom such as consumers and voters. Parag and Janda's (2014) middle actors already exist and function outside of mediation, and independently exercise their own capacity and agency. The authors use the example of building professionals, examining how they influence consumers through the encouragement of energy efficiency upgrades, and the integration of home building design and green technology. In turn, their role has multiple knock-on effects: shaping professional homebuilder associations, promoting professional practices, transforming supply chains, and influencing consumer knowledge and agency. The homebuilders and affiliated associations that participate in NorthCAN have made some gains in this regard.

In summary, NorthCAN's economy-wide approach is indicative of transition strategies unfolding in other places that "recognize the need for deep decarbonization beyond the energy sector, and typically align decarbonization with broader social goals such as improving societal welfare and reducing socio-spatial inequalities" (Bridge and Gailing 2020, 1037). The downloading of responsibility and management to local government has been chaotic and controversial in recent decades, providing opportunities for local empowerment on one hand while entrenching uneven capacity development on the other (Parkins et al. 2016). Respondents identified the need to tip the balance to the local empowerment side. Results indicate that participation from diverse sectors strengthens the ability of traditional government actors to implement climate projects. Intersectoral collaboration instills greater courage in state actors to initiate change.

4.2.2. Equitable Policy and Climate Action

One of the major barriers to climate action lies in the common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR) clause first articulated through the formation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992. The principle reflects the uneven and unequal distribution of benefits and burdens globally, as well as heightened violence, exposures, vulnerabilities, and risks experienced by many communities that have contributed least to the root causes of climate change. Yet, thirty years onwards, equity concerns continue to be downplayed or remain absent in many climate action strategies (Klinsky et al. 2017), and climate financing

promised to those experiencing disproportional impacts remain unfulfilled (Timperley 2021). Furthermore, climate change is exacerbating the root causes of inequity, leading Fernandez-Bou et al. (2021) to argue that research with frontline communities is needed to develop and implement impactful policies. They outline multiple challenges and solutions in their work, but one is the error of ignoring local knowledge, potentially solved through information exchange and expansion of community-based participatory research (Fernandez-Bou et al. 2021). Information exchange was one of NorthCAN's formative drivers.

Several respondents raised the idea of a policy hub to help with literacy and preparedness for implementation. As transformative policies are negotiated and mandated in Victoria (BC's capital city and home to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia), such as the zero-emissions requirements for medium and heavy-duty vehicles (Government of British Columbia 2023a), companies are reviewing consultation papers and fulfilling the province's requests for comments piecemeal, while they reactively work to assess how their fleets and operations will be impacted. NorthCAN members describe their experience with climate policy as unpredictable, overburdening, and destabilizing. Clean BC is the province's most recent climate change action plan, and includes targets for pollution reduction that will have significant impacts on resource sectors (Government of British Columbia 2018), yet those in BC's resource-dependent communities do not have the information they need to navigate the transitional risks associated with regulatory change.

The results show, however, that the challenge is not merely about additional representation within provincial or federal-level policy cycles, such as invitations to comment or consult on policy options. It is not about access to information either. Northern BC has long been characterized by heartland–hinterland dynamics (Hayter, Barnes, and Bradshaw 2003), and political power, policy-making, and investment decisions remain concentrated in large urban centres. Many respondents discussed these inequities directly and listed them as reasons why they are compelled to participate in the network. There are few governmental supports specific to northern BC, and NorthCAN is the first regional body to collectively organize for low-carbon transition.[6] Respondents expressed that there is an interest in new ways to participate but, more so, they are seeking opportunities to lead or co-create policy development, and collective efforts via NorthCAN might allow them to do that.

These dynamics speak to some of the tensions around policy mobilities and the critical question posed by Theodore (2019): "How do 'ideas from elsewhere' shape local policy debates?" A central argument made by critical policy studies scholars is that social, political, and environmental conditions influence public policy successes in particular places and should not be assumed to work when reapplied and reused elsewhere (Peck and Theodore 2010; Cochrane and Ward 2012; Theodore 2019). Such critiques seem even more relevant in a changing climate, where impacts and adaptative measures are highly differentiated across space. If taking a "geographically sensitive approach to studying policymaking" (Theodore 2019), voices from northern, rural, and resource-based communities need to play a greater role in climate policy, and networks are one tool that can support increased representation. There is evidence here that local authority and autonomy are important in an era of multi-level governance, and there needs to be more analysis of the interactions between municipal or non-traditional actors under provincialism and federalism. Unpacking related questions can lead to a better understanding of the barriers and opportunities associated with regional leadership and participation in policy resolutions.

Gislason et al. (2021) argue that the literature on climate change communication inadequately addresses the challenges faced in rural and remote communities. With a focus on communication and engagement strategies in northern BC, the authors highlight that climate initiatives must be community-informed, reflect local realities, and address the role of industry in regional economies. This latter point is integral to "spatially targeted interventions" or a "whole systems approach" (Garvey et al. 2022) to policy-making. The legacy of extractive resource economies and colonial heartland–hinterland relations permeates governance structures in northern BC. A low-carbon future will look different in these communities given their ties to resource sectors. A spatially just transition sets the trajectory apart from models developed for urban centres with tertiary-oriented (service) economies. Spatially targeted policies can be one way to promote regional equity, understood here as a fair geographic distribution of benefits and burdens as rural regions navigate decarbonization pathways; examples such as consumption-based emission policies, regional target-setting, or citizens assemblies, can help to "shape context specific solutions" (Garvey et al. 2022, 10).

Those who work in legacy industries (e.g., oil and gas, construction, automotive) will be adversely affected, as will people living on low incomes and people of colour who currently face higher levels of precarity and insecurity (Carley and Konisky 2020). Electric vehicles, for instance, are owned mostly by high-income, highly educated males who are homeowners, and charging infrastructure is not equitably dispersed across space (Hardman et al. 2021). The shift to electric or hydrogen-powered transportation will impact rural and northern areas differently, where people often cover significant distances in cold temperatures to obtain basic social services such as health care or education. Flipo, Ortar, and Sallustio (2023) discuss several distributional and procedural justice implications for rural regions; the costs of mobility changes are assumed by individuals and policies are most

often promulgated by a central government without the input of residents (under wider neoliberal strategies privatizing transportation options).

Similarly, the shift to renewable energy sources is not benign. On one hand, renewables have been examined for their ability to localize and democratize energy systems (Szulecki, Ancygier, and Szwed 2015; van Veelen and van der Horst 2018; Burke and Stephens 2018), and on the other hand, as leading to uneven geographical development, core–periphery asymmetries, and energy peripheralization (Golubchikov and O'Sullivan 2020; O'Sullivan, Golubchikov, and Mehmood 2020). In any case, growing interest in NorthCAN is indicative that people are wanting to participate in creating trajectories that work for their communities. If agency can be increased through collaboration and information sharing, northerners might be more successful in designing community-based, locally relevant, geographically situated low-carbon transition pathways.

Conclusion

The people and places referred to in this article are nested within distinct regions throughout northern British Columbia. They are also nested within Indigenous Territories and within provincial and federal jurisdictions. Northern BC has an extended history as a globalizing region (Bowles and Wilson 2016) and communities are negotiating relationships, old and new, with international corporate actors that are also shifting to remain relevant in a low-carbon society. Within this context, over 300 northerners have chosen networking as a path toward climate solutions, participating in NorthCAN to share with and hear from others across the region. NorthCAN is presented here as an example of the dispersion of climate governance within nation states, with actors seeking a "collaborative approach to be able to work through barriers a lot faster" (A6).

The article starts with a description of why NorthCAN came to be and how it currently functions. It also starts with a description of the region as diverse and complex. We return to Coates and Poelzer's (2014) geographical-political definition that highlights Provincial Norths as "not homogenous units, but rather diverse, even fractured, regions, facing distinctive challenges, opportunities and social characteristics" (2) where there is "a strong juxtaposition of economic opportunity, regional distress, and political marginalization" (3). Yet, despite such geographic diversity, the network has been successful because of a shared identity of exclusion and isolation, compelling people to learn from each other. We then present research results under four themes: intersectoral action, quality of life, northern rural leadership, and collective voice and purpose. The discussion analyzes how the experience of isolation has brought people together collaboratively, across space and sectors, and how this has contributed to new constellations of climate governance in the region. We then discuss policy and climate action in relation to equity concerns.

This article brings a new perspective to multi-level governance. It argues that participation from northern resource regions is essential to understand "supply side" transition challenges. More so, it argues that place-based knowledge is a critical component of climate solutions. Social and technological transition strategies that are desired and championed by communities where implementation occurs will be more successful. NorthCAN exemplifies how intersectoral work is actualized, and that non-traditional actors in multi-level governance are providing a strong foundation to fill a policy mobilities gap that has left rural and northern needs underrepresented in provincial and federal-level programs.

It is useful to not only highlight that environmental decision making is power laden, but to articulate it specifically as a coloniality that has appropriated land, extracted resources, and accumulated capital in the hands of decision makers elsewhere. Given that the "global marketplace of policy solutions" is exceptionally busy in today's climate domain, it is important to attend to the "relationality of policymaking sites (whether as sites of emulation, implementation, or contestation)" (Theodore 2019). Applying a policy mobilities lens to north–south relations in British Columbia will help to address some of these inequities.

Lastly, the article argues that incentives for network members to engage go beyond participation to include leadership, with northern communities seeking greater influence over climate policy, investments, and initiatives. Contrary to depictions of resource-based communities as entrenched and allegiant to carbon intensive energy systems, the size and breadth of a network that coalesced within several months, and has consistently grown, is evidence that northern BC communities are ready to address climate change. People are eager but are limited by the resources and capacity needed to transform. As articulated by one respondent: "How do you do this in smaller communities that don't have a team of fourteen people working on risk reduction and adaptation? Networks" (A4). Intersectoral and regional collaboration is the salve for community-level capacity challenges related to low-carbon transitions.

Notes

1. The Northern Health Authority (NHA) delivers health care across thirty-three communities and fifty-five First Nations communities across six regional districts, serving approximately 300,000 people across 600,000 km^2.
2. NDIT covers approximately 70% of the provincial land base and represents thirty-nine municipalities, nine regional districts, one regional municipality, and eighty-nine First Nations communities.

3. High-activity status was attributed to those who had attended two or more meetings as of January 2023.
4. We follow Statistics Canada definitions of population centers as small (population between 1,000 and 29,999), medium (population between 30,000 and 99,999) and large (population of 100,000 or more) (Government of Canada 2016).
5. The concept of carbon lock-in refers to the structural features of society that are tightly tied to fossil fuels, such as technologies and governing institutions that are dependent on fossil fuel energy systems.
6. At the sub-regional level, extensive work on climate risks and vulnerabilities has been undertaken in northeastern BC through the Northeast Climate Resilience Network, facilitated by the Fraser Basin Council.

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Research Perspective

Issittumi paasinnittaatsinik misissuineq: Oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsineq aqqutigalugu nunasiaataanerup oqaluttuarisaanerani pullaviit apeqquserlugit

Unthinking Historical Thinking: Lessons from the Arctic

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Eqikkaaneq: Ilisimatusartut ilinniartitsisullu nunaqavissut avataaneersullu ilarpassuisa nunat killiit avataanniittut ilisimasaat oqaluttuarisaanerallu pingaarnertut ilisimatusarfigineqartunut ilinniagarineqartunullu naleqqiullugit sammineqannginnerusarlutillu atorumaneqannginnerusarnerat qangalili isornartorsiortarsimavaat. Oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsinerup ajornartorsiummut tamatumunnga qanoq aaqqiissutaaqataasinnaanera misissuiviginiarlugu allaaserisami matumani ilisimatusartut Issittumi naqavissuusut aallaavigineqarput. Qanga pisimasut pillugit qanoq ilisimasaqartoqartigineranut nunasiaataanerup sunniutaanik ilisimatuutut siornatigut misissorneqarsimasunik atorluaanikkut allaaserisami matumani siunnersuutigineqarpoq UNESCO-p Piujuartitsilluni Ineriartortitsineq pillugu Ilinniartitsinermut (ESD) tunngavissiaa nutaaq 2021-mi maajimi saqqummiunneqartoq aallaavigineqassasoq. Allaaserisaq naggaserlugu nunap inuii sammisatut ilisimatusarfiginagit nunap inuiisa ilisimatusarfigisaannit ilinniarfiginninnissap pingaaruteqassusia erseqqissarneqarpoq. Ilisimatusartullu nunaqavissut ilisimasanik assigiinngitsunik aallerfigisinnaasanut naapertuilluartumik naligiissumillu pullaveqarnissatsinnut taakkuninngalu atorluaanissatsinnut iluaqutigisinnaasatsinnik pingaarutilinnik periusissiorsimanerat erseqqissarneqarpoq.

English abstract on page 2

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Abstract: Many Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and educators have long criticized how non-Western knowledge and histories are actively discriminated against in mainstream research and education. This article foregrounds Indigenous scholarship from the Arctic region to explore how history education can contribute to addressing this issue. By drawing on previous research on the colonial impact on knowledge about the past, the article proposes a shift in perspective in light of the new UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) framework introduced in May 2021. The article concludes by pointing out the value of learning *from* Indigenous scholarship rather than only studying it as a separate subject. This is because Indigenous scholars have created important approaches that can help us achieve fair and equitable access to, and benefit from, different knowledge resources and systems.

Aallarniut

Issittumi oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu nunasiaataanerup ilisimasanut sunniutai pillugit ukiuni kingulliunerusuni ilisimatusarnerit tunngavigalugit allaaserisami matumani oqaluttuarisaanermik paasinnittaatsit assigiinngitsut pullaviginissaannut paasinissaannullu atatillugu oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsinermi periarfissaalertartut aporfiusartullu misissuivigineqarput (Petersen, 1978; Reeploeg, 2021; Segato, 2022). Oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsinermi nunap inuiisa ilisimasaannik soqutaanngitsutut imaannaanngippallaartutullu isiginnilluni itigartitsisarnikkut nunasiaatitut aaqqissuussaaneq aalajangiusimaneqartarpoq (Guha & Spivak, 1988). Oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsisoqartarpoq ilinniarfinniinnaanngitsoq — aammali katersugaasivinni, allagaateqarfinni, atuagaateqarfinni oqallinnernilu tamanut ammasuni inuit peqatigiillutik qanga pisimasut pillugit eqqaamasalikkersaarlutillu ilinniarfigisartagaanni (Ricoeur, 2010). Sumiiffiit assigiinngitsut taakku oqaluttuarisaanerup ilaanik assigiinngitsunik ingerlatitseqqiiffiusarput (historical narrative). Aamma inuit qanga pisimasut pillugit eqqaamasaannik paasinnittaasiannillu, oqaluttuarisaanermik paasinnittaatsimik taaneqartartumik (memory culture), ilusiliiffiusarput. Oqaluttuarisaanermik paasinnittaatsit taakkua iluanniittarput ilisimasat ataqatigiissut atugaanerusut nunanit killernit aallaaveqartut. Ilisimasat ataqatigiissut taakku ilisimasanit nunanit killernit aallaaveqanngitsuninngarnit saqquminerugajupput akuerineqarnerugajuttarlutillu. Assersuutigalugu nunani killerni naalagaaffiit alliartortillutik ilisimasaminnik siaruarteripput, aammali ilisimasanik nunanit killernit aallaaveqanngitsunik nungusaallutillu suusupaginnipput, ilaatigut allakkanik ikuallaallutik nunaqavissullu ilitsoqqussaralugit oqaasiinik atuiunnaarsitsillutik (Burke, 2010, n.p.). Nunap inuii *pillugit* ilinniarnissaq pinnagu nunalli inuiisa *ilisimasaannik* ilinniarfiginninnissaq historikerit ilinniartitsisullu pikkoriffigisariaqarluinnagaattut allaaserisami matumani innersuussutigineqarpoq. Taamaalilluni ileqqutoqqat qimakkiartuaarneqarsinnaapput oqaluttuarisaanerlu pillugu ilinniartitseriaatsinik ilinniariaatsinillu naleqqunnerusunik pilersitsisoqarluni.

Tunngavigisaq

UNESCO-p qanittukkut nalunaarusiaani allanngoriartortitsisumik sulisaaseqarnikkut siunissamik pitsaanerusumik ilusiliiumalluni oqaluttuarisaanerup oqaluttuarisaanerlu pillugu ilinniartitsinerup pingaaruteqassusiat erseqqissarneqarpoq. Sulisaatsimut tamatumunnga ilaapput qanga ullumikkullu naapertuilluanngitsuliornerit misissuivigiumallugit iliuuseqarfigiumallugillu isummersoqatigiissitsinerit, isummanik paarlaateqatigiinnerit atassuteqaqatigiissitsinerillu:

> [oqaluttuarisaaneq] pilersitsiffiusinnaavoq siunissap iluarsiartorfissatut takorloorneratigut, qanga ullumikkullu naapertuilluanngitsuliornernik pilersitseqqiffissatut pinnagu. Oqaluttuarisaanermik suliaqariaatsit taakku isummersoqatigiiffiullutillu paarlaateqatigiiffiupput; periaatsit taakku ilinniartitaaneq aqqutigalugu pilersinneqarput taamaalillutillu periaatsinut ilinniartitaanerup iluarsiartornissamut piumasaqaataaffigisaanut tikkuussillutik. (Sriprakash et al., 2020, p. 6)

Tamatuminnga nalunaarusioqataasut ilinniartitaanermik allannguinermut aallarnisaatissatut kajumissaarutigaat, sulisaatsinik ullumikkut atuuttunik apeqqusiilluni misissuisarnissamik siuarsaallutik. Ilinniartitsisut assigiinngitsunik pullaveqarnissamik pingaartitsinissaq, isiginnittaatsinik assigiinngitsunik naleqqiussinissaq paarlaateqatigiinnissamillu siuarsaanissaq eqqarsaatiginerusariaqarpaat. Nalunaarusiami siunnersuutigineqarpoq ilisimasat ataqatigiissut nunanit killerneersut tunngavii apeqquserneqassasut aaqqissuussallu ajoqutaasut atorunnaarsinneqassasut. Taamatut suleriaaseqartitsiumanermi suliaqartut tamarmik immikkut nunasiaataanerup nunasiaataajunnaarsaanerullu nalaanni inissisimaffimminnik eqqarsaatiginninnissaat pisariaqarpoq (McKenna et al., 2021, p. 5).

Ilisimatusartut ilinniartitsisullu nunaqavissut avataaneersullu ilarpassuisa nunat killiit avataanniittut ilisimasaat oqaluttuarisaanerallu pingaarnertut ilisimatusarfigineqartunut ilinniagarineqartunullu naleqqiullugit sammineqannginnerusarlutillu atorumaneqannginnerusarnerat qangalili isornartorsiortarsimavaat (Berthelsen, 2020; Burke, 2002, 2010; Cutrara, 2018;

Rasmussen, 2002). Ilisimaneqartunik paasinnittaatsitsinnik allannguisoqarnissaa oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsinermik ilisimatusartunit qanittukkut kajumissaarutigineqarsimavoq. Taakkua aperipput oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilisimasat suut kulturit assigiinngitsut akornanni paaseqatigiinnissamik siuarsaanermi pingaarutilittut isigineqarnersut (Chapman, 2021). Taama aperipput oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsinerit qanga pisimasut, inuit sumiiffiillu pillugit paasissutissiinerinnaanatik aammali isummanik pigiliutiinnakkanik pullavinnillu illuinnaasiorpalaartunik ersersitsiviusarmata (Kuokkanen, 2008).

Oqaluttuarisaanerli pillugu ilinniartitsinermi siunertaavoq naliliisinnaanermik, paasisanik ingerlatitseqqiisinnaanermik, piffissap ingerlanerani allanngujuitsuusunik allanngornernillu paasinnissinnaanermik, pissutaasunik sunniutinillu misissueqqissaarsinnaanermik assigiinngitsunillu isiginnittaaseqartoqarneranik qujamasuutiginnissinnaanermik ilinniartitsinissaq. Oqaluttuarisaanerilli ilaannut atatillugu allanik ilisimasaqarnermik akaarinninngitsoqarsinnaavoq, nunarsuaq tamaat aallaavigalugu kikkunnillu tamanik peqataatitsilluni “oqaluttuarisaanermik ilinniartitseriaaserisinnaasavut ilinniariaaserisinnaasavullu pillugit oqallittoqarsinnaagaluartoq” (Cutrara, 2018, p. 256).

Oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsinermik immikkut ilisimasalik Samantha Cutrara (2018) maluginiaavoq ileqqunik malinneqqissaarluni eqartumik periaaseqarnikkut oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsinermi politikkimut tunngasut avaqqunniarneqartartut. Taanna isumaqarpoq tamanna pissutigalugu oqaluttuarisaanermut atatillugu Europamiut eqqoqqissaanngitsumik ingerlatitseqqiinerinik akerliliinissamik kajumissaarutit malillugit iliornissaq inuiaqatigiillu nunaqavissuusut namminneq oqaluttuassaminnik ingerlatitseqqiinissamut periarfissinnissaat imaannaanngginnerulertartoq. UNESCO-mit qanittukkut nalunaarusiarineqartumi tamanna isumaqataaffigineqarpoq siornatigullu imaannaanngitsorsiuutigisimasat—ilinniarfiit aaqqissuussanik saqquminerusunik nalimmassaanatik apeqqusiisinnaassutsimik ilinniarfiunissaannik aalajangiusimanninnikkut—ilinniutiginissaata pingaaruteqassusia erseqqissarneqarluni (Sriprakash et al., 2020, p. 3). Assersuutigalugu nunap inuiisa oqaluttuarisaaneranni erseqqippoq taakku politikkikkut nunasiaataanikkulluunniit sunniivigineqarsimasut aammali isummanut aaqqissuussanullu naalagarsiortitsinissamik siunertaqarfiusunut taakkununnga akiuuttoqarsimasoq (Fjellheim, 2020; Tester & Irniq, 2008).

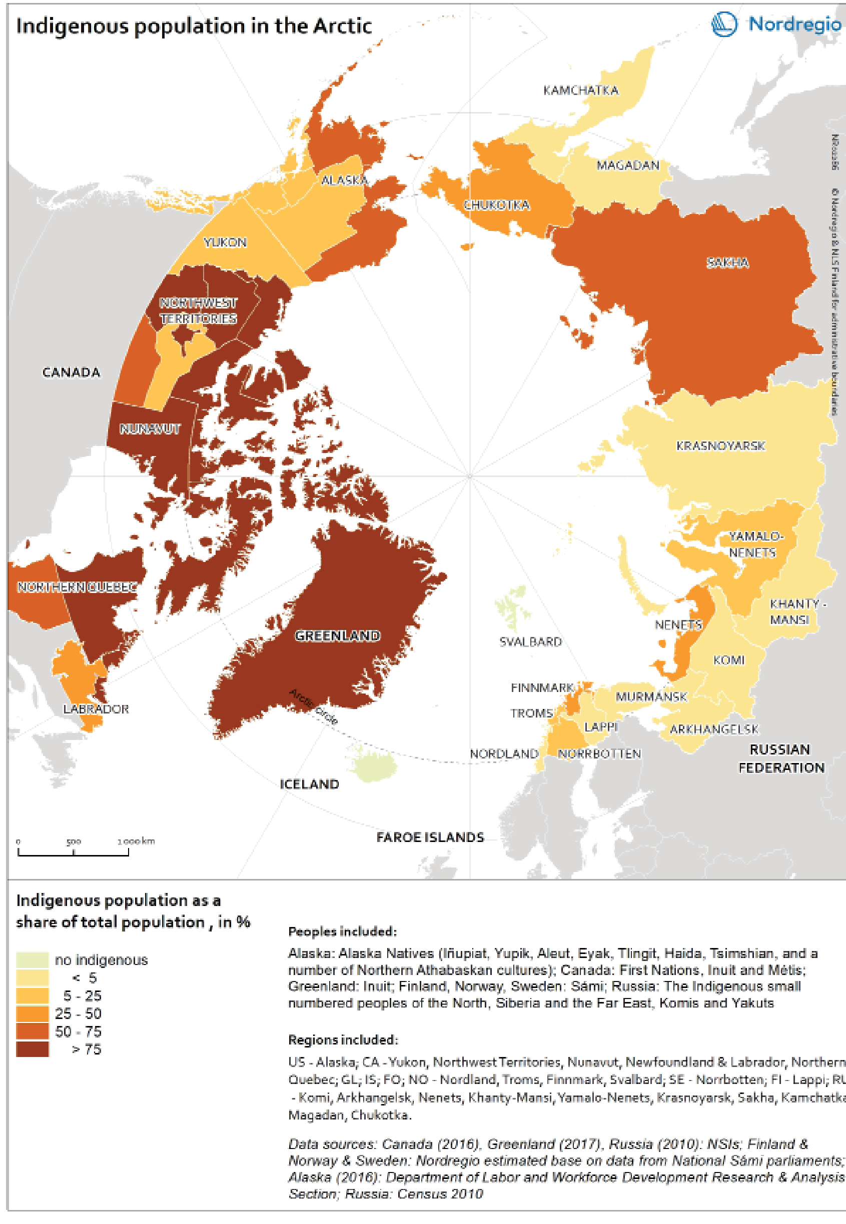
Oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsineq paasisimasaqanngissuserlu

Oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsineq ileqquliutiinnakkatut ilisimasanut ilisimasanillu misissuinermut tunngassutilittut allaatigineqarsinnaavoq (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). Oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsinermi ilisimatusarnermilu ilinniarfiit pullavinnik misigisalikkersaarutinillu assigiinngitsunik ajornaallisaasarput kimikillisaasarlutillusooq, taakku tunngavissatut pisariitsunngortillugit. Taamatut ajornaallisaaneq nuna tamakkerlugu ilinniarfinni assigiinngitsuni ilinniartitsinermuttaaq ajornaallisaataasarpoq (Lennert & Brincker, 2019). Pingaaruteqarluinnarpoq ileqqut taamatut tunngavissiinermik kinguneqartitsisartut qanga pisimasut pillugit eqqarsartaatsivut ilanngullugit apeqquserlugit misissuiviginissaat. Tamanna oqaluttuarisaanermut tunngatillugu piginnaasaqarluarnerulernissamut oqaluttuarisaanerlu pillugu illuinnarsiunnginnerusumik assigiinngisitaarnerusumillu paasinnittaaseqarnissamik siuarsaanissamut iluaqutaasinnaavoq.

Inuiaqatigiit nunasiaataasimasut aaqqissuussani inuiaqatigiinnilu aaqqissuussani atassuteqarfinnilu pissaanerup naligiinngitsumik agguataarneqarfiini inuusut ajornartorsiutigisartagaat ilisimatusartunit ilinniartitsisunillu qangalili ilisimaarineqarput (Petersen, 1978). Takussutissiami 1-imi takutinneqarpoq Issittumi innuttaasut nunaqavissortaasa agguataarneqarnerat, innuttaaqatigiit assigiinngisitaartut Issittumilu tamarmi taakkua kulturikkut, oqaluttuarisaanikkut naalakkersuinikkullu asseqanngitsumik imminnut atassuteqarnerat erseqqissarneqarluni.

Pissutsini taama ittuni oqaluttuarisaanermi oqaluttuarisaanerlu pillugu ilinniartitsinermi pigiliutiinnakkanik eqqarsartaaseqartoqaannanngilaq aammali eqqarsartaatsit taakku atuupput aaqqissuussat atassuteqarfiillu taakkuninnga pilersitsisartut aallaaviummata. Ilisimatusartoq Ilisimatusarfimmilu rektoriusimasoq kalaaleq Robert Petersen (1978, n.p.) “isummat politikkillu nunasiaataanermit aallaaveqartut Kalaallit Nunaanni suli atuuttut” pilersinneqarnerannik ingerlateqqinneqarnerannillu nalunaarsuisimavoq:

> Kalaallit Nunaata oqaluttuarisaanera, historikerinit danskinit allanneqartoq, uanga inuiaqatima oqaluttuarisaanerattut taaneqarsinnaanngilaq, tassaavorli oqaluttuarisaaneq Europami allagaateqarfinneersoq nunasiaatillit atorfilittaannit allataasoq. Taakkua malittarisassiat aalajangersimasut nunasiaatillit pisortaqarfiinut pingaaruteqartut malillugit allattuipput, taamaattumillu Kalaallit Nunaata oqaluttuarisaanera danskit allagaateqarfiinit kinaassusersiunngitsumik allanneqarsinnaanngilaq. (Petersen, 1978)



Takussutissiaq/Figure 1. Indigenous population in the Arctic in 2019. First Nations Peoples in northern Canada region depicted include Gwich'in, Hän, Kaska Dena, Tagish, Northern and Southern Tutchone, Tlingit, Cree, Dene, Inuvialuit, and Innu. (Source: Map Designer/Cartographer Shinan Wang. Nordregio. (2019). *Indigenous population in the Arctic*. https://www.nordregio.org/maps/indigenous-population-in-the-arctic/

Ilisimatusartup Aviaja Egede Lyngep tamanna eqqarsartaatsikkut nunasiaatiginninnertut, historikerit oqaluttuarisaanerlu pillugu ilinniartitsinerup isiginnittaatsimik equngasumik ilusileeqataasimanerattut, nassuiarpaa. Lynge assersuutigalugu nassuiaavoq kalaallit nunasiaataanertik immikkorluinnaq ittuuneranik, inussiaataaffiunngitsuuneranik nakuuserfiunngitsuuneranillu ilinniartinneqarsimasut. Pullavik tamanna, danskit oqaluttuarisaanermik atuakkiaat ilinniartitsisuilu aqqutigalugit ilinniartitsissutigineqartartoq, kalaallit oqaluttuarisaanerannik kulturiannillu nutaanerusumik kukkusumik ingerlatitseqqiinerinnaanani aammali allamik kulturilinnit naleqannginnerusutut misigilersitseqataasarpoq (Egede Lynge, 2006; Egede Lynge, 2011). Ilisimatusartut kalaallit allat tamatumunnga tunngatillugu oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsinerup pingaaruteqassusiannik uparuaapput nunasiaataanerup ilisimasanut ataqatigiissunut pioreersunut sunniutaanik apeqqusiisinnaallunilu allannguisinnaammat. Taakku imminut naapertuutinngitsunik, paasissutissanik amigaataasunik aammali nunasiaataanerup issittormiut oqaluttuarisaanerannut sunniutaanik suli atuuttunik uparuaanissamut periarfissanik maluginiaaqqusipput (Berthelsen, 2020; Bianco, 2019; Kleist, 2021; Kleist et al., 2023; Vold, 2021a, 2021b).

Kalaallinik pissutsinut nutaanerusunut naleqqussaanerup tungaatigut ilinniartitaaneq pingaaruteqarlualereerpoq, aammali nunani killerni naleqartitanit kalaallit pisortatigut ingerlatsiviini naalakkersuisoqarfiinilu epistemologiinit (ilisimasanik taakkualu ilumuussusiannik teoriinit) sunnersimaneqarluarpoq (Berthelsen, 2020). Taamaattumik nunani allani eqqarsartaatsinit sunnertilluinnarnaveersaarumalluni ilisimasaqaleriaatsit assigiinngitsut ulluinnarni sulianut qanoq ilaanerannik isumaliutiginninnissaq aaqqiissuusseqqinnissarlu pingaaruteqarpoq (Tester & Irniq, 2008). Nuummi ilinniarnertuunngorniarfimmi qanittukkut misissuinermi ilinniartitsisut danskiusut ilinniartullu kalaaliusut kulturikkut assigiinngissutaat misissuivigineqarput paasineqarlunilu Kalaallit Nunaanni ilinniartitaanerup aaqqissuussaanera kalaallit kulturiannut ullumikkut naleqqutinngitsoq (Reimer Olsen, 2021). Misissuinermi erseqqissarneqarpoq assigiinngitsunik ilisimasaqarnerup attaveqatigeeriaaseqarnerullu kinguneranik attaveqatigiinnerluttoqartartoq tamannalu kulturit marluk taakkua paaseqatigiinnginnerannik kinguneqartarluni (Reimer Olsen, 2021).

Assersuutigalugu Naalakkersuisut meeqqat atuarfiinik aaqqissuusseqqiissutaanni "Atuarfitsialak"-mi siunertarineqarpoq kalaallit kinaassusiannik nakussatsitsinissaq. Kalaallilli Nunaata inuiisa ilisimasaannik, piginnaasaannik, naleqartitaannik isiginnittaasiannillu tamakkiisumik atuinissaq imaannaasimanngilaq naalakkersuisoqarfinni malittarisassiornissaq ilinniartitsinermi atuutilersitsinissaminngarnit aaqqissuusseqqinnermi

pingaarnerutinneqarmat (Lennert & Brincker, 2019). Innuttaaqatigiinni aningaasatigullu siumukarumalluni danskit oqaasiinik atuinissaq pingaaruteqartuarmat silarsuarmut isiginnittaatsinik assigiinngitsunik atuutilersitsiniarnermi akimmiffeqartuarnera erseqqippoq (Lennert Jensen et al., 2022). Kalaallit, ingammik qanga pisimasut pillugit, ilisimasaannik ilinniarfiit qanoq ingerlatitseqqiisoqartarsinnaanersoq ilisimatusaatigalugu misissuivigineqarnerusariaqarpoq, taakkua ilisimasaannik naliliinermi nalileeriaatsinik avataaneersunik imaannaanngitsunik atuinani (Egede Lynge, 2011; Olsen & Tharp, 2013; Wyatt & Lyberth, 2011).

Kattukkiartorneq, iluarsartuussineq, allaqqiineq aallaqqaataaneerinerlu ilisimatusartut nunaqavissut oqaluttuarisaanermut tunngatillugu piginnaasaqarlualernissaanni namminerlu aalajangiisinnaatitaaneranni pingaaruteqarluinnarput. Oqaluttuarisaanerli pillugu ilinniartitsinermi nunallu inuiisa ilisimasaasa assigiinngiiaartut ataqatigiinneranni imaannaanngitsoqarlunilu tamaviaarnartortaqarpoq, ingammik imminut isumaliutiginissamut tunngatillugu. Matuma akuersaarnissaa pingaaruteqarluinnarpoq: nammineq pigiliutiinnakkanik isumaqarneq miserratigigaanni tamanna nammineq kulturerisaq kisiat aallaavigalugu naliliisarlunilu paasinnittaaseqalernermik (etnocentrisme) kinguneqarsinnaavoq (Petersen, 1978). Naqisimanninneq assigiinngisitsinerlu nunasiaataanermi ilisimasanut inuunermullu ilaajuartarput oqaluttuarisaanerlu pillugu eqqarsartaatsimuttaaq sunniuteqartarlutik. Ilisimasat nunanit killernit aallaavillit nunaqavissunillu aallaaveqartut imaaliallaannaq kattutitinneqarsinnaanngillat nunasiaataanermi tunngavissat nunap inuiisa ilisimasaannik ataqatigiissunik atorunnaarsitsissutaanerat akuersaanngikkaanni (Cutrara, 2018). Oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilisimatusarnermi periaatsinik peqataatitsiviusunik naligiissunillu pilersitserusukkaanni sunneeqatigiinnerit taakku pillugit unneqqarissuunissaq pingaaruteqarpoq. Nunap inuiisa matumani pullaviannik paasinnikkumagaanni akuersaarneqartariaqarpoq ilisimasanik nunap inuiinit aallaaveqartunik nassuiaariaaseq illuinnaasiortuusoq. Tamanna nunasiaateqarnermi eqqarsartaatsimik pilersitsiniarneruvoq nunap inuiisa ilisimasaat nunat killiit tunngavissiaannut tulluarsarniarneqarlutik. Tamanna nunap inuiisa ilisimasaannik ataqatigiissunik assigiinngisitaartunik kimikillisaataallunilu sumiginnaaneruvoq (Steeves, 2021).

Oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsinermik immikkut ilisimasallip Samantha Cutrarap (2018) ullumikkut periaaserineqartut nunaqavissuunngitsunik nunallu inuiinik ilinniartitsinermut taakkualu ilinniarnerannut ajoqutaanerarpai. Nunap inuiisa atugarisimasaat misigisimasaallu nunani killerni eqqarsartaatsinit allaanerulluinnartuusut kukkusumik saqqummiunneqaannaratik aamma oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsissutigineqartunit peerluinnarniarsarineqarput. Paarlattuanilli ilisimatusartut nunanit avannarlerneersut tamatigoornerusumik periaaseqartarsimapput. Taakkua miserratiginngilaat ilisimasat nunat killiit nunaqavissullu ilisimasaasa assigiinngissutaat tassaasut akerleriissutit avaqqunneqarsinnaanngitsut, ilisimasaqarfittut assigiinngitsutut marluttut kattutitinneqarsinnaanngitsutut isiginagit (Nordgren, 2019).

Oqaluttuarisaaneq nunallu inuiisa ilisimasaat

Issittumi nunap inuiisa ilisimasaannik nalunaarsueqqissaarluni qanittukkut misissuinermit erserpoq nunat Issittumiittut inuiisa ilisimasaannik paasinnittaatsit assigiinngitsuusut. Assigiinngissutit taakku piffissamit, sumiiffinnit, nunap inuiisa iliuusiinit aamma nunasiaatinngornermi politikkikkullu aningaasaqarnermi allanngoriartornernit sunnigaapput (Egede Dahl & Tejsner, 2021). Pingaaruteqarpoq akuerissallugu pissaaneqarnikkut imaannaanngitsumik naligiinngitsoqaraluartoq nunap inuii nunasiaatilinnut akerliunerminni iliuuseqarsimasut (Subramaniam et al., 2016). Taamaattumik ilisimatusartut nunaqavissut pissutsini aalajangersimasuinnarni aalajangertarput ilisimasatik nunani killerni periaatsinut naleqqussarniarlugit. Taama aalajangertarput ilisimasaqariaatsimikkut nunasiaataaleqqinnissartillusooq pinngitsoortinniarlugu. Tabelimi 1-imi takuneqarsinnaavoq nunani killerni periaatsit nunallu inuiisa ilisimasaasa sumiiffiit ilaanni assigiissuteqarsinnaasartut.

Tabeli 1. Our Knowledge and Western Knowledge (McKenna, 2021, p. 5)

Our Knowledge	Western Knowledge
Ways of valuing	Axiology
Ways of knowing	Epistemology
Ways of doing	Methodology
Ways of being	Ontology

Ilisimasanik paasinnittaatsivut assigiinngisitaartunik ilisimasaqarnissamut killilersinnaavaatigut ammaavigisinnaallutaluunniit. Oqaluttuarisaanermik misissueqqissaartarneq (historical thinking) nunani killerni inuiaqatigiinnik nutaalianik, silarsuarmut isiginnittaatsimit 1500-kkunni ineriartortortinneqartumit aallaavilinnik, tunngaveqarpoq. Silarsuarmut isiginnittaaseq tamanna eqqarsartaatsinit assigiinngitsorpassuarnit, nunaqavissut ilisimasaat uppernarsaatillu immikkuualuttortallit – ilaatigut oqaluttuatigut kingornussarsiat – aqqutigalugit qanga pisimasunik aalajangersaaviusunit aallaqqaammut aallaaveqarpoq. 1700-kkunniilli Europami tunngavissiat eqarneruleriartorput, malittarisassianik sulisaatsinillu kulturimut,

innuttaaqatigiinnut politikkimullu tunngasunik immikkoortinneqaleriartorlutik. Tamatuma kinguneranik nunani killerni politikki aallaavigalugu piffissamik sumiiffinnillu nassuiaariaatsit nutaat pilerput. Taamaalillutillu ilisimasat ilaat ilaannakunngorpullusooq puiugaalluinnarlutilluunniit, tamannalu inuit ilisimasaqarnikkut oqaluttuarisaaneranni paasissutissiinissamik ilisimasanillu siaruarterinissamik amerlanerpaajusunit anguniagarineqartumut naapertuutinngilaq (Burke, 2010).

Ilisimatusartoq Maoriusoq Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2006) isummanik imminnut ataqatigiissunik oqaluttuarisaanermik ilisimasanik aallerfissatut tamatigoortuusorinartutut ilusiliisimasunik qulingiluanik allaatiginnippoq. Oqaluttuarisaanermi pisimasutut ilisimasat qanoq pisoqarsimasinnaanera takorloorlugu pisimasunik tulleriaariffiupput, inuit pisimasullu aalajangersimasut qitiutinneqarlutik. Qanga pisimasunik ilisimanneriaaseq tamanna suleriaatsimut 'ajoqutaanngitsumut' inuit taakkua inuusimanerannut pisimasullu taakkua pisimanerannut uppernarsaatinik 'sinneruttunik' qanga pisimanerat naapertorlugu tulleriiaarilluni katersuiffiusumut ilaavoq (Smith, 2006, pp. 30–31). Burke (2002) nassuiaavoq qulinik tunngaviusunik najoqqutassalimmik assingusumik aaqqissuussaqartoq nunat killiit oqaluttuarisaanermik misissueqqissaariaasiannik ilusiliisimasumik. Taakkunani ilaatigut pingaartinneqarput pisimasut, siumukarnerit ineriartornerillu qanga pisimanerat naapertorlugu tulleriiaarinissaq (piffissamik aqutsineq) kinaassusersiunnginnissamillu anguniagaqarnissaq (misigissuseqannginneq pigiliutiinnakkanillu isumaqarneq). Aamma taakkunani 'nunat killiit' eqqarsartaasiat pingaarnerutinneqarpoq inunnik nunanik sumiiffinnilluunniit immikkoortitsiffiusartoq (nunat assingi, nunap sumiissusaa). Paasinnittaatsit taakkua nunani killerni eqqarsartaatsinut sunniuteqarsimanerat erseqqeqaaq. Assersuutigalugu oqaluttuarisaanermik suliaqariaatsini suiaassuseq suiaassutsinullu attuumassuteqartut nunasiaateqarnermi eqqarsartaaseq naapertorlugu nassuiarneqartarput, isummat aalajangersimaqqissaartut nunap inuiisa kulturiinut atanerarlugit (Jessen Williamson, 2011; Lugones, 2008). Eqqarsartaatsit killiliinerusut taakku paasinnittaatsinik, soorlu suut uppernarsaatitut akuersaarneqarsinnaanerannik suullu oqaluttuarisaanermi pingaaruteqarnerannik paasinnittaatsinik, allannguisarputtaaq. Taakkua kingunerattut isiginnittaaserineqalersut pissutaallutik qanga pisimasunik *ilinniarfiginninniartilluni* nunasiaataanermik aallaavilimmik ataqatigiissunik ilisimasaqalernissaq avaqqukkuminaallivoq (Sriprakash et al., 2020).

> Nunasiaataanerup nalaani nunap inuii nunat killiit oqaluttuarisaanermut isiginnittaasiannut akiuussimagaluarlutik taamatut isiginnittaaseqartoqarneranut pissutaaqataapput. 'Oqaluttuassartatta' allanit oqaluttuarineqarnissaat amerlanertigut akuerisarsimavarput kingornalu ingerlateqqinneqarneranni avataaniillusooq isiginnittunnguinnarsimalluta. Tamanna atuartitsinermut akuulluinnarpoq. Atuartitsinermi najoqqutassat najoqqutassanilu taakkunani ilisimasanut isiginnittaaserineqartut aqqutigalugit ilinniarfiit siusissukkulli silarsuarmik nunallu inuiisa silarsuarmi inissisimaffiannik nassuiaaqqippullusooq. (Smith, 2006, p. 33)

Nunat killiit oqaluttuarisaanermik misissueqqissaariaasiat, Burkep Smithillu allaatiginninnerattut, isummanik ataqatigiissunik aalajangersimaqqissaartunik tunngaveqarpoq qangalu pisimasut pillugit ilisimasanik ilanngussiviuneq ajorluni. Tunngavissani taakkunani sulisaatsit oqaluttuarisaanermik qangalu pisimasunik assigiinngitsunik paasinnittaaseqarnermut akuersaanngiffiusut taakkuninnga akuersaarnissaminngarnit pingaarnerutinneqarput. Sulisaatsit taakku qaammarsaarusussutsimit siumukartitserusussutsimillu pilersinneqartut maanna qanga pisimasut pillugit ilisimasinnaasatsinnik killiliipput – taamalu paasisimasaqanngissuseq atuutilerluni.

Peqatigiilluni atorunnaariartortitsineq: Issittumi oqaluttuarisaanermik paasinnittaatsinik misissueqqissaariaatsinillu misissuineq

> inuuneq tassaavorlusooq imaq ineriartorfiujuarlunilu siuariartorfiujuartoq, naggueqatigiit inuit alapernaajummerlutillu piginnittaatitaanissartik noqqaassutigisariaqartussaanngikkaluarpaat. (Rasmussen, 2002, p. 90)

Nunat killiit Issittumi ilinniartitsinerat naggueqatigiit inuit ilisimasaannut silarsuarmioqataanerannullu ajortumik sunniuteqarsimavoq. Ilisimasat naalagaaffiup ilinniartitsineratigut aqunneqarlutillu paasiortorneqarsinnaapput, ilisimasat tunngavigalugit "politikkikkut aningaasaqarnermik" pilersitsilluni. Nunap inuii pillugit ilisimasat nunat killiit isiginnittaasiat aqqutigalugu katersorneqarlutillu immikkoortinneqarlutillu saqqummiunneqarput, nunap inuiisa ilisimasaat naleqartitaallu pillugit paasisimasaqannginneq atuuttuartussanngortinneqarluni. (Graugaard, 2016; Jessen Williamson, 2006; Öhman, 2017; Smith, 2006). Taamaalilluni nunap inuiisa ilisimatusarfigisaannik teknologiiannillu atornerluisoqartarpoq nunasiaataajunnaarsaanissamut aningaasaliissuteqartoqannguarnani.

> Inuiaassutsikkut atukkat quianaannarput: siullermik, nammineq inuunitsigut ersersipparput Europamiut imminnut isiginnittaasiannut avataanit tapersiissutigineqartussatut pisariaqartinneqarluta; aappaatigulli imminut isiginnittaaserineqartoq tamannarpiaq pissutigalugu Europamiutut nuimatiginngilagut, alianaannartumillu naammaqutitut eqqaasitsissutitullu inissisimajuartariaqarluta … (Arke, 2006, p. 3)

Misissueqqissaarnermi matuma qulaaniittumi misissuivigineqarpoq ilisimatusartut ilinniarfeqarfiillu paasisimasaqanngissutsimik nunat killiit oqaluttuarisaanermik misissueqqissaariaasiannit atajuartinneqartumik apeqqusiisinnaallutillu ajugaaffiginnissinnaanersut. Ilisimatusartut nunaqavissut erseqqissaapput nunap inuiisa ilisimasaannik atuinermi nunasiaataanermilu aaqqissuussanik unammilliinermi ilinniartitsisut suliniuteqartuusut. Taamaattumik ajornartorsiutinik uparuartuiinnarata oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsinermik qanoq allannguisinnaanerluta eqqarsaatigisariaqarparput. Nunasiaataanermi eqqarsartaatsip apeqquserneratigut nunani killerni inuiaqatigiit nutaaliat eqqarsartaasiat pingaarnertut inissisimajunnaarsillugu atorunnaarsikkiartorsinnaavarput.

Innuttaaqatigiit nunaqavissut eqqaamasaat immikkuullarissuseqartuupput nunat killiit oqaluttuarisaanermik misissueqqissaarneranni paatsoorneqarlutilluunniit akueriumaneqarneq ajortut. Paatsoorneqarlutillu akueriumaneqarneq ajortunut taakkununnga ilaapput piffissamik kaaviiaartutut isiginninneq najukkamilu avatangiisinut pinngortitanullu inuunngitsunut ataqatigiissuseqarnissap pingaaruteqassusia. Taakkununngalu ilaapput inuuffigisami avatangiisinik piffissamillu qitiutitsineq, aamma nunasiaataanermut akiuunneq nunaqavissullu ilisimasaannik nungusaaneq. Qanoq siuariartortoqarnissaanik isummat assigiinngisitaartarnerat allanngorujussuarnerillu nunani killerniittunut nunallu inuiinut atatillugu oqaluttuarisaanermi piffissap ingerlanerani pisarsimapput. Tamakku ajornartorsiutitut isigineqaraangata nunap inuiisa oqaluttuarisaanermik misissueqqissaariaasiat nunat killiit isiginnittaasiat atorlugu isigineqarsimasarpoq, oqaluttuarisaanermik misissueqqissaariaatsip immini assigiinngisitsiviunera soqutiginagu. Tamakkua tamarmik imminnut atassuteqarnerannik paasinnikkaanni pissutsinut piviusunut, ilaatigut nunat killiit eqqarsartaasiata oqaluttuarisaanerannut isiginnittaatsinut assigiinngitsunut, ataatsimut isiginnilluni sulianillu tapertariissitsilluni pullaveqartoqarsinnaavoq.

Inerniliineq

Allaaserisami matumani Issittumi inuit qanga pisimasut pillugit eqqaamasaat paasinnittaasiilu misissuivigineqarput. Allaaserisami oqaluttuarisaaneq sammisamut siammasinnerusumut oqaluttuarisaanermik paasinnittaatsimut (memory culture) ilaasutut isigineqarpoq. Eqqarsartaatsit taakku nunasiaatitut oqaluttuarisaanermit sunnigaasimapput, tamannalu soqutigininnginnermik, naligiinngissutsimik akiuuttoqarsimaneranillu paasissutissanik nungusaasoqarsimaneranik kinguneqarpoq. Allaaserisami naggueqatigiit inuit kinaassusiannik ilusiliiniarnermi Inuit Traditional Knowledge, Institutions, and Technologiesip (Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit imaluunniit IQ-tut ilisimaneqartup) pingaaruteqassusia erseqqissarneqarpoq. IQ-mi kulturikkut inissisimaffik aalajangersimasoq aallaavigalugu eqqaamasalikkersaarnissaq iliuuseqarnissarlu pingaartinneqarput, naggueqatigiillu inuit akiuuffissaattut kinaassutsiminnillu illersuiffissaattut naatsorsuussaavoq. Ilisimatusartut nunaqavissut ilinniarfiginerisigut takusinnaavarput oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilisimasaqariaatsinik eqqarsartaatsinillu atuuttunik apeqqusiillunilu allannguiniarnermi oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitseriaaseq qanoq pingaaruteqartigisoq. Erseqqissarneqarportaaq oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsineq atorlugu nunaqavissut akornanni ilinniarfinnilu naapertuilluassutsimik qanoq siuarsaasoqarsinnaanera kulturikkullu paasinnittaatsip qanoq atuutilerseqqinneqarsinnaanera ilisimatusarfigineqarnerusariaqartut.

Tassa, imaanngilaq nunap inuiisa ilisimasaat nunanilu killerni ilisimasat eqqarsartaatsillu ataatsimoortinneqarsinnaanngilluinnartut. Kattutitinneqarsinnaapput sunneqatigiissinneqarsinnaallutillu taamalu allanngoriartortuarsinnaallutik. Taamatuttaaq nunani killerni oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu eqqarsartaatsit amigarnatillu paasisimasaqanngissutsimik tunngaveqanngillat. Oqaluttuarisaaneq pillugu ilinniartitsisut ilisimatusartut nunaqavissut ilisimatuutut misissugaannik atuisarnerminnik iluaqutiginnissinnaapput taamaalillutillu pullavinnik assigiinngitsunik ammaffiginninnissamik siuarsaasinnaallutik aammattaarlu inuit, uumasut pinngortitarsuarmilu avatangiisit ataqatigiissusiannik misissuinissamut ileqqussatigut akisussaaffimmik erseqqissaasinnaallutik. Taamaaliornermikkut paasinnittaatsinik atugaanerusunik apeqqusiisinnaapput oqaluttuarisaanermullu oqaluttuarisaanerlu pillugu ilinniartitsinermut pullavimmik peqataatitsiffiunerusumik ataatsimullu isiginniffiusumik pilersitsisinnaallutik.

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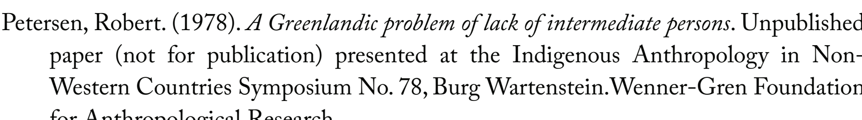

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Book Review

Plundering the North: A History of Settler Colonialism, Corporate Welfare, and Food Insecurity. By Kristin Burnett and Travis Hay, University of Manitoba Press, 2023.

Reviewed by Sara Komarnisky

Northern Indigenous people in what is now Canada have long lamented high grocery prices and food insecurity, alongside ongoing advocacy to restore Indigenous food systems and Indigenous food sovereignty. Consider "Feeding My Family," a Facebook page and movement started by Eric Joamie and Leesee Papatsie to draw attention to food prices in northern communities and how they are preventing northern Indigenous people from living healthy, happy, and productive lives.[1] In most small and remote northern communities, there is often only one store in town, and that store is a Northern Store or North Mart. Community members can supplement with country foods, but that's only if they have the knowledge, equipment, and money for gas and supplies to go out on the land.

Indigenous Peoples in the Canadian North once lived in a context where the land provided everything that was needed to survive. So why has this changed so drastically? This book provides some answers to that question: *Plundering the North* explores the history of federal food policies for Indigenous people and the corporate practices that implemented those policies. Its authors argue that over the last century the state (via the Canadian and territorial governments) has "manufactured food insecurity and retail monopolies in northern First Nations and Inuit communities" (3).

Kristen Burnett's interest in the North West Company (NWC) and how it came to operate in fly-in Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario was sparked by an unnamed undergraduate student who wanted to understand the high cost of food in their Indigenous community in relation to prevalence of Type 2 diabetes. The price differences the student documented between their community and Thunder Bay were shocking to Burnett, so even after the student

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moved on, Burnett continued to explore how the NWC came to occupy such a monopolistic position in many communities in the North (14).

To understand how this happened, and tell that story in *Plundering the North*, Burnett and Hay reviewed publicly available corporate records of the NWC, historical records of the federal government, and historical records for the Hudson's Bay Company (the predecessor of the NWC) to understand past and present policies and practices. They also interviewed community members, government employees, and employees of the NWC and held a series of community conversations about northern retailers and the cost of food. All of this was, the authors say, enriched by "countless informal conversations" (15) that allowed them to read the documentary record "through and alongside the experiences of Indigenous peoples living in the North" (15).

The chapters in the book are organized temporally, starting in Chapter 1 with the criminalization of Indigenous foodways through the imposition of hunting and fishing regulations in the late 1800s. This is in violation of Indigenous sovereignty and Treaty, and created a space for the federal government and the Hudson's Bay Company to introduce market-based foods to Indigenous communities and households (16). Chapter 2 carries forward the story of the HBC before the Second World War to show how the federal government used the HBC to implement policy. Chapter 3 continues after the Second World War with social welfare initiatives like the Family Allowance program, the forced purchasing lists created by the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and the shifting retail practices of the HBC.

Chapter 4 expands on postwar shifts, specifically the establishment of the Northern Stores Department within HBC and the establishment of stores in the provincial and territorial Norths. Chapter 5 is about the Food Mail Program and how it shaped the choices available to northern Indigenous people about market-based foods. Chapter 6 returns to the Northern Stores Department of the HBC and its transformation to the North West Company. The North West Company is shown to specialize in low-income, northern, and remote places that have high barriers to entry, as a business model that produces enormous profit. Finally, the last chapter charts contemporary policy in the replacement of the Food Mail Program with Nutrition North Canada.

Overall, the book shows how historical patterns of collusion between state and market actors have produced and positioned First Nations and Inuit communities as captive consumers of grocery store foods. Burnett and Hay show how state and corporate influence worked together to encourage northern Indigenous people toward grocery store foods and away from country foods harvested from the land. The detail and the breadth of how this happened, as described in the book, is expansive and infuriating. Unfortunately, the authors also show how these established patterns continue today.

Burnett and Hay are both settlers and historians, and they position this book alongside the ongoing food security work that they do with Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario—work "which supports resurgent activities engaged in food sovereignty and undertakes policy and anti-colonial/racism work" (15). As such, the "North" in this book is more often the provincial Norths than the territorial Norths, reflecting Burnett's initial interest. I'd love to know more about how a solid understanding of the public policy and corporate history that worked to disrupt and destroy Indigenous food systems can support the kind of food sovereignty work that is ongoing. I can think of ways, but would love to hear from organizers and activists about how they see projects like this supporting their work—as well as from Hay and Burnett about how these projects are integrated (or not).

Anyone who wants to better understand why the food systems in the provincial and territorial Norths are the way they are will appreciate this book, especially if they are up for a scholarly deep-dive into the topic. Scholars and activists of northern or Indigenous food sovereignty or food systems may appreciate the careful documentation of the historical context and wide-reaching impacts of the harms done by governments and corporations to Indigenous ways of life in the North. The book is a well elaborated and focused analysis of how settler colonialism in Canada works: how it involves state and corporate actors, how it shifts over time, and how corporate profit is made from dispossessing Indigenous Peoples from their Traditional Territories and ways of life. This is a useful study, then, for anyone looking to expand their knowledge about settler colonialism in Canada. Here's to a future that sees the end of corporate monopolies in northern communities and the re-establishment of Indigenous sovereignty at all levels of the northern food system.

Notes

1. Eric Joamie and Leesee Papatsie. (2012, December 4). Feeding my family: A story of grassroots organizing in Northern Canada. Food Secure Canada. [Facebook Presentation]. https://www2.foodsecurecanada.org/content/feeding-my-family-story-grassroots-organizing-northern-canada

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Book Review

Unsettling the Commons: Social Movements Within, Against, and Beyond Settler Colonialism. By Craig Fortier. ARP Books, 2017. 100 pp.

Reviewed by Nicole Bauberger

I am sitting down most belatedly to review *Unsettling the Commons.* I wanted to review the book when I first read it in 2019. A few things have happened since. Nevertheless, the challenges that this book presents, as well as the ways that its world seems to differ from our situation in the Yukon, seem as relevant as ever.

Craig Fortier, Associate Professor in Social Development Studies at the University of Waterloo and himself a settler weaves together ideas and narrative in a readable way. He builds the book on fifty-one interviews with anti-authoritarian activists across North America. The way he has woven the voices of these other thinkers into the book reminds me of the dialogue chapters in books by American writers and activists bell hooks and Adrienne Maree Brown. It seems useful to me, as a thinker in one of the Norths, to experience writing shaped polyvocally this way.

Fortier begins the book with his "glitter-sparkled sweat" and we are swept up into a nighttime protest march, part of the 2012 Quebec student protests against tuition increases. Fortier and his friends joined their voices to the chants of "Whose streets? Our streets!" in both French and English. But who is "we"? Fortier interviewed Fred Burrill, a white settler, who recounted the push and pull within the movement between groups chanting "A qui le Québec? A nous le Québec!" and others chanting "A qui le Québec? Au Mohawk le Québec ou a les Algonquins le Québec!" (p. 12). It is possible to critique many anti-authoritarian protests, both in Fortier's personal narrative and in the 2011 "Occupy Wall Street" movements, as a continuation of colonization in their reclamation of public space.. While reclaiming a commons from capitalism can feel empowering, how does that act actually play out in the history of colonization?

Chapter 2 explores "the long history of settler occupations of Manna-hata," known today as Manhattan. We see how settler uses of a commons (grazing) were at odds with Indigenous uses (hunting, gathering medicine), and how the former pushed out the latter. Later chapters take us into interesting conversations

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with activists working in immigration, gentrification, and other issues of human belonging and land.

These activists—for good, long-experienced reasons—do not believe that "statist" governments have any "intention of honouring treaties or respecting Indigenous sovereignty, and so it is incumbent upon social movement activists to … begin the long process of reconciliation through accountability—not through apologies" (p. 84). In Fortier's discussion of Kahnawà:ke Mohawk activist and scholar Taiaiake Alfred's work, he reflects that "most participants within the anti-authoritarian current see the settler state as incapable of contracting authentic relationships of respect, accountability and responsibility" (p. 86). As I read this, I could understand the despair. And yet, as a writer of settler heritage here in the territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, however, I cannot follow that trail. The modern treaties that I see as negotiating my ability to make my home here draw from the courageous Yukon Indigenous leaders who brought the historic document *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* to Ottawa in 1973. If Indigenous people in the Yukon still hope enough to negotiate with the Canadian and Yukon goverments, I must follow their lead—and do my part to help hold those governments accountable when necessary.

As Fortier considers what "unsettling" might look like, he suggests as one possible starting point that we "accept the partiality of knowledge." He quotes University of Victoria scholar Sarah Hunt / Tłaliłila'ogwa's idea that "the relational, fluid and emergent nature of knowledge means that if we try to fix meaning to the process of unsettling, we are always at risk of missing out on the emergent knowledges and lessons that come from engaging in the act of decolonization itself" (p. 90). As Yukon University, with thirteen campuses throughout the territory, recently changed its identity from Yukon College, it may be uniquely placed to remember that all knowledges are local.

I was grateful to encounter the idea of the "undercommons," which Fortier cites from the work of Americans Stefano Harney and Fred Moten: "the idea that the changes we are seeking will come not from one grand monolithic movement, but rather from small, diverse, and widespread attempts to live outside the dominant logics of our time" (p. 104). This concept made me differently value some of the things I have done and continue to do. It makes change accessible, whether or not large organizational structures bear it up.

It is difficult to live outside the dominant logics of our time without identifying them first. Fortier cites Yellowknives Dene scholar Glen Coulthard, referring to an ongoing history of "rounds of enclosures" that is still taking place (p. 33). For myself, while I engage ideas of the commons in my art practice, I find my understanding of the history, even of the European-derived ways we approach authority over land, to be undereducated. I am inspired that the Whitehorse non-profit organization Northern Community Land Trust is using a different understanding of home ownership to create ongoing affordable housing in the new neighbourhood of Whistle Bend. European-derived concepts of land ownership have come into power comparatively recently here in the Yukon. If we unpack their histories, maybe there are changes we can make. In the meantime, what opportunities are there to make small and diverse gestures towards an unsettled commons in our lives today? Fortier's book introduces us to a community of activists living this question.

For thinkers in the Yukon, meeting these activists with Fortier can support a sense of a wider community that seeks change and inhabits complexities as it engages with this hard work. We are not alone.

Nicole Bauberger is an artist and writer of settler heritage who has made her home in Kwanlin (aka Whitehorse) since 2003. Find out more at http://www.nicolebauberger.com, @nicolebauberger, #baubergernicole.

Cover Art Number 56

Boreal Night

Doug Rutherford
Whitehorse

Doug Rutherford (he/him) is a self-taught visual artist, concentrating on watercolour landscapes of the vistas of the Yukon, northern BC, and Alaska. He is of settler descent.

In keeping with the Robert Service question in his poem "The Spell of the Yukon"—"There's the land. (Have you seen it?)"—Rutherford tries to make available the breathtaking scenery of this wonderful region in small-format paintings.

Boreal Night is watercolour on paper, 11x15.

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