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Sovereignty Matters: States, Security and Climate Change in the Arctic

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ABSTRACT

Inuit and the Government of Canada assign significantly different attributes to construct the defining qualities of Arctic sovereignty. While Government references the tools of security such as boarder defense, Inuit view sovereignty as a fluid concept in which internal and external sovereignties co-exist – a place of inclusion, compromise and harmony. An analysis of these conflicting views of sovereignty provides a backdrop to the relocation of authority. Given that climate change defies borders this research suggests that Arctic states may benefit by adopting a system of co-management toward Arctic governance. Successful implementation of this method could have broad-based implications for international relations.

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Canada's North is the frontline in the global climate change challenge. Nowhere else in our country, or on our planet, are the early effects of climate change so plain. Nowhere else in Canada are communities and traditional ways of life so clearly at risk due to climate change.
(National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy 2009)

In 1965, the Canadian philosopher George Grant (2000: 42) argued “Canadians have to recognize the limitations on sovereignty in a nation that lives beside the most powerful country on earth.” Today, one could argue that climate change will radically impact the already contested concept of sovereignty. Specifically, Canada alongside its neighboring circumpolar states must assess current realities relative to the environmental challenges now widely associated with changing Arctic conditions.

If George Grant’s pronouncement in 1965 was indicative of the tensions confronting the sanctity of state sovereignty at the dawn of globalization, how are we to envision sovereignty given the uncertainties of the twenty-first century? Given current conditions, how might government go beyond its state-centric approach to pan-Arctic relations to generate a regionally based mode of governance? Indeed, in international relations, realism has dominated the political discourse since post-World War II, which is rooted in a “deep-seated will to power” (Guilhot 2011). Concurrently pan-Arctic Inuit are united in their commitment to a rights-based approach to Arctic governance. Inuit aspire to “inclusion as active partners ... [in] all national and international deliberations on Arctic sovereignty” (Inuit Circumpolar Council 2009a). Equally, Inuit seek partnership in the co-management of Canada’s Far North and throughout the Arctic region as a whole. We are undoubtedly at a crossroads as to how best to proceed given the potentially boundless magnitude of climate change. While the state-centric approach to sovereignty prevails,

there is substantial opportunity to reimage the Arctic as a location of collaborative management.

This paper examines the nexus of climate change and sovereignty specifically related to pan-Arctic relations. First, I consider sovereignty in the context of the Government of Canada and its policy position advanced by the 2010 *Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy*. Second, sovereignty viewed alternatively as a “social sovereignty,” regards the sovereign state as but one type of sovereignty: historically other sovereignties have co-existed with state sovereignty (Latham 2000). In light of the 2008 *A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration of Sovereignty in the Arctic* this concept is notably salient. Third, I suggest that the consequences of climate change have contributed to emerging ‘social sovereignties.’ I then compare the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the C40 Cities group as examples of living social sovereignties that coexist alongside state sovereignty. It suggests that leadership is increasingly found in the hands of regional and local powers. This paper concludes by asking: Are we asking the right questions?

Defining Sovereignty: A Concept in Motion

The Government of Canada uses a decidedly different descriptive to define sovereignty than do Inuit. While Government applies the tools of security in defense of territorial boundaries, Inuit view sovereignty as a fluid concept in which internal and external sovereignties coexist. One interpretation is that while Ottawa views the Arctic as a region in need of a traditional defense strategy, Inuit view it as a place of inclusion, compromise and harmony. Shelagh Grant (2010: 402) aptly states: “Arctic sovereignty is no longer simply a legal right to land ownership, but has developed into a broader concept characterized by many shades of grey.”

Indeed, policy maker's grapple with this concept in pursuance of cohesive policy that best articulates the national and geostrategic aspirations of state. Exacerbated by climate change, lingering boundary disputes, alongside increasing access to potential resource extraction has resulted in a ‘use it or lose it’ approach to policy making.

According to The Conference Board of Canada, “The disagreements over the extent of sovereignty rights in the Arctic are fuelled to a large degree by concerns over economic security,” (Rutten 2010).

In the 2006 government research paper, *Canadian Arctic Sovereignty*, the question turned on the defining qualities of sovereignty associated with the nation’s stake in natural resource and the implications of outstanding boundary disputes. The Report (Carnaghan and Goody 2006) states: “Sovereignty is supreme legitimate authority within a territory. ... Supreme authority within a territory implies both undisputed supremacy over the land’s inhabitants and independence from unwanted intervention by an outside authority.” Furthermore because sovereign authority is not an absolute, enforcement of jurisdictional claims requires the allegiance of the polity to put into effect states’ sovereign claims (Philpott 356). From this perspective government has pursued an agenda reminiscent of realpolitik associated with questions of nationalism, power and advancement of state interests. This assumes that internal authority is absolute whereby limitations of authority apply solely to the external state system of international relations (Philpott 357).

However, defining the qualities of sovereignty are ‘somewhat elusive’ from both the perspective of internal and external state relations (Carnaghan and Goody 2006). Historically it has not had one fixed meaning nor does it today. Jurisdictional authority alone does not fully satisfy the conditions prescribed in international law but may also require states to meet conditions of de facto sovereignty (Grant 2010: 12-13).

The Northwest Passage is a case in point. Claimed by Canada as “historic internal waters,” the United States among others argue that it is an international strait which therefore permits uncontested right of passage. Should Canada neglect to enforce jurisdiction, legally this could jeopardize her claim in an international court of law (Carnaghan and Goody 2006), although Canada would retain ownership (Byers 2009: 7). Under current conditions, the escalating effects of climate change put increasing pressure on both Canada and Russia (which claims the Northern Sea Route as internal

waters) to not only claim but also to demonstrate jurisdictional occupancy. Whereas Russia is better prepared to defend its sovereign claim by augmenting its already large fleet of icebreakers with additional military support, Canada is less prepared. As a result of diminished naval capacity, she is “vulnerable to a de facto loss of sovereignty if unable to enforce Canadian maritime regulations in the Arctic” (Grant 2010: 415). Indeed, former National Defence Minister Bill Graham states that, “Sovereignty is a question of exercising, actively, your responsibilities in an area” (Carnaghan and Goody 20006).

Yet, de facto sovereignty goes beyond the symbolic presence of a military capacity and enforcement of capabilities – icebreakers and development of the Nanisivik, Nunavut naval facility do not replace the historic presence of indigenous peoples. It is well known that Inuit ‘use and occupancy’ of the Canadian Arctic and sub-Arctic region has provided a pivotal de facto justification for Canada’s claim to Arctic sovereignty (Carnaghan and Goody 20006). Though necessary, the Canadian Coast Guard and icebreakers do not replace the historic occupancy of Inuit, who, according to Michael Byers (2009: 111-112), provide “the most morally and legally compelling component” of Canada’s sovereign claim. To a great extent Canada’s Arctic policy rests on the historic presence of Inuit but recent Arctic strategy has tended toward development of jurisdictional authority of state.

On August 19, 2010 the Government of Canada released the *Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy* (Canada 2010b), which arguably articulates a heightened state of assertiveness concerning the nation’s sovereign claims. In pursuance of establishing Canada’s role as an Arctic power, her strategic interests are articulated in the four pillars: Exercising Sovereignty; Political Economic and Social Development; Protecting the Arctic Environment; and Improving and Devolving Governance: Empowering the People of the North.

Focused on national interests, the Statement (Canada 2010b) clearly defines its position: “We are putting the full resources of the Government of Canada behind the exercise of

our sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the Arctic.” Indeed, Prime Minister Harper has stated that Canada’s Arctic sovereignty is “non-negotiable.”

To that end, Government aims to implement traditional defense and policing measures either directly or obliquely (for instance, as defense mechanisms intersect with the procurement of natural resources) through “significant new commitments ... to better monitor, protect and patrol its Arctic land, sea and sky and to keep pace with changes in the region” (Canada 2010b: 5). All branches of the nation’s security services including the Canadian Forces, Coast Guard, Canadian Rangers and Royal Mounted Police will be charged with demonstrating an “increased presence in the Arctic.” (Canada 2010b: 5). Investment intended to increase the capacity of the Canadian Forces is slated to result in the launch of the “most powerful icebreaker ever,” new patrol ships and development of berthing and refueling facilities in Nanisivik, Nunavut. Support for NORAD and new technologies are intended to enhance Canada’s surveillance capacity.

Throughout the *Statement*, validation of Canada’s Arctic sovereignty remains central: the policy areas associated with development, environmental protection, and ‘Peoples of the North’ are instrumental to Canada’s national interests.

Promoting Economic and Social Development in the Arctic and sub-Arctic suggests that resource extraction is fundamental to Canada’s Arctic interest. As global demand for energy resources continues to increase, state economic expansion will drive industry-wide growth (Klare 2008: 17). Increasingly, circumpolar nations including Canada are seeking ways by which to securitize resources for this purpose. Potentially, overlapping claims to offshore economic zones could result in an increased “risk of conflict with neighboring states” even if state relations are otherwise friendly (Klare 2008: 21), although this seems highly unlikely given current conditions. In the multilateral 2008 *Ilulissat Declaration*, the five Arctic coastal states prioritized “the orderly settlement of any possible overlapping claims” (Arctic Ocean Conference 2008). And on September 15, 2010 Russia and Norway signed the bilateral *Treaty Concerning Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean* after four decades

of hard negotiation. However, uncertainty remains when the desire for economic expansion tips the pendulum toward securitizing self-interest, potentially leading to cascading and dire consequences (Klare 2008: 225). Unlikely as this may be, the tenor of the *Statement* suggests that Canada is preparing to defend its assets.

Protection of the Arctic Environment has a long-standing history in Canada. As a result of the 1969 voyage by the U.S. supertanker *SS Manhattan* transiting the Northwest Passage without seeking permission from the Canadian government, Canada enacted the *Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act (AWPPA)*. Its purpose was twofold: 1) defense of its historic sovereign claim to the NW Passage and 2) environmental protection. Andrea Charron (2005) notes: “The Act enabled Canada to exercise jurisdiction over shipping in the Passage in order to protect the Arctic marine environment but it did not, in any way, change the position of Canada with respect to their claim of sovereignty over the Passage.” In 2009, application of AWPPA was extended from 100 nautical miles to reflect Chapter 3, Article 234 to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea which allows coastal states to enforce pollution prevention laws up to 200 nautical miles.

Lastly, and discernibly the least developed policy area, *Improving and Devolving Governance: Empowering the Peoples of the North* is vital to Canada’s de facto claim to Arctic sovereignty. As was the case during World War Two and the Cold War, articulations of the historic presence of Inuit have provided a means by which Government validates its de facto claim in the eyes of the international community. Yet, beyond this assertion of national sovereign authority, sovereignty is also associated with the indigenous right to self-determination and the right to attain political aspirations (United Nations). In this respect, according to Byers, “Inuit have already exercised self-determination in a manner that strengthens Canadian sovereignty,” (2009: 8).

However, in light of potential game changing events caused by climate change; are national interests really best served by instituting policy based on the bounded territory? James Der Derian (2007: 192) from Brown University’s Watson Center for International

Studies asserts, “We believe sovereignty will keep us safe.” Yet, today’s “Global events defy sovereignty” (Der Derian 2007: 194).

This strongly suggests that policy makers in Canada, the other circumpolar nations, and beyond may need to consider alternatives to “crude self-interest” (Canada 2010a) to prepare for the life-altering effects of climate change when artificial boundaries are breached by elements outside the control of the state. For instance, given the limited capacity of a nation’s military and security forces, decision makers may be required to emphasize search and rescue capabilities rather than enforcement of jurisdictional sovereignty (Regehr 2010). Certainly, this is not an either/or issue, but rather an important consideration that could well determine the nuances of policy-making when international cooperation becomes an imperative.

Alternate View of Sovereignty

Sovereignty is a contested concept ... and does not have a fixed meaning. Old ideas of sovereignty are breaking down as different governance models, such as the European Union evolve. Sovereignties overlap and are frequently divided within federations in creative ways to recognize the rights of people. (Inuit Circumpolar Council 2009a)

Today, the state is increasingly confronted by extreme weather events and trans-boundary organizations such as multinational corporations, NGOs, and intergovernmental bodies such as the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC). In this context, it places in question the state’s monopoly on sovereignty (Latham 2000: 2). Whereas traditional assumptions of sovereignty have held sway, webs of interconnected actors increasingly play a vital and robust element of a globalized society. Sovereignty must be examined in this light.

To address these fundamental changes outside the exclusive control of state (Shadian 2010: 491), some academics have recast the concept of sovereignty to include non-state actors operating within and across state boundaries. From this perspective, the state remains significant but is relocated as one type of sovereignty within a broader network

of overlapping sovereignties. Robert Latham, Director of York University's Centre for International and Security Studies, developed a theory for which he has coined the term 'social sovereignty', which removes existing barriers to visualizing the potential for a robust interconnected system of state and non-state actors. Latham (2000: 3) describes this concept as follows:

By using the qualifier 'social' in the term 'social sovereignty' I mean that a) sovereignty can attach to a wider range of structures than those only identified as, or of, the state; and b) what is at stake in sovereignty is not the status of the agent (such as state) but of a body of relations that shape spheres of life operating within or even across state boundaries.

For Latham, sovereignty rests not in the agent (for example the king, prime minister, parliament or the state itself) but in the structure and codes within which a social existence operates. Latham (2000: 7) suggests, "whereas authority is an attribute of agents, sovereignty is an attribute of structures." The state, for instance, is structured around laws, codes, legislation and relations between the various governmental institutions. In effect, these attributes provide the agent with the authority to act in the interests of the group. Likewise, a non-state actor such as the ICC, founded in 1977, instituted a charter, by-laws and sub-groups in pursuance of advancing a common Inuit vision. The ICC, like other social sovereignties, derives authority from their ability to "place action and practices, into a meaningful (sovereign) social frame or context" (Latham 2000: 7).

Dominion over a bounded territory is not a necessary attribute of a 'social sovereignty.' In that an organization's 'boundaries' are established by its unique structure and internal codes rather than understood solely by the limitations of territory, trans-boundary organizations can exist independently and alongside state sovereignty. Understood this way, a social sovereignty does not "displace the broad-based forms of governance associated with states." (Latham 2000: 14). Similarly, the non-state organization functions as an autonomous self-governing association and possesses its own form of broad-based governance. Accordingly "the ICC is not seeking statehood nor is it bound

within the traditional limitations of a state operating within the international system” (Shadian 2010: 486).

With the view that both the state and the non-state organization are integral parts of a broad network, it is possible to imagine how collective processes can emerge in place of fragmented and/or endeavors based primarily on self-interest. As Latham (2000: 15) notes however, “we need to theorize the terms of ‘coproduction’ of social sovereignties as it bears on responsibility and the development of collective projects.”

In practice, the assembly of Arctic organizations engaged in a collective endeavor is representative of Latham’s view of a functioning and robust network of social sovereignties. Indeed, the circumpolar network is extensive, linking together a wealth of national, sub-national and pan-Arctic organizations, inclusive of indigenous-based organizations, which to a large extent, aspire to a collaborative governance arrangement based on a human rights approach to environmental protection and sustainable economic development. Concurrently each organization develops and maintains the organization-specific strategy to advance the interests of its specific constituency. For example, Inuit organizations, one of numerable Arctic indigenous groups, comprise a network of actors engaged in the co-production of the sovereign space at the sub-national, national and pan-Arctic level.

Briefly, state specific organizations such as Canada’s nationally based Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (representing the national interest of Canada’s Inuit) and for example, the provincially based Makivik Corporation (legal representative of Inuit of Quebec) advocate for the interests of Canadian Inuit, including, for example, the settlement of land claim agreements, and social and cultural issues specific to Canada. In addition, these nation-based organizations tangentially promote the larger agenda of Inuit across state boundaries. At the pan-Arctic level, the ICC (the organization representing the interests of Inuit from Canada, Greenland, Russia and the United States) promotes the collective “aspirations of changing political ideology and policy at the domestic, regional and international levels” (Shadian 2010: 486). In turn, the ICC is drawn up into the larger

membership of the Arctic community under the umbrella of the Arctic Council (inclusive of Arctic states and other indigenous Arctic groups) forming a distinct space of networked organizations with the authority to affect change (Latham 2000: 10). Individually, these organizations represent social sovereignties that express a degree of autonomy and self-governance that lays “somewhere between total independence” and integration into the central authority of state (Latham 2000: 15).

To put this in perspective, Mary Simon’s resume epitomizes the breadth of Arctic activity. Now President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Simon was a lead negotiator in creation of the Arctic Council. She was elected President of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (now Council) in 1986 and served for two terms. From 1999 to 2001, she served as Canada’s Ambassador to Denmark. While this represents the activities of an individual it also demonstrates the interconnectivity of Arctic organizations.

Given that a well defined network of Inuit-based organizations have established Inuit as influential political actors, how might we recast sovereignty writ large to enhance an agenda of collective life in the Arctic region? In light of state and international inaction on climate change, implementing a regionally based Arctic code of conduct will take more than state action to provide the parameters of sustainable development.

Arctic Climate Change: When Threat Defies Borders

There is no shortage of scientific climate change research and data. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (2010) provide near-real time data of Arctic sea ice extent. The University of Colorado’s Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research develops scientific knowledge and applies it to improving society’s understanding of environmental change. Likewise, researchers from the University’s Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (2010) and NOAA partnered with Inuit after scientific data did not match up with Inuit observations. Elizabeth Weatherhead of CIRES (2010) noted: “With the Inuit, it’s much more of an experiential issue, and I think that fundamental difference brings a completely different emphasis both in defining what

the important scientific questions are, and discerning how to address them.” As a result, statistical data now reflects the historical observations of Inuit.

In the 2009, Canada’s National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) report, *True North: Adapting Infrastructure to Climate Change in Northern Canada*, research and data reflected the findings of a wide range of scientists and stakeholders. NRTEEs (2009: 7) essential message: “Canada’s North is on the frontline of climate change. Nowhere else are the effects and stakes of failing to adapt so high.” Yet, despite reports such as NRTEEs, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions remain high world over. In North America, neither Canada nor the United States have adopted a comprehensive strategy to mitigate the effects GHG emissions. In 2008, the United States ranked third in total GHG emissions per capita and Canada ranked 4th despite signing onto the Kyoto Protocol (World Resource Institute 2010).

State leaders attempted to implement a legally binding treaty on emission reductions at the Copenhagen 2009 UN Climate Change Conference but to no avail. Governments continue to disagree on a common set of regulations for either adaptation or mitigation. Though President Obama, indicated that political agreement was foreseeable prior to Copenhagen, the conference was marked by “bitter divisions, confusion and setbacks,” according to the Pew Center on Global Climate Change (2009).

Failure to reach consensus on GHG emissions reduction raises an interesting point. Where national and global leadership has largely failed, efforts to reduce emissions are occurring at the trans-national and sub-national level. Provinces and Territories in Canada alongside US States, and numerous cities worldwide, have implemented collaborative strategies to tackle site-specific challenges with broad-range implications. This networked approach establishes a basis from which the exchange of information is maximized and applied to localized solutions to sustainable development with an overall improvement to infrastructure and quality of life. By consenting to a common set of guiding principles these networked associations of socially cohesive groups are creating a framework from which socio-political power can develop. In so far as these networks can

affect change, authority is derived from putting into action the agreed upon goals (Latham 2000: 7).

Change Makers: The Unlikely Affinity between the ICC and C40 Cities

Studies provide ample evidence that members of the general public are ill-informed about science in general, and climate change in particular.
(Sterman and Booth Sweeney 2007: 234)

Evidence shows that while most Americans believe that climate change poses a serious risk, an overall complacency remains toward mitigation policy. In part, this may result from the complexity of climate science and attitudes of the public and policymakers who “underestimate the magnitude of the emissions reductions required to stabilize atmospheric GHG concentrations” (Sterman and Booth Sweeney 2007: 234). This low support for mitigation policies and miscalculations regarding the breadth of climate change makes it that much more critical to place the linkages of networks into a broader context. To that end, I will draw on the climate change strategies of the ICC and C40 Cities group. Both of these networks seek to mitigate the harsh effects of climate change while planning for sustainable economic development.

Both the ICC and C40 Cities group are considered in the context of living social sovereignties functioning within and across state boundaries, and engaged in affecting a political outcome. The ICC has implemented climate change strategy that now resonates beyond the boundaries of the Arctic region. While the C40 Cities initiative has had observable success in harnessing the political will of city leaders. Both have demonstrated a significant degree of leadership.

The Inuit Circumpolar Council

The idea of a pan-Arctic Inuit organization had modest beginnings. In 1973 the various Northern indigenous groups convened the Arctic Peoples Conference to discuss their common interests. The Inuit participants (Alaskan and Russian Inuit were unable to

attend) decided that Inuit needed to assemble as a united group. In 1977 Inuit from Canada, Alaska and Greenland (Russia's Inuit were unable to attend) held the first Inuit Circumpolar Conference in Barrow Alaska at which time the delegates "affirmed the need to express their concerns, and their right to self-government" (Grant 2010: 370-371). A sub-group, comprising representatives from each country, was tasked with writing the organizations Charter and sought input from individual Inuit communities. At that same meeting the ICC set forth its mandate to preserve the Arctic environment. (Shadian 2010: 488) and proposed an operating budget of \$1.5 million. Funding was sought from a variety of government and non-government institutions, including selected oil and gas companies. Shelagh Grant (2010: 372) notes that although the governments of Canada, Denmark and the US gave modest funding, "few senior politicians took their resolutions and determination seriously, perhaps a miscalculation considering the major influence the ICC would have on future Arctic affairs." The ICC holds a General Assembly every four years to strategize for the forthcoming years. Resolutions as elevated as *A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic*, represents the decisive action which has advanced the ICC as a recognized political organization.

In 1983 the ICC was granted status as a non-governmental organization by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (Grant 2010: 381). Two years later they played a key role in the drafting of the *Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, adopted in 2007. And in 1991 they were influential participants in the "Finish Initiative" (Grant 2010: 387) which resulted in the *Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy* signed by the eight Arctic states – Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States. When the Arctic Council (AC) was founded in 1996, to a great extent the ICC was considered an important political partner (Shadian 2010: 488). They continue as a key actor in the AC where they maintain status as a Permanent Participant (Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada).

In 1992 the ICC passed the *Comprehensive Arctic Policy*, after a decade of difficult consensus building. Although Inuit are a united people, because Inuit live in four different countries decisions are influenced by these diverse histories (Grant 2010: 389).

In comparison to the state-based Arctic policy statements from Canada, the US and Russia, Shelagh Grant (2010: 447) argues that the Inuit *Arctic Policy* is “likely the most comprehensive and far-reaching policy to date.” Despite this, states do not reference Inuit Policy.

The ICC never strayed from its original mandate of environmental protection, yet its strategy is increasingly sophisticated. As an example, in 2003 the ICC Executive Council adopted Resolution 2003-01, *Climate Change and Inuit Human Rights* (2003), with the aim to “develop and implement a political, legal, and media climate change strategy” that would draw “the attention of international agencies and decision-makers.” Early that year, the ICC Executive Council had met with attorney’s Martin Wagner of Earth Justice and Donald Goldberg of the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), which began proceedings against the United States for human rights violations resulting from climate change. Lloyd Axworthy, former Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed that if called upon he would lend his political and fundraising support.

In December 2005 Sheila Watt-Cloutier, then Chair of the ICC, filed the petition with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights with the support of Earth Justice and CIEL. It claimed that U.S. climate change policy had violated Inuit human rights. The petition was dismissed without prejudice in 2006 (Center for International Environmental Law 2008b). At a subsequent hearing in 2007, ICC attorney’s Goldberg and Wagner testified as to the effects of climate change on Inuit and extended the argument to other vulnerable communities (Center for International Environmental Law 2008a). Although the case went no further, it raised considerable media attention (Aminzadeh 2007:261).

As an advocate for climate change policy and Inuit rights, Watt-Cloutier has articulated a discourse that now resonates far beyond the Arctic region. As a result of the ICC petition filed with the IAHCR, she was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize alongside Al Gore. Whereas Gore’s 2003 film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, put the climate change debate firmly into the recesses of the public imagination, Watt-Cloutier was instrumental in negotiating treaties (Rockel 2010).

In September 1999 Shelia Watt-Cloutier, then Chair of ICC Canada, (later to chair ICC international from 2002-2006) testified at the United Nations panel on the effects of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). POPs, which include a wide variety of pesticides and industrial pollutants such as DDT, had entered the Arctic ecosystem, contaminating local foods. Watt-Cloutier argued that “concentrations of certain POPs in Inuit women’s blood and breast milk are five to ten times higher than women in southern Canada” (Nativenews 1999). After considerable negotiations, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants entered into force in 2004. According to Shadian (2010: 502), “The ICC, through political persistence and a savvy media campaign, became an influential political actor throughout the discussions.”

In 2008 ICC Chair, Patricia Cochran, addressed the impact of permafrost thaw on infrastructure at the *International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples & Climate Change*. Coastal erosion of up to 100 feet had damaged houses, airports and roads to the extent that entire Inuit villages were forced to relocate at great expense. In Shishmaref, Alaska, seawater had contaminated the drinking water supply and the town dump threatened to spill its contents into the sea, contaminating marine life for years to come. Cochran (2008) argued: “we refuse to play the role of powerless victim.”

Leading up to COP15 in December 2009, Aqqaluk Lynge, now Chair of the ICC, went to Scotland at the invitation of the *Royal Scottish Geographical Society* where he addressed the nexus of colonization and climate change, and the role of self-determination (Inuit Circumpolar Council).

Drawing on past experience where foreign whalers, missionaries and colonizers produced “culture-changing” events, Lynge equates the effects of climate change to the next harsh reality already insinuating itself into Inuit culture. Where the presence of colonizers and missionaries threatened to destroy Inuit society through a process of domination, Lynge now cautions western scientists not to do the same.

Furthermore, shifting mores, institutionalized in various United Nations doctrines dropped barriers to the pursuit of self-determination. Canada's largest and most comprehensive land claims agreement resulted in the creation of Nunavut with de facto "self-government" (Légaré 2008: 347). Greenland, which Lyngé refers to as a "country," is clearly the most independent Inuit region having attained self-government in 2009. Both have established a unique form of governance that combines Inuit elements with that of their respective federal governments. But neither has escaped the consequences of colonization. Put simply, high suicide rates may be the result of dependency and modernization (Légaré 2008, Allvoices 2010). Lyngé (2009) notes: "We have a duality that we must come to understand better."

The paradox of Inuit self-determination lies at the doorstep of modernization. Lyngé situates the dilemma as such: If self-determination is the goal then what does this require in terms of development? In the case of Greenland, the financial gains made from oil and gas exploitation could lead to full independence but exploitation of resources could further accelerate the effects of climate change. At once, Inuit are drawn up into the web of globalization potentially contributing to the very thing they were trying to prevent – environmental degradation. While "Self-determination is regarded as the 'right' to participate in the process of development," (Shadian (2010: 488), it also represents the living paradox of Inuit society today.

I should note that while little mention has been made of *A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic*, it is a highly significant document. Application of its guiding principles will evolve over time setting the tone of future Inuit to state relations. Informative of that process is the accumulation of evidence that demonstrates how Inuit discourse has evolved over the course of 34 years and come to influence the broader debate on climate change and human rights.

C40 Cities Group

Like Inuit Circumpolar Council leaders, city leaders must focus on long-term strategy that includes emission reductions in conjunction with economic growth. While cities stand to affect localized solutions to climate change, a networked city system has broad implications. The science journal, *Nature* notes:

With nations largely paralyzed on this front, cities have emerged as a testing ground for cutting greenhouse gas emissions and for adapting to the changes that warming will bring (Rosenzweig et al. 2010).

Founded in 2005 the C40 Cities group is a city-based climate leadership initiative working in partnership with *Clinton Climate Initiative* (CCI) to implement large-scale projects aimed at greatly reducing city GHG emissions. The C40 Cities group states: “Climate change is the **most pressing environmental, social and economic problem facing the planet**. The consequences of climate change are global and long-term” (C40 Cities b). As a global initiative, 40 global cities from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to Lima, Peru, London, New York and Toronto have established a networked approach to information sharing and seek to demonstrate leadership on climate change strategy (C40 Cities a).

With more than half the world’s population now living in cities, urban centers consume 75 percent of the world’s energy and are responsible for more than 80 percent of GHG emissions (C40 Cities 2010). Recognizing that cities have been complicit in creating the problem, they must also be part of the solution.

City leaders and planners are in the challenging position of having to draw information from a wide network of often-disconnected disciplines to establish strategy and policy. However, the process requires the expertise of scientists, academics, business and finance to establish the best possible outcome. As is the case with all disciplines, it is critical that scientific data and knowledge not be confined to the annals of industry journals but must flow to policy-makers in order to make a difference (Nature 2010).

CCIs *Climate Positive Development Program* is working toward bridging these gaps. Garnering the knowledge and capacity of industry specific experts, the *Program* places specialists on the ground to help facilitate large-scale projects aimed at improving the efficiencies of the urban development. To date, cities on 6 continents have been selected, based on their commitment to leadership, to receive the full range of CCIs *Program*. Based on the site-specific needs, support includes technical, purchasing and financial assistance, as well as project coordination (Clinton Climate Initiative). *Program* goals range from improvements in ‘green’ building practices; energy efficiencies that produce 100 percent clean energy; waste management strategies that result in zero waste; and transportation initiatives that shift habits away from automobiles and toward walking, biking and public transportation (C40 Cities c).

New York City is one location that has implemented long-term strategy. In December 2006, Mayor Bloomberg initiated plans that would result in a “greener, greater” NYC. With the goal of a 30 percent reduction in GHG emissions below 2005 levels, as of 2010 citywide emissions had dropped 9 percent (C40 Cities 2010). As proposed in *Plan NYC*, improvements to building practices, water quality, the transportation and energy sector are expected to reduce the effects of climate change and improve the overall quality of life (New York City).

Yet long-term planning has its challenges. In 2008, Bloomberg proposed legislation that would have imposed a vehicle congestion tax of \$8. This dual purposed legislation aimed to reduce weekday traffic and the tax revenues applied to financing improvements of the New York City transit system. After a bitter fight the legislation failed to reach the floor of the City Assembly and the New York State legislature allowed the clock to run out before a vote was taken. The city lost out on \$354 million in federal mass transit aid to the city of Chicago (Environment and Urban Economics 2008). Greatly annoyed, the Mayor stated: “It takes a special type of cowardice for elected officials to refuse to stand up and vote their consciences on an issue that has been debated” (Confessore 2008).

Although the legislation failed to pass, the alternative transportation sector is undergoing a renaissance. *Plan NYC* promotes cycling as a healthy mode of emission-free, low-cost travel. With a proposed plan for 1,800 miles of bike lanes by 2030, 504 miles are designed to include median street parking that separates bikers from oncoming vehicle traffic (New York).

Clearly, as part of a grand strategy the addition of bike lanes are modest compared to large-scale improvements to infrastructure. Yet as a means for shifting public thinking and behavior closer to environmentally sustainable action, its effect is considerable in a city far removed from the present effects of climate change.

Nevertheless, although the C40 Cities initiative represents the significant value of political will paired with networked approach to climate change strategy and urban development, this approach still hits roadblocks (Schroeder and Bulkeley 2009). In a 2009 comparative study of climate change policy in two of the C40 cities, London and Los Angeles, the authors conclude that despite increasing political will, policy attention and project delivery, (Schroeder and Bulkeley 2009: 338) city leaders meet with limitations to “perform climate change policy [which] is somewhat determined by legal frameworks at national or state levels” (Schroeder and Bulkeley 2009: 358). However, to a large extent the degree to which self-governance has been achieved has been an important first step toward addressing the challenges of urbanization and emissions reductions. As members of a transnational network, cities are driven in part by competition to get their house in order (Schroeder and Bulkeley 2009: 352). In balance, where implementation of energy efficiencies have shown a significant degree of success when applied to the government infrastructure, overcoming resistance from the business community is complex due to the associated costs (Schroeder and Bulkeley 2009: 358-359).

Self-Governance

Self-governance is considered an important first step toward implementing climate change policy. Yet in both the case of the Inuit Circumpolar Council and C40 Cities initiative, the degree to which self-governance is attained is partially predicated on the ability of the actor to negotiate through a complex web of overlapping regimes and/or institutions. For instance, the ICC is compelled to negotiate through a web of local, pan-Arctic, national and transnational institutions to advance its primary goals – environmental protection and sustainable equitable development. We have yet to fully understand the extent of complexity with which negotiations take place across multiple levels of fragmented institutions.

In so far as the ICC and C40 Cities initiative have attained conditional self-governance, they should also be considered within the context of emerging social sovereignties as they overlap with the sovereign state. Where the state may value order above freedom, self-contained social sovereignties may come into tension with the state. Nevertheless these actors have recognized gaps in the system resulting in change that could ultimately benefit the state.

Conclusion

In closing I want to clarify any possible confusion as to where my imagination is located. Throughout the writing process an aerial view map of the Arctic has been in clear view – the Arctic Ocean surrounded by the Nordic countries to the far right, sitting next to the Russian Federation, followed by Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Iceland. It is a world that few of us will know first-hand. And for this reason perhaps it is difficult to comprehend the potential, and might I say necessity, of giving serious consideration to regional governance by those located far from the Arctic Circle. As climate change increasingly pressures non-state actors to develop creative solutions to site-specific challenges, the more likely that local and regional forms of governance will take shape.

Sovereignty understood within the confines of territory appears not to resolve the complexities of climate change where extreme weather events defy borders. State-centric territorial claims resulting in status quo solutions driven primarily by the potential for economic gain, with little consideration of the environment is unsustainable in the long run. But economic interests are not only within the purview of the state but are also a driving force behind the actions of non-state and sub-state actors who are attempting to balance sustainable development with the encroaching effects of climate change.

We can look at this, two ways: the state can recognize that these growing networks of social sovereignties are of benefit to stability or the state can contribute to a potentially fragmented and unsustainable outcome. Where the state focuses primarily on the opportunities associated with resource extraction, shipping and reshaping the extent of state authority through the acquisition of additional economic exclusivity over Arctic waters, Inuit and other Arctic peoples are faced with the real life implications of climate change. There is no doubt in my mind that Inuit will not take a backseat to the will of the state. What started as a simple idea in 1973 – Inuit must unite – has developed into a sophisticated plan of action for the twenty-first century and beyond.

On February 25, 2011, Inuit Circumpolar Council leaders concluded a two-day Summit on Resource Development. Leaders were tasked with developing a common front on resource development such as offshore drilling and the mining of uranium. Consensus was not reached due in part to disagreement on the level of extraction. However, leaders committed to developing a set of guiding principles that include guidelines for sustainable practices and establish Inuit as the primary beneficiaries of resource development (Rogers 2011).

I ask, who are the legitimate stakeholders? Will jurisdictional sovereignty be sufficient or will government policy makers face increasing pressure to consider the ramifications of the de facto presence of Arctic peoples? Admittedly, there are more questions than answers to this complex set of issues, but I suggest that it is important to question the perspective from where we sit. New questions regarding the capacity of emerging social

sovereignties may well arise in response to challenges encountered by the sovereign state.

Climate change is the game changer of the twenty-first century.

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