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The Inuit Circumpolar Council: Reconceptualizing Regional Governance

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Abstract

This research seeks to explain the formation of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) in 1977 and its prominent role in Arctic regional governance today. The Inuit are an indigenous people who have lived in the Arctic since time immemorial. Understanding the Inuit as regional actors has taken on a new importance as climate change and growing international economic and strategic interests bring new attention to the Arctic. The Inuit Circumpolar Council was formed as an international indigenous peoples organization to unite the Inuit of Canada, Greenland, the United States, and Russia. The ICC has been examined in the literature as a case of the Inuit reconceptualizing sovereignty and as a case for the development of multilevel or global governance, however the theoretical focus of the literature fails to examine the origins of the Inuit Circumpolar Council or trace its development as a regional actor. This paper rectifies this gap by building on an interdisciplinary literature of sovereignty, governance, and self-determination by scholars of international relations, indigenous peoples, regional institutions, and legal studies to trace the formation of the Inuit Circumpolar Council and its development as a regional actor. Process tracing is used within a single case study to analyze institutional and government archival sources, anthropological texts, and histories. This research demonstrates that the causal mechanism of Inuit governance building explains the formation of the ICC through a two-part iterative process in which change from intruding governance structures are met by Inuit assertions of self-determination. The formation of the Inuit Circumpolar Council was vital to international Inuit governance building because the ICC served as the conduit through which the Inuit organized transnationally and participated in international organizations.

Keywords: Inuit, Governance, Arctic

1. Introduction

A study of the Arctic today requires an interdisciplinary approach that acknowledges the relationship between the people and environment as it has evolved since the onset of European colonialism. This research examines why the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) was formed in 1977 and how the ICC has influenced Arctic regional governance.[1] The Inuit are the largest indigenous population in the Arctic with their people stretching from Russia across the United States and Canada to Greenland.[2] Studying the Inuit allows us to understand how indigenous peoples have been able to act beyond Westphalian state borders to shape global governance. The ICC was formed as the transnational non-governmental organization that represents the Inuit of Canada, Greenland, the United States, and Russia as one people internationally. This research builds upon a literature of sovereignty, governance, and self-determination to analyze the expansion of Inuit governance institutions. This expansion of Inuit governance occurred at the local level through the formation of the North Slope Borough, at the transnational level through the formation of the ICC, and at the international level through the formation of the Arctic Council. By using the methods of process tracing within a single paradigmatic case study, this research demonstrates that the causal mechanism of Inuit governance building explains the formation of the ICC through a two-part iterative process in which change from intruding governance structures

are met by Inuit assertions of self-determination. The formation of the Inuit Circumpolar Council was vital to international Inuit governance building because the ICC served as the conduit through which the Inuit organized transnationally and participated in international organizations.

2. Theoretical Frameworks

This research examines the literature of sovereignty, governance, and self-determination by scholars of international relations (IR), indigenous peoples, regional institutions, and legal studies in order to examine the origins of the ICC. IR scholarship has struggled to recognize indigenous perspective because the concepts and theories of the discipline are still largely centered on state based understandings of sovereignty and politics drawn from Western history, though the literature of indigeneity has emerged within IR as scholars have observed indigenous politics being pursued 'translocally.'[3] These IR scholars argue that Inuit governance structures at the local, regional, national, and international level have expanded the conception of sovereignty beyond that of the Westphalian nation-state system.[4] The multilateral governance structures that the Inuit have constructed in the Arctic form an Inuit polity.[5] This Inuit polity extends Inuit sovereignty beyond the borders of individual states by abstracting sovereignty beyond physical territory and the state.[6] Shadian argues that, rather than pursuing sovereignty through statehood within the traditional state-centric framework, "Inuit political aspirations for self-determination have encompassed a stewardship approach or rights over their historically claimed Arctic territories and the resources which accompany the region."[7] Significantly, the literature of indigeneity provides a foundation through which to understand how the Inuit have normatively constructed sovereignty beyond the Westphalian state.[8]

There is a difference though, between studying indigenous peoples in their own right as political actors and incorporating them within developed theories of IR.[9] Neta Crawford's examination of *The Great Law of Peace*, a founding document of the Iroquois Confederation, is situated within a realist framework that argues the Iroquois League was an early security regime.[10] In response to Crawford, Bedford and Workman write, "the interest that the author finds in *The Great Law of Peace* does not lie in the uniqueness of the Iroquoian confederacy but rather in its supposedly (Western) democratic character."[11] Both perspectives acknowledge indigenous perspectives and history within IR, but Crawford co-opts the Iroquois Confederacy within a realist world order, while other IR scholar's draw upon the constructivist theory of indigeneity to acknowledge a transformation of IR as indigenous people reconstruct the world order.[12] The literature of indigeneity aims to recognize the colonial construction of indigeneity and therefore overcome it by incorporating indigenous perspectives into IR.[13] This paper seeks to build upon the literature of indigeneity in order to uncover the processes by which the Inuit have gained political agency in the Arctic and internationally.

Regionalism scholars offer a way to bring together the literature of indigeneity with the literature of regionalism through the study of norms and the construction of the 'multiplex world order' that reimagines the Westphalian construction of the international system.[14] In regards to norms and the construction of regional orders, Acharya first argues that constructivist scholars need to understand norm creation and diffusion as a bottom up process, occurring at the local level. Second, Acharya asserts that there has been a general neglect of normative behavior in Third World countries and their regional institutions. Finally, he argues that acknowledging the normative agency of Third World countries will help shift the understanding of order-building beyond that of a Western enterprise.[15] This approach to the study of norms and regions serves as a theoretical wellspring for studying the Inuit by building on the literature of Third World countries using regional organization to assert their sovereignty. A limitation to Acharya's argument though, is the state centric focus of its analysis.[16] The analysis of the ICC and the Inuit in this paper builds on Acharya's theories, while also incorporating indigenous peoples within the literature of the 'multiplex world order.'[17] Countries and people on the periphery are reshaping the dynamics of regional and global governance, whether in the High North or Global South. Understanding the development of this multiplex world order is necessary for understanding the development of Inuit regional governance. This scholarship supports the argument that the Inuit formation of the regional governance through the ICC reflects a paradigm shift within global governance.

Legal studies scholars have examined how sovereignty and self-determination have been reconstructed through domestic and international law.[18] The international legal norm of self-determination has been constructed through bodies, including the United Nations and the International Labor Organization.[19] International law shapes the capacity for indigenous activism beyond the state and is deeply tied into the Inuit discourse around sovereignty and governance. Settlers and explorers treated the lands of the Arctic indigenous peoples as *terra nullius*, land belonging to no one, and because of this, various Arctic indigenous peoples straddle national boundaries today, such as the Saami being spread across Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia.[20] States have also used indigenous people, including the Inuit, to justify territorial claims.[21] This research utilizes the legal studies literature of self-determination and sovereignty

to better contextualize Inuit legal efforts to gain self-determination through domestic governance and internationally through the ICC.

Altogether, the literature of sovereignty, governance, and self-determination by scholars of international relations, regional institutions, and legal studies critically informs the research of the expansion of Inuit governance within the international system. The theoretical literature informs how the causal mechanisms linking shifts in Inuit governance are operationalized. Furthermore, this research contributes to the literature of indigenous peoples' sovereignty and self-determination efforts within the context of this case study.

3. Methodology

This research takes the form of a single paradigmatic case study based on the work of Bent Flyvbjerb, wherein I trace the evolution of Inuit governance in response to causal mechanisms that will be outlined below.[22] To justify a paradigmatic case study, Flyvberg writes "all that researchers can do is use their experience and intuition to assess whether they believe a given case is interesting in a paradigmatic context and whether they can provide collectively acceptable reasons for the choice of case."[23] This case is justified because the expansion of Inuit governance represents an expansion of sovereignty beyond the bounds of the Westphalian state and is indicative of an emerging multiplex world order. By working with a paradigmatic case, this research will pursue an inductive approach to uncovering meaning within the data. Data is drawn from the archives of Eben Hopson, the founder of the ICC, government and institutional records from Alaska, the ICC, and the Arctic Council, news reports, and from secondary histories of the Inuit. Although this research is limited by a lack of access to Inuit leaders and non-digitized records, the data available is sufficient to represent the rich narrative of Inuit history and interactions with Western institutions over time.

This research uses explaining-outcome process tracing as method of analysis to trace causal mechanisms in order to produce a comprehensive explanation of a particular historical outcome.[24] This is an iterative research strategy, where there is a continual juxtaposition between empirical data and theory.[25] A systems understanding of mechanisms is employed, through which causal mechanisms are theorized as systems of interlocking parts that transmit forces between a cause and outcome.[26] This research identifies a two-part mechanism of Inuit governance building that serves as a model for understanding the building of governance institutions at the local, transnational, and international level. The intrusion of external governance structures into Inuit space is a mechanism of change that led to a response mechanism as the Inuit pursued self-determination. The intrusion of external governance structures into Inuit space is operationalized as social, political, and economic systems altering the status quo in Inuit space. The Inuit pursuit of self-determination is operationalized as activism and organization focused around the building of new governance institutions. The change mechanism of intruding external governance structures exerted influence on Inuit political, social, and economic institutions. These institutions of Inuit governance then shifted to adapt to the intruding Western institutions, while the Inuit also pursue self-determination. Forces are exerted in both directions as *change* is met by *response* in an iterative process, which results in constitutive institutions that incorporate both intruding governance structures and Inuit governance structures. There are challenges to measuring these mechanisms with certainty, but the empirical historical data and theoretical literature makes it possible to derive internally valid findings with this case study. This research does not aim to be generalizable, though the examination of empirical data and analysis of causal mechanisms may inform further research.

4. Analysis

In 1976, in the planning document for the first Inuit Circumpolar Conference, Mayor Eben Hopson wrote: "As the search for Arctic oil and gas mounts, we Inuit must organize to shoulder more effectively our responsibilities of stewardship over our Arctic homeland…This level of community organization will require great international cooperation."[27] The organization of the first ICC was necessary because the Arctic was changing rapidly. Interactions between Inuit and Europeans had revolved around trade relationships for centuries. In the 1850s, white whalers arrived in the Arctic and began to settle there, causing changes in patterns of economic and social life, population distribution, and technology.[28] As more and more Europeans looked to the Arctic for its valuable resources, the story of exploitation was repeated over and over again. The Inuit saw the resources, which had supported them for millennia, vastly diminished and they saw in many cases their ways of life greatly altered. Trading posts were followed by missionaries and eventually residential schools, mirroring the expansion of colonialism that had first claimed the indigenous peoples and lands to the south. In order to uncover the events that led to the formation of the ICC, this research first

examines the intrusion of outside governance structures in Alaska and the Inuit pursuit of sovereignty through the formation of the North Slope Borough in Alaska. This focus makes it possible to observe the two-part causal mechanism at the local level. It is then possible to understand how Inuit governance institutions expanded beyond national boundaries in the Arctic.

The history of the North Slope Borough is tied closely to the development of petroleum in the Arctic because it was oil and gas exploration that fueled the Alaska land claims movement. The large naturally-occurring oil seepages on the North Slope near Cape Simpson were first "discovered" and reported by Europeans in 1917. By 1921, two groups of oil claims had been staked by private companies in the region.[29] In 1923, President Harding issued an executive order establishing Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 (Pet 4) in Arctic Alaska to provide for future military needs after World War I. From 1926 to 1943 little attention was paid to Pet 4, but the military demand for petroleum during World War II highlighted the geostrategic significance of the region.[30] It was the discovery of oil in Prudhoe Bay in 1969, though, that provided the final impetus for a legislative settlement of Alaska Native land claims, as oil companies eager to begin development on the North Slope were unwilling to do so until the title to lands had been clearly established.[31]

Unlike the experience of Native Americans in the lower forty-eight states, Alaska Natives never entered into any formal treaties with the U.S. government and thus had not relinquished their aboriginal sovereignty rights.[32] In 1936, the extension of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) to Alaska allowed Native villages to form federally recognized governments. Alaska Natives participated in village operated IRA-corporations and nonprofit development groups. After World War II, new economic and social opportunities drew Inuit to the large villages of the North Slope to work in the exploration of Pet 4 and on the construction of the military DEW-line facilities.[33] The post-war expansion of the U.S. federal government into Inuit life and Alaskan statehood in 1959 was an intrusion of outside governance structures into Inuit space, but before 1972 there was no strong governmental organization through which the Inuit on the North Slope could influence socioeconomic change. This would change in the 1960s as Inuit faced two serious threats to life as they knew it.

At the dawn of the nuclear age in 1953, President Eisenhower gave his famous "Atoms for Peace" speech before the United Nations and put forth a plan to study peacetime applications for nuclear technology.[34] The United States initiated nuclear power research projects around the world. The Suez Crisis in the fall of 1956, however, was the impetus for the formation of the Atomic Energy Commission's (AEC) "Project Plowshare" program. AEC scientists were interested in creating a sea level canal through Central America to showcase the potential of U.S. nuclear technology, but they needed a test case on American soil first to prove the project's safety to the world. They chose Alaska as the site. The AEC proposed "Project Chariot," in which they would use a series nuclear detonations to dredge a deep-water harbor at Cape Thompson near the Inuit community of Point Hope on the North Slope. There was wide consensus in Alaska that such a harbor would have no utility, but plans moved forward regardless.[35] Inuit activists organized on the North Slope in opposition to Project Chariot, bringing to attention the danger of nuclear fallout to the local community at Point Hope and the wider threat to the Arctic environment through the intrusion of outside governance structures.

Along with the threat of nuclear fallout, Inuit faced repeated challenges to their subsistence hunting rights. The 1916 Migratory Bird Treaty signed by the United States, Canada, and Mexico restricted hunting of migratory birds to a short season, but this law had never been enforced in Alaska until May 20, 1961. On that date a federal game warden arrested a Barrow resident for shooting geese out of season and nine days later an Inuk man was arrested for the possession of an eider duck. The next day, the game warden awoke to find 138 hunters lined up outside of his hotel, each with a duck in his hand and demanding to be arrested.[36] The Inuit had long hunted migratory birds as they arrived in the spring. When a village had not taken a whale the year before, the birds meant survival. The Migratory Bird Treaty did not account for the indigenous peoples who lived at latitudes where most birds would be far to the south come legal hunting season, reserving the legal harvest for white hunters. While on the North Slope meeting with people at Point Hope, the Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA) official, La Verne Madigan, also flew to Barrow to hear about the struggle over hunting rights. The AAIA agreed to provide legal and investigative services for the Inuit and to underwrite a conference on native rights in Barrow.[37]

On November 15, 1961, over 200 Inuit from across the North Slope crammed into conference hall and had the opportunity to hear concerns shared by villages that had long had only limited contact with one another. Through local activism the Inuit came up with steps the state and federal governments could take to adequately meet their needs, such as building a high school on the North Slope so their children would not have to travel over 1,000 miles south to Sitka for school.[38] On the issues of land and hunting rights, the Inuit position was clear: "We deny the right of the Bureau of Land Management to dispose of land claimed by a native village…"[39] These organization efforts of the late-1950s and early-1960s brought Inuit together and allowed them to speak with a common voice, asserting their sovereignty by defeating Project Chariot and setting in motion the formation of the North Slope Borough.

In 1959, the Alaska Statehood Act was passed, authorizing Alaska to select over 100 million acres of land from the vacant, unappropriated, or unreserved public land in Alaska. When the state of Alaska began its selection of lands on the North Slope with oil development potential in 1966, the Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA) was formed by a group of young Inuit to contest these efforts.[40] The ASNA was one of a number of land claims organizations formed in the state that supported Inuit organization in opposition to the intrusion of outside governance structures. It supported Inuit claims to all 58 million acres of the North Slope. The oil and gas discovery at Prudhoe Bay in 1968 made ASNA land claims more contentious, but bolstered the Inuit appeal for jobs, housing, and schools on the North Slope.[41] The ASNA demanded regional governance to meet Inuit needs and set in motion the formation of a borough government.[42] President Nixon, in 1971, signed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) into law as a federal resolution to aboriginal land claims in Alaska.[43] The ANCSA created a corporate structure and shareholding to organize the distribution of land and settlement funds to Alaska Natives. It extinguished aboriginal claims to about 366 million acres in Alaska, in exchange for an award of 44 million acres and about $962.5 million. The ANCSA did not settle the debate surrounding Inuit autonomy and self-determination, despite the Inuit support for the land claims movement, because the ANCSA represented a further intrusion of outside governance into Inuit life.

On July 1, 1972, the North Slope Borough, comprising the entire Alaskan North Slope, was incorporated as a first-class borough and formed a municipal government.[44] Leaders in the North Slope Borough gained support for a transfer of powers from the village governments to the borough government. In 1974, the home-rule charter was ratified, which provided a legal basis for centralized governance in the North Slope Borough with a mayor-assembly structure that gave the mayor powers of appointment, legislation, and administration.[45] Eben Hopson, an early leader in the ASNA, was mayor of the North Slope Borough from its incorporation in 1972 until his death in 1980. Hopson's political career began in 1946 as a member of the Barrow City Council and later as mayor. He also served in the Alaska Territorial House of Representatives, in the State Senate, after Alaskan statehood, and as special assistant for Native Affairs in Governor Office under Willian Egan. This political activity and his active work in the land claims movement with the ASNA allowed Hopson to draw upon his broad experience to build strong institutions in the North Slope Borough through robust self-governance.[46] The North Slope of the early 20th century was transformed by increased interaction between the federal and state governments and the Native populations. Hopson was involved in the land claims movement and had gained experience working in government that made him a strong leader during the early years of the North Slope Borough and a central figure in the formation of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference. The formation of the North Slope Borough represented an Inuit pursuit of sovereignty through activism and organization in response to the intrusion of outside governance structures, which led to institution building.

On the North Slope, the intrusion of outside governance of the twentieth century was met with Inuit activism and organization against nuclear testing, in protection of subsistence living, and in assertion of their sovereign rights to local governance. The first Inuit Circumpolar Conference was formed on the North Slope in response to a transnational intrusion of outside governance structures that affected the Inuit of the United States, Canada, Greenland, and the Soviet Union equally. The Inuit leaders making up the ICC Planning Committee identified the nine objectives of language, communications, education, transportation, environmental protection, village health and sanitation, housing, energy resource development, and local government for the conference to focus on.[47] These objectives set a guideline for Inuit activism, drawing on perspectives from around the Arctic through the shared experiences of colonialism and the intrusion of outside governance structures. On June 13, 1977, Eben Hopson gave opening address to the ICC, saying to the conference:

> "We Inupiat live under four of the five flags of the Arctic coast. One of those four flags is badly missed here today. But at least in Denmark, Canada and the United States, it is generally agreed that we enjoy certain aboriginal legal rights as indigenous people of the Arctic. It is important that our governments agree about the status of these rights if they are to be uniformly respected. To secure this agreement, we must organize to negotiate for it. This will take circumpolar community organization, for the status of our rights as Inupiat is necessarily the core of any successful protection of our mutual Arctic environmental security…The motivation behind the North Slope Borough's work in the planning and conduct of this conference should be clear to all. The environmental security of our long municipal coastline depends upon the strength of home rule government in Canada and Greenland."[48]

Hopson's welcome address served as a policy platform to guide the ICC and drew upon the experiences of Inuit on the North Slope, Inuit in Canada and Greenland, and Arctic Peoples further afar. A Saami delegation attended the first ICC and Hopson acknowledged their work on indigenous land claims with the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. In this way, Hopson framed the issues of Inuit governance at a local, regional, and international level, linked the Inuit cause the issue of indigenous land claims world-wide, and acknowledged environmental security as an issue of self-

determination for all Inuit. From the outset, the ICC had global ambitions for shaping policy to benefit Inuit and indigenous people generally.

The resolutions put forth at the ICC and the speeches made by Inuit leaders closely linked the future of the Inuit to "home rule." Hopson deals with this in his welcome address, stating: "The ultimate result of our land claims movement will be the development of strong local government all across the North American Arctic. The defense of the world's Arctic environmental security must rest upon the strength of local, home rule government."[49] The term "home rule" is linked especially to Greenland and the activism of Greenlanders to gain autonomy from Denmark. Home rule as Hopson expresses it can thus be understood as the pursuit of internal sovereignty. The leaders of the first ICC sought to link the land claims movement and the Greenland Home Rule movement to the defense of the Arctic environment. Hopson argued that "[t]he oil industry should regard strong local government in the Arctic to be a good business investment, and a necessary result of all Arctic resource development."[50] The relationship between the North Slope Borough and the oil companies was contentious, battled largely in the courts, but the Inuit had a right to the land and resources of the North Slope. The colonial expansion of Westphalian states into the Arctic was an experience shared by all Inuit. By organizing across borders through the ICC, the Inuit were able to pursue governance building to promote their sovereignty claims.

In 1977, the General Assembly of the ICC adopted 17 resolutions that addressed institutional, national, and international issues, ultimately setting the framework for ICC general assemblies to follow. Resolution 70-17 called upon the governments of the United States and Canada to bring their migratory birds treaty in line with the U.S./U.S.S.R. migratory birds treaty, protecting the rights of subsistence hunting and echoing earlier protests on the North Slope.[51] The ICC General Assembly also put forth resolutions dealing, for example, with the protection of the environment, supporting Inuit health, supporting Greenlandic Home Rule, and calling for the peaceful and safe use of the Arctic.[52] Significantly, Resolution 70-15 called for the governments of the United States and Canada to "defend the Inuit's aboriginal right to hunt the whale in the Arctic" at the International Whaling Commission (ICW) summit in Canberra, Australia.[53] These resolutions set a precedent for Inuit advocacy facilitated through the ICC, which would have global implications. This activism was pursued largely through transnational Inuit leaders, such as Eben Hopson, as opposed to the localized activism that led to the formation of the North Slope Borough. The work of the ICC challenging the IWC bowhead whaling ban exemplifies the role of Inuit leadership representing local and transnational interests through high level forums and can be identified as a shift towards international Inuit activism.

In 1977, the IWC extended its regulation of bowhead whales to subsistence hunting and placed a ban on Inuit whaling.[54] The Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC) was formed to advocate along with the ICC to include provisions in the IWC regulations to protect subsistence bowhead whaling. Eben Hopson traveled to London as a representative of the ICC and the AEWC in 1978 for the meeting of the ICW and told the media:

> "Because of our cold Arctic environment, our native rights in the Arctic were respected and upheld because others could not live on our land to compete with us. This was generally true until oil and gas were discovered at Prudhoe Bay. Since then, we have had to fight against a gradual erosion of our native rights and to guard against an increasing threat to our Arctic environmental security…Proceeding from our native hunting rights is the right to manage and protect our subsistence game habitat safe from harm. Our subsistence hunting rights must be the core of any successful Arctic resource management regime."[55]

Far from the protests of duck hunters against game wardens on the North Slope, Hopson represented Inuit subsistence hunting rights on the world stage. The IWC as an international body represented an intrusion of outside governance into Inuit space. Inuit sovereignty and food security was threatened by states from outside of the Arctic, which resulted in activism on the part of the ICC and the AEWC to promote Inuit rights to harvest bowhead whales as they had always done. A research program was supported by Inuit leaders and U.S. scientists to study both the population of bowhead whales in the Arctic and the impact of subsistence hunting. The findings from this study were submitted to the ICW and a "Panel of Experts on Aboriginal/Subsistence Whaling" was held in 1979.[56] The findings of these studies led to a quota system for Inuit whaling overseen jointly by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the AEWC, a relationship that exists to this day.[57] Inuit leaders showed that if their home governments could not or would not protect Inuit rights, the ICC would work directly with the international community.

The first Inuit Circumpolar Council brought together a forum of Inuit leaders from four of the five Inuit homelands in order to hold a dialogue on shared issues facing all Inuit and establishing resolutions calling for action to be taken. The resolutions called for action on national, transnational, and international issues. They also called for the formation of the ICC as a permanent institution. Sovereignty and indigenous rights were focal points of the General Assembly, calling for home-rule in Greenland, protection of subsistence hunting and whaling, and support for land claims. The

activism of Eben Hopson and the ICC in protest to the IWC ban on indigenous subsistence whaling supported the commitments agreed to at the General Assembly, but went beyond calling for the governments of the United States and Canada to protect Inuit rights. The ICC negotiated with international community to support action against the IWC ban. Inuit activism through the ICC shaped international policy and established a precedent for future Inuit activism.

In 1980, the second Inuit Circumpolar Conference met in Nuuk, Greenland and established a charter for the ICC.[58] The ICC was granted NGO status within the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1983 and was an active member of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples (WGIP) beginning in the mid-1980s.[59] The ICC had an important role in drafting the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through WGIP and has continued to be active in advocating for indigenous rights since the 1980s.[60] The experience of the ICC organizing across borders and building governance institutions led the ICC to be a leader in advocating for indigenous rights internationally. This activism reflects the Inuit pursuit of sovereignty in response to the intrusion of international organizations into the governance of indigenous peoples. The intrusion of governments and corporations in pursuit of natural resources or of the IWC, restricting subsistence hunting rights, were largely negative intrusions, but the expansion of international organizations made it possible for Inuit to exert their policy goals beyond the borders of their Arctic states.

The ICC also played a significant role in the reform of the 1989 International Labor Organization Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (No. 169), which is one of the primary international agreements protecting indigenous peoples' rights, including the right to self-determination.[61] Dalee Sambo, an international law scholar and current ICC President, writes that the Inuit, along with other indigenous peoples, "are shaping positive international law so that it accommodates and reflects the fundamental values, perspectives, status and rights of indigenous peoples in all regions of the world." [62] The ICC has worked, since its formation, in international forums to advocate for both the protection of Inuit rights and indigenous rights generally. Inuit leaders, such as Hopson, Mary Simon, and Sambo, have worked with their national governments, other indigenous groups, NGOs, foreign countries, and international organizations as agenda setters. The ICC has a voice that is recognized internationally on issues that extend beyond the Arctic because of the participation in institutions like the WGIP and ILO. The ICC has expanded into the international system, through international activism on human rights policy and self-determination. In this way, the ICC supports the existence of a 'multiplex world order' because it functions as an indigenous peoples organization to shape international policy in a manner that the Westphalian world order cannot account for.[63] The work of the ICC to positively shape indigenous peoples rights through international organizations is important because it shows that the causal relationship between the intrusion of outside governance structures and the Inuit pursuit of sovereignty are not inherently oppositional. Although international organizations challenge Inuit sovereignty, they also provide a forum through which the Inuit can promote policies of self-determination or environmental protection that benefit indigenous peoples beyond the Arctic as well as themselves.

In 1993, the ICC became involved in the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), which was a series of meetings and declarations initiated by officials from the eight Arctic states.[64] The AEPS and the programs it established, such as the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program; Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna; Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment; and Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response, were incorporated in 1996 into the Arctic Council through the Ottawa Declaration.[65] The Arctic Council was established as a high level forum to provide a means for promoting coordination and cooperation between the Arctic States with the involvement of Arctic indigenous peoples and other Arctic inhabitant on common Arctic issues.[66] Sustainable development and environmental protection are acknowledged as issues of particular importance for the Arctic Council, while the Ottawa Declaration makes clear the Arctic Council will not deal with issues related to military security.[67] In the Ottawa Declaration, there are three structures outlined for participation in the Arctic Council. The eight Arctic States are permanent members, the ICC, the Saami Council and the Association of Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation were the original Permanent Participants, and observer status is open to non-Arctic states, inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary organizations, global and regional, and NGOs.[68] The category of Permanent Participant was created "to provide for active participation and full consultation with the Arctic indigenous representatives within the Arctic Council," however, the ultimate decisions of the Arctic Council are to be made by the consensus of the member states.[69] In this way, decision making in the Arctic Council is state based. The Permanent Participants sit alongside the eight member states to ensure the indigenous peoples of the Arctic are considered and respected, but still, the member states control the Arctic Council.

One way the ICC and the other Permanent Participants are able to advocate for policy in the Arctic Council is through the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (IPS). The IPS was established in 1994 under the guidance of the AEPS. In 1996, the IPS was recognized by the Ottawa Declaration as an entity within the Arctic Council Secretariat and is thus financed by the Arctic Council.[70] The IPS works to support the Permanent Participants and further their work and

advocacy in the Arctic Council. One way in which the IPS has done this is through the advancement of Traditional Knowledge (TK) in Arctic Council policy. In 2015, the Arctic Council approved the Ottawa Traditional Knowledge Principles, stating: "These fundamental principles on Traditional Knowledge will strengthen the Arctic Council and advance its objectives by supporting the active participation of Permanent Participants."[71] The work of the IPS and the Permanent Participants has the raised recognition of TK to formal policy within the Arctic Council, building upon mentions of TK in the 1996 Ottawa Declaration, the 2009 Tromsø Declaration, and the 2013 Kiruna Declaration.[72] The Permanent Participant status of the ICC allows it to participate in forming policy that is focused on the interests of all Arctic Peoples. The ICC places significance upon the inclusion of Traditional Knowledge in Arctic policy and research. By working as Permanent Participant and with the IPS, the ICC and the Arctic Peoples are able to share their knowledge with member and observer states and NGOs, so that all parties can work to implement better informed policy in the Arctic. Although the Arctic Council makes policy based on the consensus of the member states, Permanent Participant status makes it harder for states to ignore the voices of Arctic Peoples and allows the Inuit to assert their sovereignty in Arctic regional governance.

The ICC has made the greatest inroads internationally through its advocacy around environmental policy. The Arctic is an especially sensitive environment that supports a wealth of biodiversity. In the late 1990s, Inuit advocacy efforts around the issue of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in the Arctic drew international attention and spurred support for greater environmental protections.[73] POPs, including PCBs and DDT, were found in the Arctic along with heavy metals, such as mercury, lead, and cadmium, and radioactive isotopes, cesium-134 and cesium-137, largely as a result of industrial and military activity at lower latitudes.[74] Studies show that POPs negatively affect human health and contribute to the degradation of the ozone layer, leading to changes in the Arctic climate.[75] The intrusion of pollutants from heavy industry and military activity was met with Inuit activism around public health and environmental protection. Northern Contaminants Program (NCP) was established in 1991 by the Canadian government to address the presence of environmental contaminants in the Canadian Arctic and conducted studies between then and 1997 to determine the source, distribution, and quantity of contaminants in northern food resources.[76] Together with the Canadian Arctic Indigenous Peoples Against POPs (CAIPAP), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami of Canada, and other indigenous peoples organizations, the ICC participated in negotiations that ultimately led to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) POPs Convention, which took place in Stockholm in 2001.[77] The building of institutions to protect Inuit health and the environment was an exertion of Inuit sovereignty in concert with national and international efforts to limit POPs. This was a major success for protecting Inuit from environmental contaminants that could not have been achieved without Inuit advocacy and governance building.

Sheila Watt-Cloutier was one of the leaders who represented the Canadian Inuit through CAIPAP at the UNEP during the negotiations to ban POPs and would go on to serve as President of the ICC. Watt-Cloutier was part of the movement to draw attention to the impact of POPs through statements, characterizing the situation by telling the public "[a]s we put our babies to our breasts we are feeding them a noxious, toxic cocktail…When women have to think twice about breast-feeding their babies, surely that must be a wake-up call to the world."[78] Public statements, such as this, drew attention to the human cost of POPs in the Arctic. Inuit were being poisoned through their traditional food sources as the environment absorbed contaminants from southern polluters.[79] Similarly, Inuit have been a voice for climate change policy. The ICC began discussing climate change in the 1980s, drawing from their Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (traditional knowledge and ways of living) and initiating national and international discussions on how climate change is affecting the Arctic.[80] The work of the ICC through the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), the Arctic Council, and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples has pushed for international action to protect the environment and counteract climate change. Sheila Watt-Cloutier has said, "national government[s] are not leading circumpolar co-operation, they are following it," making the point that "the Arctic is the globe's 'barometer' of environmental health" and "Inuit are the mercury in that barometer."[81] Inuit have been involved in advocating for environmental protection because they have been continuously threatened by the threat of outside intrusions, whether by whalers, colonial settlers, the petroleum industry, or pollutants from industry far to the south. As the Arctic continues to warm, it is very likely that the Inuit will continue to face challenges to their institutions and ways of life. The Inuit have been able to expand their governance institutions from the local level to the international level and will most likely continue to be leaders in shaping governance in the Arctic and beyond.

5. Conclusion

This research demonstrates that the causal mechanism of Inuit governance building explains the formation of the Inuit Circumpolar Council through a two-part iterative process in which change from intruding governance structures are met by Inuit assertions of self-determination. This process leads to new governance structures that incorporate

elements from the intruding governance structures and the Inuit governance structures, such as protections for indigenous rights or the incorporation of traditional knowledge. In response to the intrusion of outside governance structures the Inuit over time have been able to build new governance institutions locally in Alaska with the North Slope Borough, transnationally with the ICC, and internationally through the UN and with the Arctic Council. The formation of the ICC was vital to international Inuit governance building because the ICC served as the conduit through which the Inuit organized transnationally and participated in international organizations to further their goals of self-determination. This examination of the Inuit shows that much can be learned about domestic and global governance from indigenous peoples, if only scholars are willing to look beyond Westphalian conceptions of the international system.

6. References

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