

The Making of Northern Territories & Canada's Indigenous Hinterlands

Peter Jull¹

PO Box 5075 / Kenmore East, Qld. 4069 / Australia

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

THE CANADIAN CONCEPT OF NORTHERN TERRITORIES

Canada's most remarkable and most successful constitutional innovation in modern times has been 'the northern territory'. This has seen two-thirds or more of Canada's total physical expanse being renewed or reconstituted – or newly constituted – with whole regions slowly undergoing healing reforms while race relations, socio-economic prospects, notions of Development, and the nature of Community are transformed in the process. It has usually proceeded implicitly for years, gathering support before becoming explicit, although in some regions, such as Northern Quebec (the subject of a detailed case study below) change has occurred whole and, in the 1970s, amid crisis. Despite being little known or discussed at home among constitutional specialists – and subject to mis- and dis-information there by some of the country's loudest non-specialists, e.g., talkback radio hosts – this process is one of Canada's finest exports. The subject requires much more attention in Canada, but meanwhile has potential importance – as inspiration, regardless of its particulars as a precedent – for other peoples abroad.² *Amiqqaaluta/ Partageons/ Let Us Share*, the March 2001 report of the Nunavik Commission – a tri-partite body comprising Inuit, the Government of Quebec, and Government of Canada – has proposed creation and structures of a northern territory for Quebec, providing an opportunity to examine and discuss here the whole genre. That report is online in English, French, and Inuktitut, the English text being: http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/agr/nunavik/lus_e.html

Since 1945 the 'northern territory' has seen flexible, negotiable, and adaptable arrangements, in which European and indigenous cultures have addressed anew the basic issues of the first historical encounters in the Americas, a *New World* indeed after the horrors of Depression and War, i.e.,

- mutual comprehension between distinct peoples;
- social and power relations as individuals and collectivities;
- use and misuse of the natural environment (or 'economic development');
- cooperation and assistance in everything from clothing and lifestyles to law, legislatures, and language;
- the establishment of peaceful polities linking the opportunities and networks of the European and wider worlds with the cultures, local knowledge, and rhythms of place; and
- the elaboration of relevant and workable public services, public policy, and institutions of administration and governance.

The basic dynamics among such peoples in such places have been occurring in many 'first world' and other countries. However, the Canadian case has developed in its own way.

The Canadian northern territory came into view slowly through the primeval murk and noise of its cultural and political creation – a creation of trial and error, muddle and meddle, push and stall, much heat and little light.³ But now it has become clear, proven, and sound. It has three features to interest us here when looked at from the viewpoint of mainstream Canadian or 'first world' constitutional conventions.

¹ Peter Jull was assistant to the first full-time heads of government in the Northwest Territories in the 1960s, and in the 1970s was Adviser on the Constitution for Native & Northern Affairs, Privy Council Office/FPRO (the 'Prime Minister's department', Ottawa). He worked for Nunavik Inuit from January 1980 in Montreal and Ottawa on Quebec and national constitutional issues, self-government, and claims implementation, and through the 1980s was secretariat head and political and constitutional adviser to the Nunavut Constitutional Forum. He also worked on national constitutional and international issues for Inuit from their national offices in Ottawa, and, since, on indigenous and territory governance issues in the Northern Territory, Australia, and that other Australian 'northern territory', the Torres Strait Islands. He has carried out political and constitutional studies in Greenland, Sápmi (Northern Scandinavia), Alaska, and the Faroes. He is Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Political Science & Intn'l Studies, U of Queensland, Brisbane, Q. 4072, AUSTRALIA.

² The author is especially conscious at the time of writing of the Sami North of Europe; the Torres Strait Islands and Aboriginal peoples' lands of the north, centre, and west of Australia; and the Russian North – no less than of the lands and peoples of the Mid-North in Canada.

³ See Jull 2001a; 2001b; Jull 1994b; Dacks 1990; Cameron & White 1995.

1. It is a social and cultural metamorphosis in which an empty White Man's frontier or garrison region becomes a busy locally centred hearth or *foyer* of another people, culture, and, often, language. (The difference, in fact, between 'Northwest Territories' and *Nunavut* or *Denendeh*, between 'Northern Quebec' and *Nunavik*.)
2. It is a breaking down of old – and opening up of additional and new – constitutional space on the part of the White Man to accommodate inexplicit and energetic political difference. (*Après nous le déluge?* No, there is little to fear.)
3. It is an institutional structure based on different assumptions of political economy, of political and legal philosophy, and of society than those underpinning the older constitutional units with which it is affiliated. (It is certainly *not* Victorian Canada.)

That is, in the **first case**, something which we believe is waiting to become just *like us* decides to become *something else*. We had not even noticed or valued its differences as more than vestigial, or even unfortunate, traditions. In the **second case**, we have torn down a wall of our safe system and opened it out, in a new building style, and we are not quite sure how it will work out with our 'new' fellow inhabitants. In the **third case**, we are accepting different ideas of property and political legitimacy, of development philosophy, of what kind of society we are – ours and 'theirs' – and of what kind we may become.

If we are *not* talking about these things, but hold old colonising dreams of merely incorporating some eccentrics into our system or languages wherein we can transform them, then we will have many more years of conflict. Nevertheless, there will be some in Quebec City and Ottawa who continue to see things in such terms. So perhaps we need a further item:

4. It is an application of a progressive current in existing Canadian inter-regional and inter-cultural political tradition⁴ to the demands of what is sometimes called 'a third order of [constitutionally recognised] government', i.e., indigenous governments, only now emerging in workable contemporary form.⁵

This is both a positive recognition of recent developments, and acceptance that existing political and constitutional structures are too rigid or otherwise inappropriate for large portions of nation-state territory. Such problems are most evident in large countries like Canada, Australia, and Russia-Siberia, or other large expanses like Greenland and Alaska, or, large in relation to total nation-state size, areas like North Norway (i.e., Finnmark, Troms, and Nordland).⁶

It is harder to define or circumscribe Inuit or other indigenous content because the northern territory is a vehicle for the rebuilding of indigenous society, an opportunity to reconstruct and revise in new forms a society which has gone through great changes and shocks since it was whole in times past. One can look at the priorities of Inuit authorities and governments in general and list various items, but all these entities, whether Greenland Home Rule or Alaska's North Slope Borough or the Canadian models, have been so dynamic and so new that it would be presumptuous to assume that we have seen more than a hint of how they will evolve.

In Canada non-indigenous people are 're-discovering' and re-inventing the country – or at least some very large parts of it. Not only are the post-1945 experiences of the Northwest Territories (NWT), including what is now Nunavut; of Yukon; and of Northern Quebec including Nunavik and the Cree, Innu, and Naskapi territories, creating political and policy ripples southward as Canada seeks fair and workable outcomes in indigenous-white relations. They are also providing a model for national policy, e.g., in the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), and inspiration for other continents and for international bodies.

Canada's practice of northern territories' ethno-political and ethno-regional accommodation provides further fuel for the international political philosophy current centred on writings by Canadians like Michael Ignatieff, Will Kymlicka, Peter H. Russell, John Ralston Saul, Charles Taylor, and James Tully. As Canada's elder statesman and foremost federalism practitioner commented when I suggested that we might almost have an *ism*, 'Perhaps it really is a "Canadian political *ism*" but we have stumbled on it in a very Canadian, pragmatic "non-ideological" style. I am strongly of the view that this is the essence of what federalism is all about.' (Hon Gordon Robertson, personal communication, 4-Sept-2001). As a philosophical current it may therefore be better known or at least more explicit to, say, Australian university students, than to many Canadian policy-makers. Unfortunately Canadians have been largely unaware of both northern territories

⁴ This tradition is outlined and explored in Tully 1995; Saul 1997; Ignatieff 2000.

⁵ The first two orders being federal and provincial governments, of course.

⁶ Unfortunately some interested persons in North Norway believe Canadian experience inapplicable simply because North Norway is much more crowded than Nunavut. The value of the Canadian territories is that they are very flexible instruments which can work around many types of land use and development. The reason they occurred initially in the Far North was the absence of obstructive sub-national governments, not any need of the model for unlimited physical space.

and the larger current as home-grown achievements to be valued.⁷ However, this current was the implicit subject of Canada's recent Massey radio lectures, an important national forum.⁸

The Nisga'a Treaty uproar in British Columbia has demonstrated how blunt egalitarianism and conformity – and public assumptions of a monoculture – have failed utterly to deal with a complex politico-constitutional issue while making the task much harder. Canada's public debates are too likely to be hijacked by talkback radio – the pandemic of our times – and the tabloid streak in even the most resolutely broadsheet newspapers, a crude levelling down in rhetoric and opinion on subjects which need mediation almost by definition, or at least good-hearted re-negotiation, including patience, thought, analysis, discussion, and give-and-take. If the political process is reduced in effect to clenched fist salutes, torchlight rallies, or crowd responses in city plazas shouted to balconies of posturing leaders with powerful sound systems, we resemble the dark times of 1930s fascism. And yet, again today we are seeing the emergence of sad little populist leaders or too brilliantly grinning ones. Like the powerful myths which the first democracies of Ancient Greece and their drama festivals explored to create what we call Western Civilisation, stories of Clytemnestra, Cassandra and Antigone, Orestes and Oedipus, the Furies and Athena, we are ruminating on times of crowd power manipulated by urban tyrannies of sad little men and accidental heroes, a time which those Greek playwrights and audiences knew all too well and had recently overthrown.⁹

The reasons why Canada has not accepted its own prodigious child are many. However, two groups are special problems: hardline indigenous rights advocates in Southern Canada claim to find the emerging northern territories too weak or too lacking in guarantees for indigenous rights, while others in governments who have accepted well-meaning reforms *in practice* have not yet followed the implications through to adjust their equal rights *theories*. The hardliners usually have very scant or inaccurate knowledge – and often only studied ignorance – of Northern facts, documents, and legalities, although sometimes they take their stand as a practical tactic to 'up the ante' for future political settlements of their own groups. The government well-meaners, for their part, either believe the Northern political settlements to be unique concessions in special circumstances, or some other minor variation. In reality, the contexts in which Canada's northern territories are emerging – and similar ones elsewhere such as in Alaska, home rule Greenland, and Australia's Torres Strait – are something new but widely shared in the Circumpolar world and elsewhere. Their structure and dynamics have little to do with anything specifically or uniquely Canadian, but are universal. However, relative success in addressing them has been a tribute to and characteristic of Canadian political culture.

***IN PRACTICE: PROSPECTS; PROBLEMS; PROCESS; PRODUCT*¹⁰**

1. Prospects

The typical northern territory in Canada is initially defined arbitrarily by political boundaries imposed by the White Man, or is quite undefined. A host of government policies have made trans-boundary indigenous structures almost unworkable, although there have existed associations of jurisdictionally defined bodies, e.g., Inuit Tapirisat representing Inuit of Northwest Territories (NWT), Nunavut, Quebec, and Labrador. A group of communities, or villages plus their out-camps, make common cause in relation to some external issue such as a hydro-electric project or imposed social policies, and develop a sense of regional unity around elements of their traditional culture. Rarely do all such groups within the region accept or share this new identity happily, while others farther afield may feel left out. When this newly self-conscious regional community discovers how few legal rights and political influence it and its members are seen to have in the eyes of the White Man's system, serious political mobilisation begins. Non-indigenous expertise and political support is sought – perhaps a lawyer and some church group outside the region, and perhaps with help from an academic researcher or someone who has worked as nurse or teacher in the region. Whatever the specific issue or subject of initial grievances – a health epidemic, lack of housing, polluted food habitat – a fairly stable clutch of issues forms into a whole political agenda. This almost always has a demand for self-government and legal recognition of territory and resource rights at its centre, and draws heavily on socio-economic disadvantage, inferior or absent public services, and cultural discrimination as significant data. From now on almost any issue from national defence to census surveys may become a point of contention, the real issue being the lack of politico-legal recognition of the people and consequent failure to have them make decisions for their region and people. Regional whites other than those already enmeshed in the indigenous community enter the fray, insisting on following Canadian or Norwegian

⁷ Canadians tend to be explicit about their political culture only occasionally and then invariably in self-serving comparison with the USA. Equally, behaviour of which Canadians disapprove is often said to be 'American!', although one may find that the litterbug or player of loud radio at the campsite is, after all, really just another Canadian.

⁸ Ignatieff 2000.

⁹ The September 2001 editorials and commentaries in Australia's three major daily newspapers *The Sydney Morning Herald* (including Margo Kingston's on-line Web Diary), *The Age* (Melbourne), and *The Australian* provide a troubling case study of a country and its leaders misusing boatloads of refugees to increase their own power on a wave of populism, including trying to link these issues to the September 11 terror attacks. For a comment on the Australian government's way with indigenous issues see Fletcher & Whip 1997; & Jull 2000.

¹⁰ For some of the author's more recent writings on northern territories see Jull 1991a; 1991b; 1991c; 1992; 1993; 1994a; 1994b; 1995; 1996a; 1996b; 1997; 1999a; 1999b; 2000; 2001a; 2001b; 2001c.

institutional habits, i.e., the ones they can, do, or expect to dominate whether or not they are a population majority. Their raw self-interest, their often patronising or racist attitudes towards indigenous people, and the plain injustices experienced by indigenous people often balance the political scales or assist the indigenous side in the eyes of the wider provincial or national public. Indigenous people may even get hold of some first-rate young non-indigenous expertise, as in Nunavik, Nunavut, and the NWT, who help pitch a modern and professional case to senior governments and other power élites. Where resource industries are involved, or major government-backed projects like the James Bay Project, they often provide support and expertise to the whites and to pro-development indigenous groups. In some cases, as in the NWT, the white minority move along conventional paths toward regional autonomy and – they hope – provincehood until the indigenous political storms erupt and blow things off course. Some of the most common permutations and combinations of the conflict are enumerated in a list from ‘a’ to ‘t’ in the next section. There is almost unlimited range of subject matter which may become part of the struggle, however.

2. Problems

Many voices in every indigenous hinterland region and ‘northern territory’ are convinced of its uniqueness. This is often one of the few things indigenous people, sub-national authorities, and national protectors of hinterlands can agree on – and it is wrong. From a political and constitutional point of view such hinterlands are all alike. The typical problems and characteristics of post-1945 northern territories have been:

- a) a belief that they and their circumstances and dynamics are unique;
- b) small population in extensive territory;
- c) transient non-indigenous population;
- d) identity as settler frontier vs. indigenous homeland;
- e) a governing system of disputed political legitimacy;
- f) physical and jurisdictional boundaries arbitrary and often disputed;
- g) disputed social and cultural norms (e.g. language and cultural rights and use);
- h) disputed use and ownership of land and sea territory, and resources;
- i) individual rights of newcomers and settlers celebrated;
- j) collective rights of indigenous peoples officially dismissed;
- k) high levels of national subsidies;
- l) low levels of services and socio-economic conditions, especially for indigenes;
- m) status as national/sub-national treasure house vs. self-determining region or people;
- n) ‘territory’ or such status vs. ‘state’, ‘province’, internal ‘republic’;
- o) competing institutional legitimacies (e.g., Inuit organisations vs. governments);
- p) competing models for constitutional/political structures (e.g. Kativik, Makivik, Co-ops);
- q) ambivalent or fluctuating national (or sub-national, e.g., Quebec) policy towards northern territories;
- r) settlers’ isolation from heartland and its evolving political culture;
- s) northern settlers’ ideology ‘beyond the pale’ by national standards; and
- t) a need for national governments, parliaments, or parties to broker northern reforms and accommodations for social peace.

This mix of tensions, differences, paradoxes, and grievances along a fault-line of different language, culture, birthplace, socio-economic well-being, race, and/or skin colour is the basic data of northern territory political and constitutional development.

The above list with illustrations...

- a) *A belief that they and their circumstances and dynamics are unique* includes the non-indigenous northern population insisting that only ‘we know our natives, unlike bleeding-heart governments and do-gooders’, this in order to resist demands that they treat indigenous peoples better and include them in social, employment, and political life. Indigenous cultures, for their part, are unique in various ways, just as *all* cultures are unique. However, in the crucial issue of political and constitutional relations the race or cultural relations and politics in northern territories are so predictable that one could render them as a board game. Northern ‘uniqueness’ is deployed by newcomers, sometimes with some co-opted locals, to reinforce newcomer political claims to dominance and superiority, e.g., in political structures which favour them, especially conventional workings of the nation-state, e.g., Canada or Norway, with which local indigenous peoples have had little or no experience. This is the old pioneer ethic, to create a new place in the newcomers’ image.
- b) *Small population in extensive territory* is cited in two opposite ways, perversely, (1) to argue that people are too few and scattered to deserve the expense of high quality public services and infrastructure, while also that (2) they must not have for themselves the great wealth assumed to lie in their region (e.g., in energy sources, minerals, seas,

forests). It may be more useful to recognise that such sparselands and archipelagos are special cases with special needs.

- c) *Transient non-indigenous populations* pose many difficulties, including political difficulties. In Australia's Northern Territory a fast throughput of whites keeps 50,000-year occupants permanently powerless and unable to influence the shape, future, or daily life of the region, while having extreme social problems as a result of this marginalisation.¹¹ Until an indigenous political settlement is achieved the transients usually have the best jobs, best housing, access to goods, etc. and dictate the terms of life in the region even when they are a minority. The Soviet North was one case where much was done in the name of mythical indigenous autonomies, indigenous peoples having no clout whatever (although an indigenous minority certainly benefited from opportunities in the 'mainstream' and now provides many indigenous leaders). All indigenous peoples in every northern territory fear that they will be quickly outnumbered and the communities of newcomers favoured and built up by senior governments until formal political power is transferred to these newcomers. Traditional communities oriented to livelihoods of the seasons on land, freshwater, and sea cannot compete with the sort of nation-state political, social, or cultural clout of the highly skilled and/or educated transient workforces who are found in such hinterlands as expert élites. Indigenous land claims and self-government movements are largely a response to this newcomer threat. The evolution of the NWT from the mid-1960s may be the clearest and most fully documented case of this phenomenon in Canada.¹²
- d) *Identity as settler frontier vs. indigenous homeland* is another variation on this theme.¹³ The frontier ethic implies that hinterlands are awaiting the transforming hand of the nation-state majority people or, as in Canada, peoples (i.e., Francophones and Anglophones), while indigenous peoples see these places where they and their ancestors have always lived, simply, as *theirs* – that is, shared by them with many other life forms under the beneficence or occasional displeasure of a higher power 'not of this world'. Indigenous peoples are usually outraged by notions of private land ownership, or of sovereign jurisdiction by outsiders, as both mad and bad.¹⁴ The difference of viewpoint implies very different national and hinterland policies, the frontier centred initially on white or other national majority's aspiration and the homeland on indigenous need. Essentially the story of Northern hinterlands since 1945 has been first an attempt at frontier incorporation followed by indigenous resistance and resulting official movement towards greater accommodation or recognition of homeland values.
- e) *A governing system of disputed legitimacy* such as a government imposing laws and regulations foreign to local custom, or operating with incomprehensible procedures, may command silence or fear but little respect. When it blunders in fields of local expertise such as caribou migrations or outrages local feelings in other ways it loses authority.
- f) *Physical and jurisdictional boundaries arbitrary and often disputed* may involve traditional cultural boundaries, e.g., between peoples divided by state, province, territory, or national boundaries like Quebec and Labrador Inuit, or the poignant case of Quebec Inuit separated from their marine and insular resource base (or Polar Inuit from traditional hunting areas in Canada's northernmost islands). The inability of the NWT government to do anything for Inuit in the crucial subject matter of marine hunting and the ocean environment, ocean matters being under federal jurisdiction, was a factor in the Nunavut movement.
- g) *Disputed social and cultural norms (e.g. language and cultural rights and use)* have been major issues in most hinterlands. Past prohibitions on indigenous language use by school children being immersed in English, French, Russian, or Norwegian, have been a major and often very bitter politicising element when those children grow up.
- h) *Disputed use and ownership of land and sea territory, and resources* have involved nation-state and sub-national governments simply denying that indigenous people have rights to pursue their livelihoods or protect their resource base when their activities, however longstanding, conflict with projects advanced or allowed by governments. This is why land, sea, and resource rights are such fundamental organising principles for indigenous politics. The White Man often sees indigenous activities as folkloric or sentimental, but they are a way of life and an economic base, often the sole available base.
- i) *Individual rights of newcomers and settlers celebrated* as the true Northern spirit of enterprise and innovation are given official support and encouragement, usually relating to non-Northern economy, markets, or values.

¹¹ In August 2001 the opposition Labor party finally ended the one-party Right populist rule of the CLP (Country Liberal Party), Labor surely a more indigenous-friendly government.

¹² See Dickerson 1992; & Jull 2001a; 1984b.

¹³ Berger 1977

¹⁴ Inuit and Northern Indian First Nations are certainly in accord with Russia's indigenous peoples in not organising their political aspirations around notions of private property as outlined by Osherenko 2001.

- j) *Collective rights of indigenous peoples are officially dismissed and ignored, or even seen as retrograde and an obstacle to progress, despite being an inherited form of organisation in indigenous communities. The ideological preference of the White Man for rugged individualism and individual enterprise becomes a policy of ignoring, discouraging, or replacing existing activities in favour of newcomers' projects. In Inuit areas of Northern Canada the Co-operatives became an important means of bridging some of these divides between different economic approaches.*
- k) *High levels of national subsidies in northern territories co-exist with a strong sense of grievance among settlers about domination by faraway capital cities and with a paradoxical rhetoric about the virtues of private enterprise and market economics despite their failure to meet northern needs. The targeting of funding may be matters of ideological preference but not always practical benefit, e.g., resource exploration programs rather than community services.*
- l) *Low levels of services and socio-economic conditions, especially for indigenes can be a major problem. Governments may be prepared to spend generously in their search for the mythical wealth of the hinterland – or on hydro-electric projects – but regard provision of basic public services as something to be postponed until such wealth is flowing.*
- m) *Status as national/sub-national treasure house vs. self-determining region or people is a basic government policy dilemma. Presumed resource wealth may attract public spending which, it is assumed, may soon justify such spending in remote places, while recognition of local imperatives may seem to threaten future revenue flow.*
- n) *'Territory' or such status vs. 'state', 'province', internal 'republic' debates may become heated. A tailor-made arrangement for local circumstances, i.e., one which accommodates indigenous people, such as Canada's northern territories, may conflict with newcomers' desire to opt into the national mainstream via conventional structures (which also facilitate their domination). Newcomers will appeal to the liberal values of the national public to demand their rights to create mainstream institutions rather than recognise 'special' or 'ethnically defined' indigenous rights.*
- o) *Competing institutional legitimacies (e.g., Inuit organisations vs. governments) can also be bitterly divisive where neither side recognises the authority or validity of the other's differing aspirations or their political vehicle. This has sometimes occurred in Nunavik in relation to Ottawa-Quebec relations.*
- p) *Competing models for constitutional/political structures (e.g. Kativik, Makivik, Co-ops) can be similarly divisive, especially within the indigenous community, undermining political clout. Perhaps the most bitter case in recent 'first world' experience has been the SLF movement based in the Sea Sami communities of North Norway and its opposition to key elements of the Sami rights movement.*
- q) *Ambivalent or fluctuating national (or sub-national, e.g., Quebec) policy towards northern territories is common, most notably in episodic national protection of the environment vs. wealth-generating resource extraction projects, and other ambiguous gestures, making hinterland peoples' relations with capitals the more complex and difficult until formal political settlements have been reached. All the same, in Northern Canada in general the indigenous organisations have usually managed this more effectively than the newcomers.*
- r) *Settlers' isolation from heartland and its evolving political culture means that the 'conventional wisdom' and *realpolitik* assumed by hinterland whites is intellectually outdated and more often a distorted or caricature mirror image of their own sense of powerlessness vis-à-vis national capitals than of the actual state of national political culture. This is a significant indigenous political resource when recognised.*
- s) *Northern settlers' ideology 'beyond the pale' by national standards...this happens often, as in the Yukon and NWT pre-1985 and pre-1979 respectively, and in Australia's Northern Territory, or among various political party branches in North Norway, forcing national authorities to support indigenous peoples or at least refuse to support non-indigenous agendas in those regions. Racist or redneck hinterlands cannot be seen to be supported, except in Australia's remarkable case of the Prime Minister threatening Kofi Annan not to comment on human rights issues during his visit to the Northern Territory in early 2000.¹⁵ But even stalemate may be useful to give incentive for negotiated accommodation.*
- t) *A need for national governments, parliaments, or parties to broker northern reforms and accommodations for social peace is the logical political outcome of these problems and of course national ideals rather than hinterland prejudices give indigenous peoples a significant boost.*

¹⁵ Jull & Rutherford 2000.

3. Process

Process and negotiation have been the keys to Canadian indigenous policy progress and to northern territories.¹⁶ These have been more obvious in hindsight or in the broad view than to most of us involved at the time in various battles. That is, the process or negotiation has been often implicit rather than explicit – slowly moving or evolving changes of position or outlook brought by public disputation rather than quiet and rational conversation or working through of problems around a table. However, after initial fierce battles across the northern hinterlands which make up most of Canada, a series of conventions have developed, a political culture which is there for the using. (Unfortunately some governments or ministers within them continue to provoke crises through their own foolishness or arrogance, and some indigenous leaders schooled in habits of earlier confrontation are too ready to go to the brink.)

Initially the South saw the North as poor people in ragged animal skins and could think only of material change to make them look more like us. Surely the minerals presumed to lie underground throughout the hinterland would provide jobs and so schooling became an official priority. It took a long time before the Canadian public could see past prejudices about ‘Stone Age peoples’ to recognise their shared humanity and sympathies with Inuit, Dene, and other Northern peoples. The James Bay project in Quebec from the early 1970s produced some quick learning in respect of the Cree most directly and immediately affected by the project, while the Berger hearings of the mid-1970s in the NWT became a sustained national teach-in about Northern and indigenous realities, one which at last made the North a general political issue and subject of public awareness.¹⁷ Here Inuvialuit (Western Arctic Inuit), Dene, and Métis spoke through interpreters in their villages or through their articulate young people in terms all too clear to Canadians: the North was a social mess which no amount of white triumphalism and glossy public relations could hide any longer. Official good intentions, which were seen by few ‘natives’ as good at all, were not changing a divided society where whites, mostly deriving income directly or indirectly in service of indigenous administration, had most of the visible material benefits and all the power. The idea that Canada could not simply move in with lots of Southern material clutter, open schools, set up a Mountie post and a nursing station, and encourage geologists to find mine or hydrocarbon sites – that this Canadian model of national expansion was no longer enough, and even of doubtful relevance – was a shock to many Canadians. Many Canadians today prefer not to learn yet, favouring simple and crude assimilation to the complexities of cross-cultural relations.

Having established that Inuit and the other Northern peoples were people, not some strange beings with inherently greater natural powers and less humanity than ourselves, it became possible to engage in what Canadians regarded as politics. All the years of Dene protests about Treaties unfulfilled had gone unheard, but now that Northern peoples were ‘speaking our language’ in every sense, thanks to the schools, real debates began. Ottawa, used to administering the North, tried to come up with new and better programs, but Inuit and everyone else wanted Northern political participation and decision-making, not Southern expertise serving Southern priorities for Northern ‘resources’ such as caribou or mineral deposits. The 1970s were very bitter in the NWT, a region which was merely the leading edge for a whole era of indigenous-white, indigenous-government conflict across Canada – that is, the search by Southern governments and by industries they supported for Northern resources in Provinces and the two (now three) formally designated Territories turned the era into one of massive disputation. However, Canadians had learned enough that now the indigenous side was listened to more respectfully, while the insights brought to public forums by indigenous peoples and their environmental advisers and allies were changing the idea of Canada. No longer one huge empty place with lots of room for mistakes, now the North became a patchwork of peoples, each with its own unique ways and outlooks, living in home territories amid lands and waters of intricately connected eco-systems where it could matter very much precisely where mistakes were made. Lancaster Sound or the calving grounds of caribou herds, for instance, were not places in which to risk oil spills for fear of wrecking environments far and wide.

Governments often responded poorly. They believed that ‘the natives’ did not understand law and politics and that mere assertion of official will would bring things back into line. They made firm decisions which proved remarkably *in-firm*, failing to understand that what they faced was *not* callow rudeness to the Crown and disrespect for Canada’s long hard effort to extend public order and institutions into an expensive-to-serve hinterland. Rather, it was a general reaction to inappropriate policies and socially inequitable outcomes on the ground. Those Establishment whites who took time to listen carefully, i.e., the Courts, increasingly found in favour of the natives. The struggle was not of non-Europeans against Her Majesty – ‘Confound their politics,/ Frustrate their knavish tricks’ as *God Save the Queen*, the British and long the Canadian national anthem helpfully advises of non-British badasses – but of people dependent on living wild resources *vs.* an industrial state and its ‘liberal development model’. Of course, nothing was so simple – Ottawa talked about and believed in rugged free enterprise even while it created, in fact, the ultimate welfare state in the North.

¹⁶ Jull 1999c; 2001a

¹⁷ The resulting report quickly became an international classic, Berger 1977.

As the Arctic Peoples Conference of 1973 demonstrated, Northern Canada, the Sami North of Europe, and Greenland were all experiencing similar conflicts and problems.¹⁸ Each country tended to look at things too much in national optic, and each tried to find solutions to common problems inside national conventions, and each to use its own form of national denial.¹⁹ This access to the Circumpolar world was important to Inuit for helping convince Canadian governments and political élites that problems were more basic than symbolic, more general human issues than matters of courtesy. Moreover, in general Canadians were coming to see the North as social and environmental space here and now, not a fantasy space for great projects and futuristic tomorrow. Public debates, environment controversies, court cases, newspaper and TV features, social and especially health tragedies, and renewed pride in Canada in light of the USA of race riots and Vietnam all made the North part of the national space to which, *of course*, equal rights and opportunities must be extended. Governments who had long tried with little success to interest Canadians in the North now found themselves caught between angry Northern natives and impatient Southern whites demanding to know why they were not performing better. The ultimate symbol of the changed North today has been Nunavut and the celebrity and attention accompanying its forma launch in April 1999, an international source of wonder and surprise.²⁰

Canada's general process-oriented political culture has demonstrated its worth in these matters. What seemed surprising or radical demands when first voiced by indigenous leaders in the 1960s and early 1970s have become familiar and mostly unthreatening since. A *federal* system of government is designed to accommodate diversity, after all. One need not even see this matter positively; one may say that the sheer length of time over which matters are discussed has rounded off sharp edges and helped everyone get used to new ideas. All sides discuss, pull back, re-assess, and try again.

4. Product

The outcome or new northern territory resulting, huge like Nunavut and Nunavik, or simply large like some of the Dene regions of NWT/Yukon, has a certain pattern. While it appears to sit within existing Canadian liberal democratic norms – and much futile emotional energy is spent on arguing if Nunavut is *really* indigenous self-government or *merely* a conventional model – its novel or exotic features are clear to its inhabitants. There is a dual constitutional structure, with the governing institutions rather like or utterly like the usual elected pattern of a clutch of local councils nested under a regional government, while the other half, i.e., the land, sea, resource, and cultural provisions are exclusive to indigenous peoples and lie quite outside the scope of non-indigenous people to touch. This latter indigenous arrangement is entrenched in the Canadian Constitution, especially under Sections 35 and 25 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.²¹ Amendment is not only very difficult but requires indigenous consent. The package of arrangements also includes a large capital fund under control of the indigenous people in question, this as compensation for past erosion of their rights and loss of territory, to be used for development or other projects with the interest providing running costs for various businesses or representative bodies. The package also includes categories of land/sea ownership and exclusive use, including some sub-surface rights, remedies for development impacts, land use and environmental management or co-management bodies sharing with senior governments the decision-making power in respect of resources and development in the whole region, and preferential rights for indigenous access to business and development opportunities. Various other features are included, such as official status for the indigenous language, social and cultural development programs, enhanced public services in key areas, and various 'catch-up' programs for capital needs (e.g., housing, public facilities). In sum, grafted onto a basic European liberal democratic system suited (or *un*-suited, depending on one's viewpoint) to all areas within a country is another system in recognition of the cultural, social, political, environmental, and developmental imperatives of a specific place and its indigenous ecologically sustainable space. Opposites are joined. This is the basic model, but the larger cases like Nunavut have many additional features by virtue of their size and opportunities – e.g., Nunavut is a participating member of the Canadian federation of federal, provincial, and territory governments.

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Such developments in Northern Canada have played a significant and perhaps dominant part in the larger national project of re-writing indigenous-white relations, and in renewing and re-balancing respect and political relations among peoples in Canada.²²

¹⁸ Kleivan 1992; Jull 1998.

¹⁹ As late as the late 1980s, for instance, the Norwegian government would deny even at comparative studies conferences which it hosted that it had problems of Arctic peoples, this conclusion reached by designating only the Svalbard archipelago which has no permanent residents as 'Arctic' and thereby neatly discounting the Sami of North Norway. So its officials professed themselves interested to hear the Canadians worry out loud, this while denying the relevance of the discussions to Norway!

²⁰ For details and context see Jull 2001a; 2001b; 2001c.

²¹ Section 25 and 35 recognise any existing rights discovered by the Courts and validate any rights negotiated in future as part of northern territory or other indigenous claims settlements, all these to take precedence over the general constitutional Charter of Rights.

²² Russell 1993; 1999-2000; & 2001; Jull 2001

PART 2 – NUNAVIK, A CASE STUDY

NORTHERN QUÉBEC

In the case of Northern Quebec, the emerging *Nunavik*, and its people, *Nunavimmiut*, early 1970s pressure to build the world's largest hydro-electric project, a series of great dams and reservoirs to supply energy for a modern industrial Quebec and export markets, led to indigenous and environmental resistance. Cree and Inuit villages were the only human communities in Northern Quebec at the time apart from a mine soon closed.²³ Eventually after court action, an aroused public, and inter-governmental angst, plus the usual red herring aired in any major conflict that 'it's really 'a French-English issue', the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) was signed in 1975 by Inuit, Cree, Quebec, and Canada. This and related documents and statutes has provided a political and administrative framework for governance and development in the Nunavik region ever since, complete with problems, misunderstanding, and slow learning and accommodation on all sides, as well as new uproars of hydro-electric power policy and actions.²⁴ The Nunavik Report follows 25 years of Inuit pressure to re-organise and improve the JBNQA system based on practical experience and on difficulties always foreseen.

Important background circumstances were the timing and motives of Quebec's plunge into indigenous policy. In the 1960s when some Francophone personnel withdrew from Ottawa to help set up Quebec's indigenous and northern affairs capacity, two factors came into play. The first was the whole Quebec-building mood which saw Francophone ethno-national pride and a will to modernise driving a centralist and strongly interventionist government. This centralism, coupled as it was with suspicion about the then Anglophone dominance of Nunavik (and about long-term Anglophone Canadian motives and interests in the region), fed a policy climate in Quebec City unfavourable to real devolution of power to, or trust of, surging non-Francophone minorities. This surprised many outsiders (and still does today) – that many *québécois* did not see that Inuit and other indigenous peoples were fighting the same battle for recognition *within Quebec* as Quebec nationalists were *within Canada*. However, ethno-national pride is rarely rational or symmetrical. A second factor was the growing self-assertion of Inuit from the 1960s, part of the general phenomenon of indigenous rebirth across Canada. The federal government first, and later the provincial and territorial governments, would have to respond, by tolerating and then working with proud peoples recovering their pride and self-confidence. But Quebec at that moment was withdrawing from the Canadian policy ethos, and regarded national indigenous policy merely as a catastrophe. It was. But now it was about to become something else, something quite new and promising. Nevertheless, well into the 1980s a feature of visits to Quebec City was listening to the obligatory tirade of certain highly-placed Quebec officials against federal policy, policy already gone, policy whose passing was apparently unknown. Quebec would be a better master, we were told. Inuit did not want *any* master, of course, but rather some facilitating friends and equals. Therefore, for a long time Inuit and other indigenous peoples believed Quebec was trying to control them rather than to help them get free of controls and solve their own problems in their own way – this while elsewhere in Canada the devolution of powers and funds to local and regional indigenous entities was the main policy position and trend. It is in light of that special background that the Nunavik Commission report is the more refreshing and admirable.

A READING OF AMIQQAALUTA / PARTAGEONS / LET US SHARE²⁵

The report *Amiqaaluta / Partageons / Let Us Share* is a substantial and valuable addition to the literature of northern territories and of what is usually called 'indigenous self-determination' in Canada and in the world. It is also a significant document in Canada's evolving constitutional culture of indigenous-white political relations. The Commission and the report's authors deserve congratulations and thanks, regardless of the ultimate outcome of their proposals. It is well worth reading, online: http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/agr/nunavik/lus_e.html.

It is gratifying that the Nunavik Commission has made use of experience in other jurisdictions, notably Nunavut and Greenland. There is nothing so annoying as a reviewer who discusses what is *not* found in material reviewed rather than what is actually presented, so, although the report might usefully have considered practice and processes in, e.g., the Inuvialuit region of Canada's Northwest Territories and Inuit Alaska... enough said! Too few political inquiries stray beyond immediate conventional wisdom – with suffocating and devastating results as in Australia's indigenous affairs at the moment, for instance²⁶ – but the variety of experience of northern territories and indigenous self-determination at home and abroad is the best but, so far, largely uncollected and uncomparated 'political science' available. As noted already, national and sub-national experience in northern territories is not nearly so 'unique' as

²³ Saladin d'Anglure 1984a; 1984b

²⁴ See Makivik 1995; 2000; & Mulrennan 1998.

²⁵ Nunavik Commission 2001

²⁶ Jull & Bennett 2001a; 2001b.

many would believe. Furthermore, much of what is claimed to be unique may merely suit those resisting indigenous progress. Meanwhile, the political tensions and issues in northern territories are everywhere similar.

Before beginning the reader will wish to read carefully the 1999 *Political Accord* which created the Nunavik Commission, pages 53-56 in the English text in the tri-lingual glossy illustrated edition of *A-PLUS*. (Henceforth all page numbers will refer to this English text unless otherwise indicated.) As a commentator in Australia has pointed out, the Canadian use of political accords is itself a significant political and constitutional practice with valuable applications in indigenous-white *reconciliation* or accommodation.²⁷

A-PLUS begins with understandable pride in saying that the 'Commission's mandate was nothing short of developing recommendations for an entirely new form of arctic government', and that 'the Commission had to start from scratch'. (1) As noted throughout this paper that is not quite the case, although like all the 'northern territories' emerging in Canada and elsewhere, the Nunavik imagined in *A-PLUS* is, indeed, *sui generis*, a particular negotiated response in a particular place and time to a situation for which conventional national political culture has seemed unready. Perhaps the greatest innovation lies in the great unstated proposition of the *A-PLUS* work: that the Governments of Canada and Quebec have laid aside their frequent politico-constitutional feints and struggles to allow something novel to grow here. Elsewhere in the Circumpolar world the end of the Cold War saw a general political thaw with vast positive consequences for peoples and governments in the region. At last people could confront their *real* problems which were more likely to be alcohol abuse and powerlessness than worrying about the White House and Kremlin – although Russian and American submarines still play their games and each side accuses the other of dark plots, as with the *Kursk* sinking. It would be greatly to the general good, and a credit to goodwill of governments in Ottawa and Quebec City, if this work of officials and Inuit were recognised, reinforced, and allowed to proceed.

We read that 'the Commission was given the formidable challenge of identifying the means for creating an autonomous form of public (non-ethnic) government which would accommodate Nunavik's arctic realities while at the same time being capable of functioning within federal and provincial jurisdictions'. (1) 'Public government' is an ill phrase, a vile phrase, apparently invented in the NWT and sounding more like a toilet block outdoors than a political science problem. One wonders what its counterpart would be – a *private government*, perhaps Lorenzo the Magnificent's Florence? The term is now rendered into French, too, so perhaps our language-minded Francophone friends can help rid us of the term once and for all.

However the report wins this reader when it seeks a package 'to function as a true arctic government in the arctic region'. (1) The story of northern territories has often been that southern capitals and interests have sought to export ideas or second-hand items to the North, so this explicit Arctic focus is the more welcome.²⁸ The report goes on to say that 'Nunavik is part of the arctic world by virtue of its geography, climate, culture, language, landscape, modes of transportation, and high cost of living.'(2)

Welcome, too, is the desire that Nunavik have 'the ability to maintain direct relations with other governments of the Arctic' and emphasis on 'the close relationship between the Inuit of Nunavik and Nunavut'. (2) The formal Recommendation on this is very clear, specifying an Assembly power of 'Relations with other governments, or with governmental or non-governmental organizations of the Arctic, outside Québec or Canada'. (13) This is not unlimited, so that Inuit would not be able to maintain relations with hostile foreign powers, but is sensible as worded. It is important that Canadians and Québécois understand – as not all of them did when we were setting up the Inuit Circumpolar Conference in the early 1980s – that it is non-controversial for Inuit to share culture, language, and problem-solving with other people close by with whom they are closely related.

At times governments in Canada have had a claustrophobic approach to indigenous governance, wanting to bottle up indigenous peoples on the smallest possible patches and eschewing regional, let alone inter-regional, connections. With a territory of 500,000 sq. km., 11,000 inhabitants, 90% of them Inuit, living in 14 municipalities in all of which Inuit are the vast population majority, Nunavik is a substantial player. So far, so good. On the other hand, it is not clear what the specific issues or concerns of the few Cree and Naskapi living within the Nunavik territory may be, or in relation to Nunavik's future. (3) Given the bitter disputes between indigenous peoples about overlapping claims and old boundaries elsewhere in Canada, it is important not to make any more messes of this type gratuitously.

The point that the existing Kativik Regional Government 'derives 95 percent of its resources through 35 different agreements with a dozen provincial and federal departments'(3) is a familiar problem in indigenous self-management and self-government – as in university administration! Indigenous groups are hamstrung by paperwork and 'accountability' procedures. Similar issues were a major driving force and probably the major argument for

²⁷ Kajlich 2000; Jull & Kajlich 1999

²⁸ Similarly the key Nunavut manifesto was *Building Nunavut: a working document with a proposal for an Arctic Constitution*, 1983. (See NCF 1984)

constitutional reform in Australia's Torres Strait region of island and shorelines, as a Canadian scholar has masterfully explained.²⁹

And so, having raised the issue of administrative coherence and efficiency, the report turns to the other principal issue: 'Probably the most glaring shortcoming with the existing system is that it lacks an overall body through which the people of Nunavik can come together collectively to determine their priorities and aspirations.'(3) It is greatly to the credit of Makivik Corporation, the umbrella Inuit birthright corporation, that despite having a similar mandate itself it has sponsored and encouraged work to strengthen democracy and organisational reconciliation in Nunavik.

A-PLUS notes that 'the institutions created under the JBNQA have consistently evolved to assume a greater competence and role in responding to the needs of residents of Nunavik.'(3) This is typical of indigenous politics. Local people will seek help from whatever indigenous entities exist rather than trust or struggle to be understood by the White Man's structures. So such indigenous organisations, almost always struggling bravely to provide as much help as they can to those who seek help, regardless of the constraints of their own mandates, funds, and staff, often appear 'inadequate' or 'disappointing' to indigenous clients. Usually they have staff strongly morally committed to indigenous needs but who are simply overloaded.³⁰

The arguments in the latter paragraphs of page 3 on the evolution of administration in Nunavik are enjoyable as a case of muddling practicality of Anglophone sort taken on board in a comfortable way in a Francophone policy and political environment.

A-PLUS states the crucial point that 'a Nunavik Government must be one in which Inuit would be able to see themselves, their language, their values, and their traditions'. (4)

On page 5 the priority concerns of environment and resources arise:

The Commission also heard numerous presentations on the need for a Nunavik Government to have greater control over renewable and non-renewable resources and the means of generating wealth from within the region. Other areas of concern included the need for autonomy and law-making powers, adequate powers to protect the environment and the safety of country food, and culturally appropriate education, health, social, and justice systems which will involve controls and input at the community level.

Also, 'many people at the public hearings emphasized the logic of having the offshore come under the jurisdiction of a Nunavik Government.'(5) Inuit being principally a maritime people, this is only natural and logical. Indeed, during the 1983 hearings on government in Nunavut this same demand – for the greatest possible coastal and marine powers for Nunavut – was one of the two principal demands in all public hearings.³¹ If an indigenous people has little or no control of its resource base, it is severely wanting. This is a central issue.

In the principal under-statement of the report, 'The Commission recognizes that questions concerning Québec sovereignty are very important, and that this issue will continue to be hotly debated for some time to come.'(5)³² It is worth noting that earlier times, e.g., the 18th century, were more relaxed about sharing sovereignty in indigenous territories between European sovereign governments, e.g., the 1751 Lappecodicilen (between Denmark-Norway and Sweden-Finland) and Jay Treaty (UK-Canada and USA), while a recent South Pacific treaty and boundary-drawing in indigenous coastal and marine areas is generous and flexible about cross-border interests and movements by indigenous peoples on both sides of Torres Strait, i.e., Australia and Papua New Guinea.³³

Public government rears its ugly head again on pp 5-6. 'Under such a system, people are entitled to receive services from, and to fully participate in a public government regardless of their ethnic origin.'(5) But, 'the Inuit of Nunavik could decide for a variety of reasons, to exercise their inherent right of self-government at some point in the future.'(6) As is explained, 'The inherent right of self-government is an Aboriginal Right, and it manifests itself as an Aboriginal, or ethnic form of Government. As stated in the RCAP Report, governments generally take the exercise of the inherent right to be limited to lands that are primarily owned or directly controlled by an Aboriginal People, such as Category 1

²⁹ Kehoe-Forutan 1991. Her analysis and description here, drawn from her PHD thesis on the same subject, quickly became important data for Islanders and other participants in the political debate. See also Jull 1997.

³⁰ The Mephistophelian indigenous affairs conduct of the Howard government in Australia has given this a further twist by using such client dissatisfaction as public cause to make war on the Northern Territory indigenous land councils.

³¹ The other was the worry about a lack of education and job training to equip Inuit to run the new government in Nunavut.

³² For a pointed comparison of Quebec and indigenous self-determination in Canada with indigenous self-determination in Australia, see Russell 2000.

³³ The Torres Strait Treaty in context is discussed in Babbage 1990 and Lawrence & Cansfield-Smith 1991.

lands [by Inuit] under the JBNQA.’(5) This has been the big Inuit strategic decision, in Nunavut, Nunavik, and elsewhere. Like the Dene and other Northern and hinterland peoples, Inuit have no interest in being shut up on small plots of land as happened with Indian reserves in Southern Canada. They are willing to pay a price to control their large territories. However, not *any* price. In Nunavut, for instance, Inuit would have chosen village power in each village’s splendid isolation rather than accept continued control by the Yellowknife-based government. When the federal government began to understand this, progress became possible on creating the Nunavut Territory. Inuit, both in Nunavik and Nunavut, reserve the right to reconsider their strategic choice in future if circumstances dictate. However, the likelihood is that most will continue to opt for a large dynamic regional society which embraces the small number of committed newcomer residents.³⁴

The report ‘calls for the creation of a government with a high degree of autonomy’ and for ‘avoiding the temptation to mimic regional structures in southern Québec whose jurisdiction is not broad enough to address Nunavik’s needs.’(6) Both of these sound obvious but the lack of such recognition has bedevilled Inuit-Quebec relations.

The report goes on to call for block funding and for access by Nunavik to its own sources of revenue. It is hard to know why governments have so resisted block funding in Canada, it being the only reasonable and practical way to accommodate indigenous self-reliance without continual bickering between indigenous peoples and senior governments. Canada’s three existing Territorial governments and Greenland have provided good examples of the benefits, as have core-funded indigenous organisations on a much smaller scale across Canada for 30 years.

As we read,

The creation of an Assembly of Nunavik is the indispensable starting point of autonomy. It is the basic building block around which the other branches of the Nunavik Government shall revolve. Autonomy for Nunavik cannot be accomplished without an Assembly. (8)

This is the crucial reform in more ways than one. Nunavik, and its dominant player, Makivik, have been famous for their skill in negotiating outcomes, and in executive verve and ability under powerful leaders. These qualities have not always been accompanied by satisfactory transparency, or at least, such transparency has not always been recognised by some Inuit far from ‘the action’. They have complained, in effect, of a *democratic deficit*. One should not assume that the Inuit executive or populist strength which has produced so many clear outcomes beginning with the formation of NQIA and the signing of the JBNQA in the early and mid 1970s will vanish or be lightly surrendered by those who maintain it. Indeed, the whole Nunavik plan in *A-PLUS* is really an adding onto this proven capacity for strength and strong direction a democratic capacity which the practical operation of the various Nunavik organisations heretofore did not permit in practice. These two things – strong leadership, and collective representation and control – need not conflict, but they can conflict. Inuit leaders will need strong and wide regional support for many of the big issues of direction and development ahead, so they will benefit from the Assembly. An Assembly, especially one made up of village representatives as is proposed by *A-PLUS*, needs strong executive leadership to avoid becoming merely a table where vested interests *per* their local members share out senior governments’ tax revenues for her/his own community’s maximum benefit.

In Nunavut the new assembly followed 33 years experience of elected Territorial members – including ministers and premiers – practising territorial governance, a major learning exercise for all as executive power gradually devolved from a single federal appointee as chief executive to some advisory niceties to genuine ‘responsible government’.³⁵ Furthermore, the NWT – and now Nunavut – inherited an activist high-spending territorial administration created earlier by Ottawa. There was a great deal of experience among Inuit with the liberal democratic process, as well as some very pointed recent experience. For instance, immediately before creation of Nunavut the NWT indigenous premier was removed for conflict of interest in performance of his duties,³⁶ and Nunavut hired the NWT conflict of interest commissioner herself to run the Premier’s and Cabinet department in the Nunavut government. She is enormously able and suitable, but her recruitment also had a symbolic dimension – a standard was being set visibly for public office in Nunavut. Removal of office-holders for reasons of personal conduct, fitness, or integrity has become a way of life in Nunavik and Nunavut, one highly disruptive of work and continuity, and highly damaging to the image of Inuit and Inuit self-governing capacity. And perhaps even more persons should have been removed. Worse luck, many of those removed have not been novices but the experienced old guard. Nevertheless, these are not questions of defective persons – on the contrary, they are often the best and the brightest. They are symptoms of the terrific discontinuity between Inuit and non-Inuit society, of recent social and political pressure, and of the load carried by individuals. Other key individuals have maimed or killed themselves, created havoc within their families, or been

³⁴ Nunavut premier Okalik was affecting on inter-communal cooperation at his public talks in Australia, e.g., Okalik 2001a; 2001b, especially in question and answer sessions.

³⁵ The first Nunavut elections were NWT by-elections for 3 seats held in summer 1966, a project in which this author was involved on the ground and from head office.

³⁶ In late October 2001 there has been a re-run of that NWT event with another premier in Yellowknife under attack, albeit surviving in office for the moment.

institutionalised. These are transitional problems, partly created by demands of new systems for which individuals lack preparation, and partly by the movement of Inuit society as a whole from scattered hunting camp life to life in the gaze of a liberal democratic system of a modern industrial state run by other cultures. Fortunately Inuit are quick learners – and are learning quickly.

As *A-PLUS* says, ‘the Assembly shall become an instrument for achieving further self-determination, beyond the management of immediate issues, through more fundamental debates on the status of Nunavik as the need arises.’(8) And ‘The Assembly could... if it chooses, state from time to time its position on issues of fundamental concern in the name of Nunavik.’(9) This incremental approach to self-determination is sensible and the most comfortable way by which Canadian political culture in general, including recent indigenous political culture, has evolved. I.e., one step at a time for practical purposes rather than by grand statements of ideology.

This way of thinking about the development of such bodies has also been central to reforms in Nordic countries, notably in relation to the Greenland *Landsting* and Sami Parliament in Norway.³⁷ That is, both have recognised the capacity and implicit desirability of the new institutions to grow. Both those countries have also seen these indigenous and regional assemblies occupy an important role as bodies to be consulted when the national Parliament intends to deliberate on matters concerning Greenland or Sami or Sápmi. Inuit and other indigenous organisations in each province and territory were core-funded by Ottawa precisely for this role – in lieu of the indigenous political bodies yet to develop, and now developing as here in Nunavik. The Quebec National Assembly and Parliament of Canada might be open to consultative arrangements with a like body, such as the Nunavik Assembly. Makivik also has a statutory role as Inuit representative body in Quebec. It may be useful to clarify future prospects and relationships here. Clearly it is desirable for the Nunavik Assembly to be consulted on policy issues by senior governments and legislatures.

The proposed 15 members for the Assembly, one for each village, with a second for communities of over 2000 persons, was no doubt thought through carefully. The reduction of a legislature to community bargaining for the spending of regional revenues, in effect, has always been lamentable in the NWT, making a farce of so-called ‘consensus government’ and the lack of party politics. That system has now been inherited by Nunavut. Perhaps the approach recommended here is best for Nunavik, although a guaranteed member for each of the half-dozen smallest villages or most remote villages, *and*, an ‘at large’ membership for the rest, would secure the special circumstances of the weak while encouraging a more regional approach than mere local interest. Perhaps the separately elected government will look after that adequately, but if the government members elected at large are to be part of the Assembly, the chemistry changes. The encouragement of strong regional sentiment and government rather than a 15-person counting house is desirable.

The proposal that ‘Neither the National Assembly of Québec nor the Parliament of Canada would have the power to reduce the powers of the Assembly of Nunavik without its consent’(9) is entirely proper and desirable. It is also a precedent which should be taken for granted across Canada in all indigenous-government relations. Only few and specified outrages should allow override here, and that is surely covered in the Peace, Order and Good Government power of the Canadian Constitution. It is hard to imagine Quebec legislating such an Assembly into being without some safety provision, of course.

An even more immediately important proposal is that ‘no development of natural resources in Nunavik would take place without the consent of the Assembly’(9). This is further spelled out in Recommendation 15 (page 41):

- 15.1 There shall be no development of natural resources in Nunavik without the consent of the Nunavik Assembly. This includes mineral exploration and mining, hydroelectric projects (including feasibility studies and related field work), protected areas, wildlife resource and the environment.
- 15.2 Consequently, the Québec Government and the Nunavik Government should together set up a process whereby all licenses and permits concerning the territory and its resources are issued jointly by the two governments.

This is similar to the Greenland resources provision and quite workable in practice. It encourages both sides to seek accommodation, and Inuit are no more averse to finding new revenue sources than any other people. The issue is the principal flashpoint issue for Aboriginal peoples in Outback Australia, and it will be, too, in Torres Strait when another dicey development or oil spill threatens the Melanesian people there.

The Council of Elders is an interesting proposal, e.g., that ‘the traditional knowledge and moral authority of elders will guide the other institutions of Nunavik to a higher purpose and long-range concerns.’(10) The respected role of elders in Inuit and most other indigenous societies is well known. How many of them wish to be constituted into a White Man-style public body will be an interesting question – some will think the visibility and status a good thing for their society, and others will think it a demeaning of the informal respect acquired and exercised over a lifetime. Inuit elders have huge influence, whether or not they ever hold *any* formal position within the community.

³⁷ E.g., Jull 1979a; 1979b; 1984a; and Smith 1987.

To create a second political chamber identical in size to the first Assembly, as is proposed, invites inevitable confusion about the moral authority of each. If 'the Council of Elders is the guardian of Inuit language and culture, and of Inuit values'(11), well, that is why most of us have always thought Inuit should govern themselves. That *all* Inuit have language, culture, and values aplenty. Do the younger ones lack these? If so, should they be governing Nunavik? Clearly there is a very important role for the cultural knowledge and accumulated wisdom of the old in an oral culture like Inuit society. Whether an open-ended 'upper house' is appropriate, or a body with a more defined role in respect of the culture department of government, is a serious question. One can imagine some of the powerful figures of the Nunavik political past becoming very powerful barons indeed and challenging the Assembly from the Elders' council when they don't like its direction. That would defeat the whole aim of the Nunavik Commission.

Provision for a Code of Ethics, and for Recall (11) of Assembly or Government members 'before the end of their term for clearly dishonourable personal conduct', 'breach of trust', 'behaviour incompatible with the dignity of their office and the standards expected...' the list reads like any recent issue of a Northern newspaper. These provisions will be far from theoretical and may be in use all too soon, so it is important to get them right from the outset. It would be useful to consult with Anne Crawford, Deputy Minister, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Government of Nunavut, both in her present capacity and as former NWT conflict of interest commissioner and as a long-time Northern lawyer. Other Inuit-serving lawyers, most notably John Merritt of Ottawa, should be consulted. The government has its own in-house expertise, e.g., federal Justice department lawyer Jeff Richstone who formerly worked full-time for Inuit organisations and dealt with assorted messes.

The proposal for the form of the Government of Nunavik may be controversial even before considering its two alternative models (13-14). The separation of 'at large' government members from village-specific members may seem odd to the federal MPs and Quebec MNAs who will ultimately decide this question when passing the final legislation to create Nunavik. They, as legislators elected in a particular way, will have their own views. It might be useful to have a reference group of legislators, or at least lunch with a few, if that was not already done in preparing *A-PLUS*.

As for models 1 and 2, neither seems very appealing conceptually, but if one or other 'feels right' to Nunavimmiut, they will have to live with the results, at least until further changes are made. There is not so much political talent lying around as to make it desirable that all those knocked out of the Government election be then also unavailable for the Assembly for 3-4 years. The idea of an Assembly of all the talents along more conventional Canadian parliamentary lines may have some appeal after all. In fact, an Assembly with a strong 'Opposition' might be best for Nunavik and Nunavimmiut rather than forcing dissidents into extra-parliamentary opposition. It is far from clear that the case for these proposals has been adequately argued, although perhaps they were discussed further in the Commission.

Decentralization (15-16) argues for the status quo, i.e., decentralisation where it already exists and otherwise a build-up of functions in the capital. The arguments offered against physical dispersal are not entirely compelling, although one may not disagree with them. In Nunavut, for instance, the idea of dispersal was premised on the availability of unused clerical and secretarial skills in many communities (i.e., a potential local job and income pool), of limiting population impacts on the capital, and on providing more contact between officials and those governed. However, this question of decentralised administration in sparsely populated areas and the potential or limitations of new technology remains unanswered in Canada, although we are surely the country on Earth with the biggest stake in answering it satisfactorily. (We even have a federal Communications department whose original *raison d'être* was the solution of just such a problem!)

The choice of a capital (16) is admirably democratic. However, only a few locations could manage the role without vast further infrastructure and capital costs. Governments may veto the referendum result if they don't get the 'right' answer.

On 'A Justice System for Nunavik' the report proposes that Nunavik be a distinct court district with 'one full-time judge of the Cour du Québec, with jurisdiction over criminal, youth protection and civil cases. The district would also have a resident Crown attorney.'(17) The reader and Nunavimmiut are reminded that

it must be made clear that anyone who has legal standing, particularly any person or corporation residing or active in Nunavik, may challenge any law adopted by the Nunavik Assembly or measure taken by the Nunavik Government in the appropriate court, which could be the Court of Nunavik or the Superior Court of Québec. This is a fundamental right that flows from the constitutional principle of the rule of law, which has been affirmed many times by the Supreme Court of Canada. This right may not be denied by any governmental authority. ...

That is to say that, while the Nunavik Assembly has a direct link of authority over the Government, it has no authority whatsoever over what the courts may decide. (17)

Quebec has a different legal system, unlike the rest of Canada's British common-law system, and I am not familiar with its principles or administration.³⁸

On page 19, Part 2 on Public Finances begins. This is by and large clear and simple, a useful introduction to a complex subject. It is recognised at the outset that the autonomy and self-government required for Nunavik mean a new approach to funding. Apart from the obvious points about responsibility for money, *A-PLUS* argues for possible variation of tax rates to provide an incentive or at least remove disincentive from the hunting economy and associated fuel and equipment needs (20).

In an important discussion of 'Economic rents and royalties', *A-PLUS* draws on Greenland Home Rule and the resources control and revenue-sharing formula with Denmark in operation there. (21) This is a fundamental point, of course. To most *québécois* the Nunavik region is a potential treasure chest to be exploited, if it is thought about at all. Inuit have been very bitter about their own high energy costs and low standard of living while their homeland is turned upside down for the convenient and cheap energy of consumers far away.

In some words on public enterprises, the report urges the importance of Nunavik bodies which could implement policies (21). It specifically draws on the Greenland government's uniform pricing for retail goods even to remote place through the old KGH and its Home Rule successor entities.

Under 'Limits on fiscal sources' we learn that in 1998 Canada and Quebec spent \$243 million on Nunavik, while income tax would make up only \$21 million (21). *All* tax revenue would only amount to \$35 million, i.e., only 14% of expenditure.

In a delicious 'Freudian slip' the report says that 'there are indications that Hydro-Québec now sees the sharing of revenue with interested parties as the wave of the future.'(21-22) There have been jokes for many years about whether Hydro-Québec was a state within a state, i.e., within Quebec, or *vice versa*. There is little doubt who is the power in the land of Nunavik as such comments remind us.

From page 22 follows a discussion of block funding as the way to go for Nunavik. Some of us have been recommending such an approach to Ottawa for indigenous government especially in hinterland regions since the mid-1970s, including attention to the proposals then floating about for Greenland, so... *it's about time!* The report adds that 'a Nunavik Government should provide services at a level of quality that meets or exceeds current requirements' and that it 'should be able to choose to provide alternative and adapted services, to take into account the reality of the Arctic'(24). The best, briefest, and clearest arguments for these points may be the heartfelt plea by Gordon Robertson, the man who created Canada's Northern administration, for proper support in recognition of Arctic realities in his several sections on social, economic, and employment issues in a little 1988 book.³⁹

The essential issue of language, well understood by Quebec as by most in Ottawa, is stated firmly: 'Inuittitut should be the predominant language of work in the new government.'(30) This is stated formally in a Recommendation: 'The powers for the Inuit language and culture shall come under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Nunavik Assembly which, in carrying out this responsibility, shall act with the advice of the Council of Elders.'(31) There are some important issues here. In developing Nunavut, for instance, there was informal recognition that any venture involving Inuit custom and customary law, or similar cultural issues, must be seen to draw on women and respect women's rights in a contemporary equal rights context. If such provisions are not written into the framework for Nunavik they will certainly be raised pointedly by women's groups outside Nunavik. It would be a grave political miscalculation to leave such a loophole. In Nunavut we talked about ensuring that at least half the members of any body or committee on customary matters be composed of Inuit women as a visible no less than practical way to make clear that women would not be second-class citizens. It would be sad if Inuit threw away so much political credibility and invited such long delays of their agendas as Indian First Nations leaders in recent decades over the issue of gender discrimination in the Indian Act.

Under the details of 'The Administration of Justice' (from p. 31) the concept of Justice Committees used in NWT, Nunavut, and Yukon is elaborated and recommended for Nunavik. 'Justice committees are typically composed of 6 to 8 responsible members of the community. They may include elders, social workers, probation officers, mayors or municipal councillors, and ministers of the faith.'(32) We also learn that the JBNQA promised a detention centre more than 25 years ago but that such has never been built despite obvious need. (32-33)

Various other social and cultural items are also predictable – important, but being well known in virtually any Northern administration context, requiring no particular comment except hearty approval.

³⁸ Canada has only one national Criminal Code, but each province and territory has its own civil law, all provinces and territories using the English common law except Quebec. Many aspects of justice administration are handled at province and territory level, although Nunavik is not proposed as a 'territory' in the full sense of Nunavut, NWT, or Yukon.

³⁹ Robertson 1988, esp. pp 20-21, 52-53, 56-7.

On page 40 we return to the crucial subject of 'Sharing the Territory and Its Resources'. This begins, 'The territory and its resources form one of the most important spheres where a public government can play a role in Nunavik. From the outset, it is difficult to imagine that a Nunavik Government would not have a substantial level of power with respect to the control and development of the territory and its resources.'⁴⁰ Well, maybe so, but the fact is that it has taken decades for Inuit to get some recognition of this moral and political imperative. The proposal is succinct, a version of the Greenland-Denmark double veto system which, in effects, encourages negotiations for mutual benefit.

Here again the question of the offshore arises. For most communities it is the most significant territory – sea, sea ice, islands – for the pursuit of traditional subsistence and livelihoods.

On pages 41-42 there is detailed consideration of creating a Nunavik Wildlife Commission drawing on the experience of co-management in Nunavut. (One might also recommend attention to Inuvialuit and Alaskan Inuit experience of co-management, as well as experience of Indian First Nations in Canada.) This is clearly the wave of the future for most of Canadian territory so there is much good reason to 'get it right' here and to pay particular attention to the work of Peter Usher and his research program on land and resources within the RCAP process.⁴⁰

A related item on Environment, page 43, calls for 'a unified regime for assessing the environmental and social impacts of development projects, to replace the processes currently in effect, and which shall be established at the time of the creation of the Nunavik Environmental Commission.' Needless to say these wildlife, resources, territory, and environment matters are and have always been fundamental to Inuit in Nunavut, as to indigenous peoples everywhere. It is very difficult for those unfamiliar with indigenous society and politics to understand the passion evoked by these topics. It would make an interesting study to 'compare and contrast' this passion with the passion for sovereign identity among European peoples, and perhaps it has been done – certainly Quebec scholars and friends of indigenous peoples like Peter Jacobs, Jean Morisset, and Ludger Muller-Wille have tried to acquaint readers of non-indigenous background with such indigenous realities.

'Relationships with other Governments and Aboriginal Peoples'(45-46) is one of the most innovative and valuable sections of the report, a section to be commended highly. One proposal is for 'a Nunavik Conference gathering members of the governments of Nunavik, Québec and Canada [which] should be instituted to discuss matters of mutual concern.'⁴⁵ This, and an annual dialogue of Nunavik Assembly members with the National Assembly of Québec, is the very sort of practical and ongoing 'treaty-making' whose absence Mohawks and other First Nations have so often lamented – indeed, they have seen in the White Man's failure to value or understand such processes a great many bitter and fatal conflicts over the past 400 years.⁴¹ It is appropriate that such a fundamental and potentially valuable part of the 'Canadian *ism*' in federalism or inter-cultural or inter-governmental affairs, as *per* discussion above, is contributed by the pre-European culture of the country.

Also,

It is likely that once it is established, the Nunavik Government will seek to have ties with other governments of the Arctic, particularly those that are elected by Inuit majorities. The Government of Nunavut, recently created, and the Government of Greenland fall into this category. They are both public governments with a high degree of autonomy and both are immediate neighbours of Nunavik; all three governments would therefore face many common problems, and it is only natural that they would seek to share their experience. The governments of Canada and Québec shall recognize the establishment of closer ties of a cultural, social and economic nature between Nunavik, Nunavut, Labrador and Greenland. (45)

It is worth noting that other Inuit regions such as Alaska's North Slope Borough and the villages of Siberia's Chukotka also have vast experience of coping with the administrative and socio-economic fallout of rapid social change, and may also usefully contribute to multi-lateral Inuit problem-solving exchanges.

On page 46, while one assumes that the Forum of Aboriginal Peoples of Northern Québec is an important proposal, there is insufficient information given to the reader, leaving one wondering what dark tensions are perhaps being discreetly hidden.

The issue of overlapping or conflicting future roles between Makivik and the Nunavik Government, and the great moral authority of the Nunavik Assembly, is mentioned in a small paragraph. (46) The larger issues of relations between these entities may not be so slight. Nunavut's government and Inuit birthright corporation signed the Clyde River Protocol⁴² to set some direction and commitments for good relations.⁴³ The opportunities for concerting energies and

⁴⁰ Usher 1997; RCAP 1996; Freeman & Carbyn 1988; FES/UW 1991; Inglis 1993; Pinkerton 1989; Jull 1993.

⁴¹ E.g., Alfred 1995.

⁴² Clyde River Protocol signed October 27, 1999 in Iqaluit (because of bad weather in Clyde), see Joint News Release, Government of Nunavut & Nunavut Tunngavik Inc, 27-10-1999. Protocol is online at NTI website.

funds, one of the principal motives for creating a coherent politico-administrative structure in a Nunavik territory, are great. The dangers of clashes between the new Nunavik and Makivik are also great. One may hope that unproductive conflict can be avoided.

On page 46 the issue of representation in both federal Parliament and Quebec's National Assembly is raised. It is recommended that each entity create a Nunavik electoral district. This is highly desirable, of course. Inuit experience in Nunavut with the creation of a seat for the region from the 1979 election onwards has been a triumph for both Inuit and for Canada. Both Ottawa and Quebec City have good reason not to encourage feelings of political marginalisation in this hinterland.⁴⁴ It is unfortunate that some other countries are unable to provide such reforms, e.g., Australia with its bitter legacy of government malapportionment and gerrymandering ruling out, for now, such obvious benefits as a Torres Strait seat in Canberra or Brisbane in the cause of a pure or nearly pure 'one vote, one value'.

On page 50 the question of a new 'treaty' to frame the implementation of the report is raised. It would replace sections of the JBNQA which would then be confined to land matters, while the new treaty would focus on governance.

FOUR CONTEXTS

We may also look at the proposals in *Amiqaaluta/ Partageons/ Let Us Share (A-PLUS)* by framing the Nunavik project within four contexts or filters through which all such proposals should be viewed:

- 1. Local/regional and ethno-cultural context;**
- 2. National and sub-national political cultures;**
- 3. Practical governance unfolding in the world today; and**
- 4. Emerging international indigenous political experience.**

We need to be clear about the importance of these. We are not dealing here with small administrative changes but with 'big picture' constitution-making which has its own world.

The local/regional and ethno-cultural context confers essential political legitimacy. The Nunavik Commission worked at local and regional level and negotiated, in effect, both as and with local representatives. That approach may seem logical and natural to those involved – and, indeed, *should* seem so. Too many contemporary governments have sought to impose 'solutions' for indigenous ills and grievances, e.g., in Australia and Scandinavia. Official habits of unilateralism, 'the quick fix', may be all too entrenched. In such matters as establishing credibility and legitimacy of governing institutions – notably including consent of the governed – one would think they should know better. The manner in which the Nunavik Commission was established and worked is worth praise and worth noting. Meanwhile, the existence of well-publicised disagreements on some points or among some sections of the Nunavik public requires that processes of consensus and consent be maintained and, if possible, disputes resolved.⁴⁵ Legitimacy, consensus, formal consent – these are as important as specific substantive details in the development and implementation of constitutional arrangements. If glossed over they may return later and discomfortingly. Sometimes, as in post-1979 referendum Greenland, they disappear. In constitutional politics, process is product no less than documents agreed.

Not all such problems come from outsiders. In the political development style which has followed from the landmark *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act*, as in other approaches to native title such as the mid-1970s JBNQA and Northern Territory (Australia) land rights legislation, some local people are seen to benefit more than others from the new structures and new ways of doing things. The very bodies created to deal with the core issue of land and waters and associated rights may become flash-points of controversy, and confusion or anger generated by the fact that they must operate to some large extent in the White Man's legal forms which are sometimes quite meaningless and inappropriate to traditional indigenous territorial notions and custom. Such systems and cultures do not mesh easily. Quebec Francophones suffered greatly with the introduction of British law and institutions in the first decades after 1763, for instance, but apparently not because of particular newcomer ill-will.⁴⁶ Those most adept or comfortable with the new system are bound to be envied or resented by others who feel left behind, and when an ethno-cultural edge is added as

⁴³ Thanks to a series of coincidences a study on, and recommendations for, this matter in Nunavut involving this author did not proceed in the mid-1980s, alas.

⁴⁴ The eastern villages of Nunavik were in the riding which elected the federal Prime Minister in 1984, but Mr Mulroney did not visit Nunavik till long after.

⁴⁵ E.g., 'Makivik to forge ahead with self-government talks', *Nunatsiaq News*, 19-10-2001.

⁴⁶ Neatby 1966.

in cross-cultural or inter-racial relations, divides may open within the regional society. In northern territories where the whole process of political change is fired by painful and fast social changes, these further matters are gasoline on the flames. Already across Canada the first generation of the self-government reform movement and its achievements are under attack from aggrieved groups, especially by women who have to pick up the pieces of failure in their families and communities. In Nunavik people will wish to know how the new system will deliver better services and personal outcomes.

Only the Inuit of Nunavik, they who will have to live with the results of these deliberations, can say whether the present plan suits their needs. They must choose carefully because if they seek too much, or have too starry a view of possibilities, they could lose the opportunity for change and regional betterment for a generation. If they decide that the present package is a good one, it can and no doubt will be improved further with experience. This package seems to meet needs often stated over the past 20 years – for more comprehensive administration in a more coordinated and coherent structure, and more direct, simple, and overall political control by Nunavimmiut. Constitutional frameworks set a direction but they do not take us very far. The Nunavik Assembly and Government will do the hard work, and that is why it is so important to be sure that their fundamental structures are right.

The benign neglect of indigenous hinterlands and band government by senior governments is unlikely to continue, however. Afghanistan's is not the only government in the world which may have been hijacked. Mining interests, mercenaries, and African political factions have a violent history only episodically reported by Western media after a particularly colourful massacre. In the South Pacific there are governments which govern little more than indigenous reserves surrounded by turquoise sea but with serious criminal connections, these places convenient to, e.g., Australia's federal government today who are buying landing rights and boarding facilities for refugees from the Taleban, not least in hopes of winning a national election on a 'get tough with foreigners!' platform. Canadian indigenous reserves have long had rumoured troubles with drugs and Mob money, long before the era of casinos and tobacco transport dividing communities. However, the small steady stream of complaint and grievances, not from hostile whites but from injured or ethically troubled indigenous individuals about the conduct of their community affairs by their own leaders, has been the real catalyst for new scrutiny in Canada. It is unlikely that hinterlands will be left to their own devices now with fears that terrorists could use such neglect to hide.

National and sub-national political cultures are also crucial factors. In Nunavik the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) proved difficult and confusing to implement for federal and provincial governments because they had no experience of such politico-administrative structures or the habits it required of them. This resulted in political stand-offs which generated mistrust, delayed benefits, brought hardship to Nunavimmiut, and undermined the credibility of parties to, and principles of, indigenous political reform to the detriment of indigenous peoples and governments all across Canada. The fact that the JBNQA was a first and a learning experience for everyone concerned was often forgotten. Compatibility and intelligibility among the political processes and actors involved in the design and maintenance of a constitutional system and political institutions may be boring but are nevertheless essential to daily workability.

As a quaint confusing ramshackle collection of institutions negotiated hastily in a virtual constitutional vacuum more than 25 years ago, the Nunavik system largely escaped or defied outside scrutiny. Indeed, much of the comment was merely hostile rant by those who thought Inuit should be out hunting or at home making kamiks instead of meeting in board rooms and running airlines. There were inevitable scandals and problems of individuals to whom money and power had come too quickly, but these largely stayed 'within the family' of Nunavik. However, confidence among a few was never lacking and everything progressed. Now Nunavik and its governance will move into a new phase and a new intensity of scrutiny. As experience in North Alaska, Nunavut, and Greenland has shown, some of the best and the brightest who have led things so far may become casualties, although tragedies are not new to Nunavik, either. Inuit will have to participate comfortably in both the political cultures of Quebec and of Canada as significant players. Some people will feel that the region is becoming assimilated too quickly to the material culture of North America, while others will be glad that they have new and better means to cope with such change through the Nunavik reforms. Some will become permanently and articulately hostile, but this should make no-one uneasy – every whole society must have its prophets and priests, and an essential part of their role is to look at the present critically and seek a better future for their people.

While Nunavik and the Cree homeland (Eeyou Istchee) were the first modern indigenous northern territories completed in Canada, in the mid-1970s, much other effort was already long underway farther north and west. It would be easy for Inuit and Cree to recall that brash and unprecedented time of negotiation and believe it stood in a vacuum, but since that time their own experience has come to be seen as emblematic and important in a wider sense, as part of a larger evolution of new arrangements across Canada. We have seen above how indigenous hinterlands experienced that time of change as projects and governments bore down on their way of life and their homelands. For Canadians and governments in the South, the experience was seen differently. Pressing northwards in search of more minerals, forests to cut, and energy sources, Canadians were forced by indigenous resistance and the environmental movement to learn

that wide open spaces were an illusion, that the eco-systems of these places were linked in many surprising ways and that one could not simply make a mess and walk away and believe all would be well. Furthermore, they were forced to discover that the hunting peoples who lived in these areas were not all simply hankering for electric toothbrushes and a new Buick but had their own ideas of how they wanted to live; they did not appreciate being pushed around at white convenience to make way for tourist lodges, reservoir lakes, military bases, or polluting mines or mills. Over time the interplay of public information, and of strongly contested views, including court actions, inquiries, etc. provided an implicit negotiation between North and South, indigenous and non-indigenous, ecologically sustainable development and extraction of industrial resources. Canadians learned a great deal about 'their' country including that much of it was not really 'theirs' – legally, morally, or in any sense of them having a clue about how to treat it. The three main results were that

- 1) tearing up territory to the last inch of rock or damming the last trickle of water as industrial resources were by no means the only valid uses or economic activities for Canada's huge expanse, but landscapes and living resources were also valuable;
- 2) our superior Southern Canadian version of European culture might not really be superior at all in many Northern places and for people living there, while their *modus vivendi* with harsh climate and the limitations of nature was in many ways more admirable and sustainable than our own; and
- 3) the North was not an empty space which we must fill or make anew but an already lived-in place whose peoples, environments, and aspirations we must recognise and accommodate in our politics and administration.

It would be hard to overstate the impact of such discoveries amid the joyful material efflorescence of the long post-war economic boom. After Depression and War, Canadians had put all their faith in 'can-do' materialism, D-Day replayed on 'the intrusive and undivided rocks of the Canadian Shield'⁴⁷ with stern Victorian moral purpose and simple righteousness as the small farms and country places of Canada emptied into new or exploding cities and workplaces.

While some Northern leaders, like many Western Canadians, have a somewhat paranoid view of Ontario-Quebec domination of the political system, and of the cynicism and rapacity which are said to be the only motives of that heartland, Inuit in Nunavik and elsewhere, and other Northern peoples, have repeatedly proved them wrong. The political culture of Canada is much more complex. It has found room for its sometimes romanticised, often sentimentalised, frequently silly notions of the wonders of Northern indigenous life, but it has the basics right. Northern peoples do have to rely on Nature for 'the good life', and they are trying to keep social stability from a non-industrial society, and they worry about how their children and grand-children are going to survive the unhelpful influx of Southern ways which flood their region with new temptations and distractions but few jobs or accessible opportunities. Southern Canadians can understand these things and sympathise.⁴⁸ (They may not, of course, realise that not a few indigenous adults across Northern Canada are asking themselves and each other, Are indigenous people merely going to become a new underclass while the children of a few political leaders hob-nob with the whites who seem to be getting their way at last now that papers have been signed and the doors thrown open to Southern government and industry?)

The political cultures of Canada and Quebec favour the accommodation of cultural difference and accept Inuit imperatives to a degree that they did not when the JBNQA was signed in 1975. However, much of the rosy sentimentality about indigenous government has gone; the media and public are aware that Inuit and other indigenous peoples make mistakes, have crooks among them, have some very nasty social problems, and that their elected leaders may not always be up to the job. This new climate leads some indigenous people to shout 'Racism!' at every question or raised eyebrow, but that misses the point. The parents of today's young Nunavik movers and shakers had to fight hard just to get *any* education, with some of the most brilliant denied good courses at administrators' whim. They had to go and negotiate with their land and culture just to get basic services for their homes and villages in the North. It was outrageous. But their children are now often fluently trilingual, confident both as Inuit and as Canadians, sure of their entitlement to the best and settling for nothing less. When there is a problem, and there are many, they will make sure that it gets fixed, soon. This is the bargain which Canada and Quebec have made with them. The Inuit accept Canada, and Canada will accept them as full equals. It also works the other way. Quebec and Canada are moving to accommodate the material, social, and political aspirations of Inuit. This takes a little time – it took a generation in North Norway but the results there are stunning – and it will not be easy. But it is underway. However, there are white expectations of social equity, recognition that funds are scarce, and sensitivities or courtesies about language and culture in return.

Inuit cannot now go back. Few would wish it. However, the way forward will not be easy. Inuit in many other regions – Labrador, Greenland, Nunavut, the NWT, Alaska, and Chukotka – have the same problems. Contact and relations

⁴⁷ A term found on many geological maps in Canada, much of which country is a broad shield-shaped mass of granites and similar hard rock from the earliest geological Pre-Cambrian time.

⁴⁸ Jull 2001a; 2001b; 1999c.

with those regions should be a central and critical element of Nunavik as Nunavik builds its new unified territory, unified political institutions, and new territory. Without that Nunavik will too easily feel like a small region dealing with two giant cultures in Quebec and Canada; with other Inuit friends they will realise that they are part of a new world with its own ways. Inuit and other Northern peoples got this far by winning over the South to a new way of looking at the North. Now they must not give up the struggle for their culture, and must not become merely sad little towns at the end of dusty roads, of which Canada's Mid-North already has too many.

Nevertheless, Quebec and Canada are a club with expectations and rules for members. They have assimilative power, and indeed, for Inuit to make the best use of membership it is important to know how to use the system. Governance in Canada today involves many relationships formal and informal to make sure that power and funds keep flowing so that daily projects and programs keep running. Inuit leaders and representatives will have to be adept at multiple identities.

Practical governance, especially in relation to minority peoples and regions, has never been a more present or public context and guide world-wide than it is today. The presence of Canadians as genocide prosecutors, mediators, combatants, or peace-keepers on the daily news from the Balkans in recent years has reminded even the least politically-minded of the price of failure of inter-regional and inter-cultural relationships. We have seen modern cities full of urbanites apparently just like us in Ottawa, Quebec City, or Brisbane reduced to haunted fugitives, tortured wrecks or quickly shovelled-over anonymities in burial pits. More such issues bombard us daily from the archipelago north of Australia here, and from Pacific island groups to the north-east, from half a dozen areas of Africa, from the Middle East, from Asia, and from several parts of Latin America. It is small wonder that before September 11 so many city TV outlets preferred to show us homely little stories about leaking apartments, a sick child, a cat up a tree, or a slick local car dealer about which we may be able to vent our moral outrage or offer assistance. Since, they have made a simple morality tale out of a complex world situation while

Another painful awareness for those of us safe in our living-rooms watching politics as spectators is that the ideals, standards, and moral courage of many women and men on the front lines of domestic upheaval around the world, whether shooting wars or velvet revolutions, far exceed our own or those of our national politicians. Yet we would set up institutes and teach others.

We do, however, have something to share. As noted above, Canada, its regions, and peoples are attracting increasing interest in the world for the practice – and reflections on that practice – of inter-regional and inter-cultural negotiation and accommodation in complex socio-political environments. However, despite the current stalling of indigenous policy in some areas, e.g., British Columbia claims, and the fact that the loudest criticism coming from the Right and from local accountability voices is leading governments to be exceedingly cautious, much has been transformed since 1945 and especially since the mid-1960s. This has been discussed at length elsewhere.⁴⁹ For instance,

Indigenous peoples in Canada over the past 35 years have not joined in the existing national political system so much as they have enlarged, modified, remedied, and renewed it in the process of seeking to deal with grievances, needs, and aspirations, and to accommodate new political and constitutional structures. Practical changes have been most evident in vast hinterlands where new structures have been negotiated with land (and sea) claims.

Indigenous peoples have achieved positive and unforeseen outcomes by determination, innocence, occasional bloody-mindedness, good fortune, and reference to stated Canadian and European ideals – and by gaining the support and capturing the imagination of important elements of non-indigenous opinion.

The process has been a *de facto* negotiation – and sometimes a formal one as in land claims, self-government, and constitutional work – through official, indigenous, and general public understanding evolving through public debate, media reportage and comment, specialist and expert reports, court decisions, normal processes of liberal democratic politic life, international cooperation, and foreign scrutiny. It has often been angry, bitter, and confrontational, but rarely violent – its character as ‘negotiation’ often visible only in hindsight.

...

An overall indigenous political culture in Canada exists and is evolving steadily today (and may be seen by outsiders as a sum of parts such as those enumerated here), in addition to many re-emerging and even new local and regional indigenous political cultures. At the same time, Canada's overall culture, including its political culture, is modified and expanded by inter-action with the indigenous renaissance. Big pictures and big policy settings are encouraging. Canada's governments and social, economic, and cultural establishment must explain the constitutional, legal, moral, and commonsense imperatives behind indigenous *self-*

⁴⁹ Jull 2001a.

determination to all Canadians. The past failure to do so in respect of Quebec should be a stark warning of the dangers of not doing so.⁵⁰

Quebec and Canada, and Inuit, have much to live up to in today's world, at home and abroad. Nunavik is by no means merely a local arrangement to solve some local problems.

The emerging international political experience of indigenous peoples and indigenous hinterlands is the newest, most under-utilised, and perhaps richest source of precedent, standards, and inspiration available. The Nunavik Commission has recognised this by its soundings in Greenland and Nunavut. There is a need for forums in which the comparable problems of indigenous ethno-regions may be discussed and ideas shared.⁵¹

Canadian indigenous peoples and governments – especially Inuit and Cree, and Northern affairs personnel in DIAND⁵² and in NWT, Nunavut, and Quebec governments, and many of their advisers past and present – have taken the northern territory from a perception as unorganised leftover land to new ideal, from poor fringe where a few backward people insist on camping and hunting to proud vibrant new cultural community, from place where well-meaning outsiders struggle and too often fail to devise workable programs and policies to celebration of local self-reliance and traditional ingenuity, from embarrassing unfinished business to universal (or at least global) ideal. Canadians have done this by trying harder, by sticking with standards of decency, acceptance, and accommodation, and by not giving up. Canadians have also done it by accepting Northern peoples as genuine and morally equal citizens. That is something one might not have needed to say ten years ago, but now with populist parties and politicians in federal politics and provincial power in Canada – and populist reactionaries in power elsewhere, e.g., trying to undo the entire post-1945 social consensus on cultural and racial diversity including Aboriginal relations in Australia – we should not trivialise our own achievement.

In a Canada and a world where populist one-liners and facile responses to dangers real and imagined are increasingly proposed by the more unscrupulous politicians and by the thoughtless among the public, the patient and practical problem-solving and constitution-making embodied in the modern history of Nunavik and other northern territories present, evolving, or yet to come, is a tradition to be valued and strengthened. It is also one of the few promising approaches to deep conflicts of culture, land and water use, development philosophy, economic shares, and political legitimacy in a tense world – an approach with much wider application than to forests, tundras, and frozen seas of Northern Canada. Indigenous leaders in other countries are well aware of the potential and value of Canada's northern territories experience, as Australia's Patrick Dodson and Norway's Sven Roald Nystø have noted this year.⁵³

Governments, academic researchers, NGOs, and international agencies are giving increasing attention to this Canadian experience, although high costs of Northern travel deter most from actually visiting Northern Canada. For instance I myself have been asked to speak and answer questions about it often in chilly palaces of culture in Northern Europe, and in red dust riverbeds in remote Australian Aboriginal homelands at +43°C. In those places reindeer herders, fishers, or ceremonial elders laugh in sympathy with other indigenous peoples' frustrations and in shared recognition of the White Man's obstinacy which have become apparently universal tissue in European world dominance. They admire the way Inuit and other Northern peoples in Canada have been able to make progress with governments and non-indigenous people of goodwill. A hopeful sign of official Canadian support has been the August 2001 speaking tour of Australia by Nunavut premier Paul Okalik where delighted indigenous and non-indigenous audiences responded to his positive message in person and on television at a time when that country's racial tensions and xenophobia had stopped indigenous policy and social progress, blighting indigenous hinterlands.

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Where does all this leave us? We live in the world. Nunavik and each other indigenous hinterland is shaped by expectations, problems, and experience of wider contexts, and it is a significant project which contributes to the world. It is anything but a 'local issue'.

⁵⁰ Jull 2001a, items selected from conclusions, pp 43-49

⁵¹ Jull 1999a.

⁵² Canada's Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, now also called INAC for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

⁵³ Pat Dodson speaking at the National Press Club on national television, August 15, 2001, and Sven Roald Nystø in a press interview, 'Norwegian Sami want "Canadian model"', *Nunatsiaq News*, Iqaluit, June 22, 2001.

PART 3 – CONCLUSIONS

THE NATURE OF NORTHERN TERRITORIES

Whether northern territories or other such territories have formal national status already, like Canada's Northwest Territories, Greenland in the Danish Kingdom, or Australia's Northern Territory, or are emerging ethno-regional entities like Scandinavia's Sápmi or Australia's Cape York Peninsula, or are at some way station in cultural consciousness and politico-constitutional emergence like Nunavik or the Deh Cho lands or Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) in Northern Canada, or Australia's Combined Aboriginal Nations of Central Australia (CANCA) Torres Strait, matters little. The issues and dynamics are similar, as are the needs, solutions, and some predictable stages and conflicts.

In Canada the two – now three – federal northern territories allowed the national government to mend its earlier lack of attention by devising specific programs and a special administration which, in time, evolved into responsive territorial administrations under the control of indigenous and non-indigenous Northern cabinet ministers. The situation of the lands of many other indigenous peoples in Canada's seven provincial Northlands from Atlantic to Pacific Oceans has been very mixed, with conditions ranging from appalling to reasonable. Not surprisingly the places like Nunavik and the Quebec Cree territory where governments have worked with indigenous peoples to devise contemporary regional and local arrangements with substantial self-government and fiscal autonomy have been more promising than some isolated hell-holes. Nunavik, at any rate, is one of a large number of regions faced with similar problems in a similar time-frame, an era which in its later stages scholars like Robert Paine and Jeremy Beckett have called 'welfare colonialism'.⁵⁴

The political debate about northern territories is found today most perfectly in Russia and Siberia where lack of past experience and present resources create sharp-edged conflicts, and in Australia where the national head of government and ministers for indigenous issues have been attempting to roll back the post-war policy consensus and public attitudes accommodating cultural diversity and indigenous advancement.⁵⁵

National capitals will have no Northern peace unless and until real political reform – rather than mere material largesse or symbolic gestures – is achieved in direct or implicit negotiation with indigenous peoples. Northern territories are not just Northern settlers' business; they are national business. This is particularly so in Canada with its explicit and strong constitutional powers in relation to indigenous lands and peoples lying with the federal government – rights further recognised and protected in the *Constitution Act, 1982*. But so it is, everywhere, even where jurisdictions are unclear or up for grabs as in much of Australia, when policies and rhetoric of ethnic or race relations violate 'first world' standards, or their political or environmental conflicts attract wider sympathy and political attention. Then they may become international business. National governments and parliaments have explicit and implicit responsibilities towards immature parts of a federation or realm – and to the peoples there, and it is better that they exercise it credibly and workably before it becomes a bitter ethno-regional dispute.

- 1) *The key issue is politico-legal accommodation of indigenous peoples.* This is the fault line which runs through all northern territories and their politics.
- 2) *The 'solution' lies in a de facto exchange of recognised moral legitimacies* – although government legal officers would never wish to admit such a thing.
- 3) *Indigenous peoples accept the legitimacy or permanent presence of nation-state authorities, and the latter accept substantial guaranteed political and cultural autonomy for indigenous people.* 'The latter' may act alone or with sub-national authorities. The result – or desired result – is an accommodation which provides all sides with the legal certainties they seek for their very different objectives. There are many ironies here, for instance...
- 4) *Only by acceding to indigenous territorial control do governments acquire the real knowledge and effective understanding of territory and environments, and effective resource management which is a major stated aim of government insistence on control, i.e., by working through or with indigenous peoples and organisations.* Canada's Northern claims settlements have demonstrated this. For instance, it became clear in 1987 before and after the defence policy White Paper that its proponents and other officials wanting to consult about Inuit environmental realities in the Eastern Arctic were locked into a ceremonial sort of show 'sovereignty' with officious procedures for consulting governments in, e.g., Yellowknife and Quebec City, rather than with indigenous claims structures offering genuine close-grain territory management and expertise in practice. Regular outbursts of outrage among Southern Canadians at Americans using the Canadian Arctic freely for submarine and other ocean

⁵⁴ Paine 1977; Beckett 1987.

⁵⁵ Pika *et al.* 1996; Jull & Bennett 2001a.

transits – often the same whites who opposed Inuit rights to those lands and sea which Inuit alone use and know – remind us that constitutional notions like sovereignty and rights are fluid, debatable, and elusive concepts across cultural frontiers.

TORRES STRAIT & TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

On 12 October 2001 the Chair of the Torres Strait Regional Authority, Terry Waia, put out a media release, 'Torres Strait Moves Toward a Territory Government'. Mr Waia reported that after nine months of community consultations, significant steps towards a regional autonomy plan had been made. In January 1988 when Australia was beginning to 'celebrate' its 200 years of white settlement, Torres Strait leaders frustrated with the slow pace of material improvement and political recognition for their region said they would secede from Australia if things did not improve. They were reported in the press as mentioning Canadian Inuit progress as a sort of model. There are some striking parallels. Like Inuit, Torres Strait Islanders live in the remote North of the country virtually unvisited by outsiders, the islands lying between Australia and Papua New Guinea, making up c. 20 villages, each with a local council and joined in an Island Coordinating Council under Queensland state law. In 1994 a similar federal body was added, the Torres Strait Regional Authority. Both bodies are made up of the same elected local council chairpersons. The biggest issues for the region are marine rights, self-government, employment needs, health and social needs, and pollution threats to the marine environment. The Islanders live among a maze of hazardous reefs, relying heavily on local seafood for their diet. They are a Melanesian people with distinctive cultural forms but often feel ignored in comparison with the much larger Australian population of Aboriginal peoples. They also find themselves in conflict and misunderstanding with other Australians over their harvesting of dugong (a sea mammal) and turtle, both important food and ceremonial items. They feel threatened now by industrial development projects and resulting pollution in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea on the north side of the Strait. The *Mabo* case which first recognised Australian indigenous 'native title' rights in 1992 pertained to an island in Torres Strait. Their political evolution and problems are very similar to those of Inuit in Nunavik and elsewhere. For some years Island leaders and organisations have tried to learn more about regional indigenous autonomy and self-government arrangements elsewhere, especially in the South Pacific and Northern Circumpolar regions.⁵⁶

MAKING ALL THINGS NEW

Nothing so enriches a country's life as renewing, creating, or re-creating political communities and jurisdictions. It is important for the whole society, a sign of confidence in values and directions, a chance to discuss basics in light of change and accumulated history. The benefits and meaning go far beyond the immediate local or regional population affected. In Australia the establishment of new arrangements for Torres Strait and the Northern Territory, Cape York and Central Australia, should be breakthrough moments when they come, and one can hardly imagine the impact on many dour citizens of Nord-Norge when Sami elaborate and strengthen Sápmi.

Nunavimmiut, their leaders, and peak organisations are fortunate to have already achieved several milestones in the past several decades. Quebec, after a puzzled start in the North from the early 1960s on discovering the Anglophone presence so well established there, has evolved dramatically, from suspicion and a desire to control, to an open-handed and open-minded approach complete with a sense of adventure. This suits the spirit of the many *québécois* who have made their lives and families among Inuit in Nunavik over the years, and it is a tribute to them. The Nunavik Commission report is very much in their image, as in the Inuit image, and so it should be. In Quebec, as elsewhere in Northern Canada and the Circumpolar world, there has sometimes been a 'disconnect' between high policy and the view from the centre, on one hand, and the more homely but often more progressive and promising realities on the ground by Arctic seas, on the other.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many conclusions and recommendations are implicit in preceding sections, especially in 'A Reading of *Amiikkaaluta / Partageons / Let Us Share*', and are not repeated below. Some items below are specific to Nunavik, but all have wider relevance, so it is easier to have one list than try to separate into 'specific' and 'general' lists.

- 1. Disconnects.** There are 'disconnects' between Canadian northern territory realities and national policy, and between Canadian political philosophy and national policy. Canada's governments have been slow to change ways of thinking to catch up with how their own officials actually have been doing business – skilfully and successfully – for years. Furthermore, Canada is studied and appreciated in the world for the reality of its political practices and the developing theory explicating its political culture, things which are sometimes unknown in Canada's national

⁵⁶ For Torres Strait see Beckett 1987; Sharp 1992; Babbage 1990; Jull 1997; Singe 1989; Mulrennan & Hansen 1994.

capital offices. This is not a healthy situation. It risks the continuity and survival of successful policy when high officials and politicians do not even know it is there.⁵⁷ It also means that actual policy-making and programs are conceived, nurtured, and targeted in a mythical or at least 'out of focus' framework. Sometimes this is useful or necessary, of course. In 1980-81, federal political leaders and their advisers; indigenous organisations, and middle-level federal officials were working towards and through indigenous policy reforms with many shared assumptions which high officials in conclave found outrageous but which they did not realise had already captured all the ground around them.⁵⁸ Like any delusion this may prove unhealthy for the deluded and those under their governance over time. It does little for the authority or credibility of government, either.

The northern territory is now a solid and successful product of both indigenous and White Man's politics and policy in Canada, achieved with much help from many hands. It is time that it dared to speak its name.

2. **Big Picture.** The Nunavik Commission work is a welcome return of a 'big picture' proposal for indigenous reform at a time when indigenous politics and public attention have been dribbling into the sands of many little pictures about 'accountability' and administrative trivia. Yes, of course, these latter details are important, but administration is administration, and political and constitutional matters are something else and have bigger fish to fry. There is no question that much loss of Canadian public support for indigenous and other vital social agendas and for their champions in federal, provincial, and territorial government is the loss of focus on large-scale issues and the apparently endless numbing complexities of details which overwhelms public attention instead. The irony is that quiet work by Canadian scholars like Kymlicka, Russell, and Tully is spreading the notion of Canada's 'big picture' inter-cultural negotiation throughout the world as a philosophy for managing conflict, difference, and change.⁵⁹
3. **More Than Local.** The Nunavik Commission report and proposed new institutions go far beyond the sort of usual local considerations and details of the JBNQA over which Inuit, Quebec, and Canada have sparred since 1975. This plan is for something much bigger, conceptually and practically. It is also a significant addition to the *répertoire* of Canadian constitutional innovations and world register of indigenous possibilities. One may hope that everyone rises to the occasion. This project should not be lost in pettifogging or organisational trivialisation.
4. **Open Learning.** One of the best qualities of the Nunavik Commission work has been its openness to the experience of others, especially but not exclusively in Greenland and Nunavut. The best advice and experience available for indigenous peoples, hinterland territories, and policy-makers or scholars is rarely found between book covers; rather, it is locked up in the heads of too-busy practitioners or in their various reports to workshops and conferences, and some few other papers and articles.⁶⁰ This material comes from many countries but for 'first world' countries the experience of Australia, New Zealand, Canada (including its many jurisdictions and regions), Lower 48 USA, Alaska, Hawaii, Greenland, Sápmi (North Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Kola), Northern Russia, Siberia, Faroes, and Shetland is especially relevant. The Circumpolar studies area of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa, has played a long and honourable role in helping Canadians and their governments learn about such experience. International studies and the Internet are now valuable additional tools, notably such inspired sites as that of Amanda Graham at Yukon College, <http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/~agraham/> Until a younger generation who live in the web world replace us older Gutenberg Galactoids, however, accessing and use of such material will remain hit and miss. It is important that we all know of the existence of comparative international and domestic material and use it to increase our options and ideas for problem-solving and reduce avoidable mistakes.
5. **Coastal and marine issues.** A good example of an area for practical cooperation among regions, peoples, and countries is indigenous coastal culture. Around Nunavik and the rest of Canada's Inuit coasts, no less than Greenland, British Columbia, Alaska, Chukotka, North Norway, and the Torres Strait and Tropical coasts of Australia, indigenous peoples face similar difficulties of maintaining and developing marine food sources and livelihoods in the face of pollution, new projects, official indifference or hostility, lack of research, and lack of respect for indigenous rights and needs. Governments like to lecture local indigenous people and foreign audiences on 'self-reliance' and 'environmental protection' while often being unwilling to encourage either on their own hinterland coasts. For instance, a conference or workshop run in an Inuit locale of Canada by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference which has expertise and a track record on marine issues and international conferences, bringing together representatives from the places mentioned, could be funded for the purpose.

⁵⁷ The opposite problem, one of the small ironies of a change of government, comes when listening to a new minister tell you what amazing things he is going to do and then having to tell him when and how his predecessors already did it.

⁵⁸ This nearly had disastrous outcomes for constitutional progress when indigenous staff obtained minutes of a deputy ministers' meeting and assumed that the federal government was acting treacherously. They were urged to stay cool and within days saw firm evidence that the deputies simply did not know that policy was proceeding without them.

⁵⁹ Unfortunately this often or usually occurs without the aid of Canadian case studies which make concrete sense of the ideas, as attested in the puzzled faces of university students digging into these authors.

⁶⁰ E.g., Jull 1998b.

6. **Resource Project Veto.** This important proposal for Nunavik could be a valuable precedent. It is quite workable in practice, as in Greenland, and need not block general development. It could be a major circuit-breaker in many Canadian indigenous claims processes, as elsewhere in the world, and should therefore be given high priority.
7. **Nunavik's offshore.** The fact that Nunavik's principal resource base is located outside the present or future jurisdiction of any Nunavik government is extremely unhelpful for Inuit who rely on it daily. If it is really too hard to resolve the basic issues or to negotiate a timely claims/political outcome, or if the geo-political issues are deemed too large in light of continuing uncertainty about the future of Quebec's relationship with the rest of Canada, some intermediate solution should be possible. For instance, the Government of Canada made pragmatic arrangements with the indigenous First Nations of British Columbia through the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy in respect of marine issues and the environment without conceding larger legal or political issues.
8. **Nunavik Assembly.** The two models for membership of the Nunavik Assembly are not logical or convincing by standards of existing political practice in Canada or elsewhere. That is, (1) the distinction between 'at large' members regionally elected members vs. members elected in each specific village, and (2) the argument in one model against having the executive as part of the legislature, are proposals which raise more questions than they answer. It might make sense, for instance, to accord individual members to the half dozen smallest and most isolated communities, and then elect the rest as 'at large' members so that the Assembly is not hopelessly enmired in local bargaining for new playground equipment, etc. Also, to cast out the losing region-wide teams for years until the next election, as under the present proposals, rather than have all the talents working in the Assembly, would be a waste of scarce talent. Federal and Quebec legislators who must approve the final Nunavik plan will have their own preferences – and are unlikely to opt for an exotic plan.
9. **Consultative Role.** The proposal for a consultative role for the Nunavik Assembly *vis-à-vis* federal and Quebec governments and legislatures is a very good one. This has long been practised by indigenous assemblies in Greenland and the Scandinavian countries.⁶¹ Not only would it make for better governance in Nunavik, Quebec, and Canada, and set a useful precedent within Canada, but it would help the Nunavik Assembly develop greater professionalism and wider vision.
10. **Elders Council.** The Council of Elders threatens to diminish the Assembly unless it has very clear-cut powers, a much smaller number of members than the Assembly, and is not vested as is now proposed with the very powers which the White Man thinks are the whole purpose of Inuit or other indigenous government, i.e., to assert Inuit culture and values. If one were to have a strong Elders body, then why have an Assembly? The Elders body might be advisory to the executive member responsible for the cultural department of the new government, instead.
11. **Women.** The exclusive powers proposed for Nunavik in the area of culture must be accompanied by firm guarantees for the equal role of women in such processes. Whether this means an equal number of women on any panels or councils concerned with culture, or other arrangements, the issue cannot be ducked. As in many societies where socio-economic disadvantage and/or rapid social change has been occurring, whether Ireland for many centuries past or indigenous Canada today, abuse of women and children as the most vulnerable has been endemic in Inuit society. Domestic abuse must not – and must not be seen to – creep into any new 'tradition', and if there have been any such traditions, they must go. Inuit governments, like all other governments, benefit from the internationalisation and deepening of human right standards; as new governments, and ones brought into being thanks to new and better rights standards (and public awareness of those standards), Inuit must accept high standards without delay.
12. **Nunavik-Makivik Relations.** In indigenous regions where dual institutional frameworks co-exist, i.e., with conventional elected accountable public bodies like the Nunavik Assembly and Government operating alongside powerful and well-resourced entities like Makivik, friction or worse is almost inevitable. Although there are good and clear historical reasons for Makivik to hold and exercise the powers it does, i.e., as successor body to NQIA and regional voice, it would be harder to make a convincing argument *except for certain core functions* when the Nunavik Assembly and Government are up and running. Makivik cannot be so accountable in practice as the Nunavik Assembly and Government must be. On the other hand, it would be helpful if the new Nunavik bodies were enriched and strengthened by the accumulated experience and expertise of Makivik and its personnel. In Nunavut a Clyde River Protocol has been signed by the new government and the Makivik-equivalent body, NTI, as a framework for cooperation, but its goals may prove more a wish than a certainty. The Nunavik situation raises two questions of principle: (1) if the trend of the region is towards full open democratic accountability, as *per* the Nunavik Assembly and Government, then Makivik as a rich exempt barony becomes anomalous without some further reforms to its structure and functions; and (2) when Makivik has achieved the Nunavik reforms – which it has long and honourably sought – what change of its own role and transfer of functions to those new Nunavik

⁶¹ Sections 11-18 of Denmark's Greenland Home Rule Act, a sizable portion of the whole Act, show that this is no slight matter.

bodies are appropriate? It will be in Makivik's interests to accelerate its own reforms: senior governments have to accord much more political weight to the recommendations of openly elected bodies like the Nunavik Assembly and Government than to more narrowly-based and less accountable entities.

13. Collective Inuit Enterprises. How will the public enterprises envisioned under the Nunavik Report proposals differ from, compete with, or replace the various regional enterprises which have occupied so much of Makivik's mandate, funds, time, and angst since 1975?

14. Public Relations. Compared with Quebec Crees and with Inuit and Dene peoples of Nunavut, NWT, and Yukon, publicity and cooperation with Southern Canada's non-indigenous public have played a relatively small part in Nunavik Inuit political work over the years. Unless the Quebec government, or Quebec and Canada in an unlikely duet, are eager to promote the new Nunavik, it would be wise for Inuit bodies of the provisional Nunavik territory to start building bridges to the public and élites of Quebec in particular and Canada in general. Nunavik Inuit have much to be proud of, and have – and have had – much to share with other Canadians. It is important that those other Canadian recognise that Nunavik is more than a power, money, and land grab by a small minority, but rather a positive step by a positive and contributing part of the country. Meetings with newspaper editorial boards, public speaking opportunities, and other forms of public relations may be needed to convince the Quebec public and voters that Nunavik is not merely an expensive folly and to help smooth passage of the required legislation through the Quebec National Assembly and federal Parliament. It is also important to help overcome any lingering hangover of the bad old days when Inuit were thought by many in Quebec, especially including élites, to be a pawn of Anglophone federalists hostile to *québécois*. Quebec and federal governments could help facilitate such a public relations campaign, of course.

15. Knocking heads. An important function of national authorities in Canada and elsewhere in respect of hinterlands has been to knock heads together when settler élites refuse to share their socio-political space with indigenous inhabitants. Australia's Northern Territory has long suffered from a hands-off approach by Canberra to a self-indulgent northern minority who long controlled public affairs through the NT government in Darwin. It is in nobody's interest for unequal and divisive inter-ethnic relations to fester in a modern nation-state – they spread and poison the national life, as in contemporary post-1996 Australia, and they diminish the country in the world. It is greatly to the credit of all sides behind the Nunavik work that it has progressed in a spirit of openness and cooperation without too much heavy breathing offstage.

16. Yes, but... !? The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement published in book form began with a short statement by the Quebec government about why the Agreement was important.⁶² It may, indeed, be *the* classic statement of why claims settlements matter to senior governments, and has been noted around the world. It would be useful to have such frank statements in company with the Nunavik Commission report so that nobody will be deluded that Quebec is cheerfully 'giving away' a third of its territory out of the sheer goodness of its heart. The absence of such is highly misleading.

17. Parliamentary Representation. It is highly desirable that new federal and Quebec electoral districts be created, as recommended, to correspond with Nunavik's boundaries or at least so as to encompass its Inuit villages. This would give Nunavimmiut both a sense of belonging and access to Quebec and Canada, something not always felt today. The value for both Canada and for Inuit of the Nunavut (a.k.a. Nunatsiaq) seat created for the 1979 federal election and maintained ever since has been inestimable.

18. Living reality. The northern territories and their indigenous societies in Canada are living realities. Their politics and wider culture have evolved over recent decades through successive stages or political battles, and have much longer histories of contact with whites. For that reason abstract debates about possible impacts of indigenous policy which sometimes divert or confuse the Canadian public, such as the Flanagan-Cairns debate by two noted author-scholars, are of very limited relevance in northern territories.⁶³ Whether they are very relevant in Southern Canada is a matter of opinion. But the northern territories have had a sort of organic development *within*, and in dialogue with others *without*, as shown above. It is not necessary to debate or fantasise their future, although they disprove many elements of the dystopia imagined by Flanagan in a notorious recent book.

19. Inuit expansion. Inuit have expanded Canada and Quebec, and non-indigenous notions of ourselves and our country. They have done this quite literally by opening to us the Circumpolar world, in the first instance through their Inuit cultural relations with Greenland, Alaska, and Siberia, and with the rest of the Arctic, as well as the whole world of environmental issues from sea mammal regulation to marine pollution to concerted global action and ecologically sustainable development. In respect of this the former Nunavik Inuit leader Mary Simon has become Canada's first Arctic Ambassador. Inuit and other Northern peoples have also taught us that the North is

⁶² It was signed by John Ciaccia, as I recall.

⁶³ Flanagan & Cairns 2001. Cairns quietly and sensibly shows up some of the problems in the Flanagan position here.

not lonely empty space but a knowable and known landscape, a place where old cultures thrive and have long domesticated the challenges which we think of as the adventure of the New World and of remote areas.

In a very practical vein, Inuit work, mostly notably the Nunavik research under inspired leadership like that of Lorraine Brooke, Bill Kemp, and their many Inuit and non-Inuit associates sponsored by Makivik and others, has provided the base for Canada's scientific and policy breakthroughs supporting resource 'co-management'. Together with other project coordinators and researchers of indigenous land and sea environments across Canada and abroad, the Nunavik and Cree workers have enlarged the country's knowledge and intellectual base – and the world's – transforming our notions of physical space and wilderness in the process.⁶⁴ At home this work has provided very specific benefits in helping governments and Canadians first to understand and then better protect the Arctic seas from Labrador to Alaska, and even to provide a legal base for law of the sea and marine territory arguments.⁶⁵

When Inuit and other indigenous claims arose as a major political agenda from the late 1960s the White Man saw them as a threat to diminish Canada. But it was we who were already diminished, and it was Inuit and other peoples who opened up new prospects, expanding our sense of ourselves, the country we all shared, and the wider world to which we were unwittingly connected. Indigenous peoples have also made us relearn our history, and helped us to rediscover layers of national experience and whole eras which we had lost behind the stern pictures of Industry and Progress. Yet too often *québécois* and Canadian have talked about 'giving' the Inuit land and some meagre rights as privileges, crumbs from the plate of our beneficence. The Inuit-Canada relationship has been one of recognised mutuality and equal exchange. It is time the White Man remembered.

20. National Policy. As noted in point 1 above, Canada's national policies have not caught up with Canada's progressive policy reforms as practised. This has both domestic and international implications. Domestically the hinterland of provincial and territorial Norths, split up among 11 jurisdictions (3 federal territories, 7 provinces, 1 national government), has no models of wellness ready to hand but countless studies and regional development plans which have usually failed. The big powers in the land remain resource ministries, resource industries, and the business blow-hards of Northern town and small city life, and indigenous people trying to improve their lot must endlessly run the gauntlet of these untender types to achieve anything. Nunavut is probably better known in Brisbane, Australia, or Tromsø, Norway, than in any Canadian city apart from Ottawa, for instance. There is no good reason for this.

The Wendigo effect is also a worry – that if the monster catches you, you become one, too! That is, the more we deny the real North and insist on the fantasy of rugged free enterprise and market forces, the more we insist that the Indians become the Cowboys, the more we will kill off our unique and successful creation. How often have we accompanied a minister or Northern head of government from a meeting in which we are discussing more 'welfare state' spending and further programs to a public event where his speech is all rugged pioneer spirit. Do we have to maintain this fantasy to make Southern Canada feel good, or can we drop it now? Hon. Arthur Laing, its finest exponent, mixed such glowing speeches with prodigious and successful efforts to have Cabinet shovel ever more money out of the truck into Northern social needs, but has not been the Northern minister for 33 years! When is enough, enough? On some level Northern policy in Canada has consisted for 50 years – 48 to be precise – of compensating for what the 'liberal development model' has failed to do. Big government spending and big government planning and all kinds of hardworking nurses and teachers and clerks and small administrators and crafts people and mechanics and small traders, as well as pilots like the McAvoy's of Yellowknife and dreamers like the Houstons of Cape Dorset, have been the outsiders who have done the real work with Inuit, Dene, Métis, Cree, and others. The North is a lifestyle choice and a lot of hard work for outsiders; it is certainly not a get-rich-quick game. Why are we afraid to admit it? Canada's successful North and northern territories are products of collision between indigenous peoples and bureaucracy with service sector facilitators, and the episodic interest of faraway politicians. Key figures or brokers have been high officials in Ottawa like Gordon Robertson.⁶⁶ Now let us, their heirs, consolidate their achievement in a Northern policy which reflects reality, smooths the future, and removes gratuitous hardships for Northern regions and Northern peoples.

Internationally the incomprehensible manoeuvrings of Canadian officials have bewildered many, leaving them with northern territory accomplishments ignored or impugned, while long-running sores such as Lubicon Lake and Davis Inlet, and lumpishness about wording in the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, seem to the world the only and ugly face of Canada's indigenous and human rights policies. (At a recent conference in Brisbane some Canadians and others decided that we should all simply drop the word 'Draft' from UNDDRIP and regard it as a consensus statement of the world's indigenous peoples and not hold it forever hostage to pettifogging governments determined to whittle it away.) The penultimate draft of the UN's Alfonso Martinez report on indigenous treaties

⁶⁴ For an Inuit- and marine-centred introduction see Jull 1993.

⁶⁵ Jull 1987.

⁶⁶ For memoirs of the setting up of Canada's Northern Affairs department see Robertson 2000, 107-208.

demeaned and misrepresented both Greenland Home Rule and Canada's recent northern territory developments, and the final version is only cosmetically better, thanks to the more ardent well-meaners in Canada's indigenous internationalist field. With such an air of unreality at both domestic and international level, what hope for sensible policy?

- 21. RCAP or Other.** Presumably the RCAP report will be implemented piecemeal over time as Canada's national policy. In the meantime the tradition of northern territories, whether the exemplary work of the Deh Cho process in the central NWT⁶⁷ or Nunavik in Quebec, continues, building on recent experience and exploring new and promising ground. Although the Government of Canada has active northern territories work underway in Quebec and Labrador for historical and constitutional reasons, the Northlands of the other five provinces from Hudson Bay to the Pacific have no lack of similar needs. Nunavik itself is a 'second generation' issue, developing after the first wave of arrangements signed in 1975, so one should not assume that all existing arrangements will not require further attention. Whether Ottawa wishes to issue a policy document to declare itself open for business, or draw attention to the northern territory model, is worth thought. This would be responsive and reactive, awaiting indigenous initiative, rather than prescriptive or assertive. I.e., it would not intrude on provincial rights, but seek cooperation when activated.
- 22. Negotiation.** The crucial element of process in Canadian northern territory experience, and in Canadian indigenous reforms post-1945 in general, has been negotiation. This has taken two forms. One is the sitting down at tables and working through problems. The other, perhaps more important, has been the one which gets the various sides to the table in the first place. This implicit 'negotiation' may be shouting through the media., going to court, going to Geneva, protest marches, etc., but is the broad-scale shaping of public and political attitudes through exposure to the issues until they become familiar or manageable. This readiness to negotiate or seek accommodation, and to work through differences, is often seen as the key to Canadian political culture.⁶⁸
- 23. North-South Models.** Much of the heat and bitterness within indigenous politics in Canada centres on the conflict of two models, each of which has its place and logic. The Northern model, or northern territory, is the subject of this paper – a flexible creation in a large or relatively large physical area and a number of communities where size and relative lack of other land users permits real opportunities for wide-ranging arrangements anchored, as 19th century treaties were not, in developed and mutually understood legal and constitutional forms. The Southern model is founded on the isolation, loss of territory and of rights, grievance, and anxiety of indigenous communities, and therefore focuses on acquiring the strongest possible legal and constitutional safeguards and maximum expansion of jurisdiction, territory, etc. Both are natural reactions to their contexts, but neither is cause to deny the other. Where things become interesting is where the two contexts collide or are sought in tandem as in the treaty claims emerging now in British Columbia.
- 24. Russia-Siberia Framework.** For some years the Russians have been attempting to pass a national framework law which would provide a general guide for the negotiation of specific indigenous northern territory arrangements to suit local circumstances,⁶⁹ while political projects of the type proceed, willy-nilly.⁷⁰ It has been delayed or defeated, being collateral damage from constitutional battles between legislative and executive branches of government in Moscow, not on the merits of the subject. It is a model worth considering as federal enabling legislation for Canada, embodying the sorts of principles which Inuit and government have worked out in Nunavik as earlier in Nunavut and elsewhere.
- 25. The Hannikainen proposal.** In May 2001 the UN Working Group on Minorities received an important document from the University of Lapland's Professor Lauri Hannikainen. Well worth reading in Canada for its discussion of the recent constitutional changes respecting Sami and for its survey of Åland autonomy, the document proposes that the international registration of autonomy arrangements, a practice under the League of Nations, be resumed in order to provide security or a safety valve for difficult cases.⁷¹ One can easily see how such a visible register, with an annual report on the status of world autonomies, could provide a circuit-breaker in many critical situations, a way out of impasse in negotiations. It could be useful in cases like Nunavik where one side or other doubted the goodwill or long-term intentions of another, providing extra and visible security. It might be workable in other contexts respecting indigenous homelands in Quebec and Canada.

⁶⁷ Apparently DIAND intends to post the documents and background of the Deh Cho work as web pages in the near future. One hopes so. This work has much to teach the rest of the world – and the rest of Canada.

⁶⁸ This is discussed compellingly in Tully 1995. It reaches to the highest levels as in the differences over Constitutional reform between Gordon Robertson and former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, see Robertson 2000, 321-384. In Australia the present prime minister, John Howard, has repeatedly and loudly rejected any 'negotiation' with indigenous peoples, thereby creating a considerable movement among them and progressive non-indigenous persons to establish real negotiations on a wide range of issues or even a package of such under the umbrella of a national treaty the moment he has left office.

⁶⁹ See English translation of draft law at pages 37-43 of Jull 1995.

⁷⁰ Osherenko 2001.

⁷¹ Hannikainen 2001.

26. Regionalism. Canadian government policy south of latitude 60 North has usually eyed regional indigenous political ambitions with suspicion and strongly favoured a focus on individual bands or villages. Meanwhile scholarship at home and abroad has often favoured the local over the regional, and through the operation of academic disciplines has tended to atomise and then re-quantify experience rather than accept or 'see' collectivities such as ethno-regions, 'see' the way in which a country like Canada so often deals in policy and politics in regional gulfs, or recognise indigenous ethno-regionalism as meaningful. What regional studies and public policies there have been have tended to focus on economic development rather than on the political, social, or cultural issues which have been reshaping most of Canada's expanse for more than a generation. An international conference at a Northern Canada location on the political and constitutional emergence of indigenous hinterland regions should be funded by government, its proceedings published, and part of its program to include a discussion of how best to establish a continuing study centre or research program dedicated to such regional phenomena and needs.

27. Canadian initiative. Canada has good reason to improve and develop domestically its international activity in indigenous policy reform – especially its diverse and growing experience with northern territories in the Mid-North and Far North – and with Inuit and other indigenous peoples to enter into bi- and multi-lateral forums with others abroad to share ideas and seek improvements. Canada has as much to gain from good experience elsewhere as to contribute to others, the sort of spirit with which the Government of Canada has funded this year's Australian Federation Dialogue program in which Australian and Canadian notables in a field have met, e.g., Nunavut premier Okalik in public dialogue on various occasions with various Australian Aboriginal leaders.

Most obviously Canadian governments could fund the Inuit Circumpolar Conference to hold forums or conferences, or sponsor publications or projects, spreading the word about northern territories. This author in recent years has had to endure any number of conferences and workshops in Australia, and no end of articles and papers, in which much absolute rubbish has been stated about Canada's northern territories and comprehensive land claims. The tragedy is that Canada has experience worth sharing, experience which the world can use to help with any number of ethno-regional problems on all continents.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

There are many interesting and important questions about emerging northern territories but they require another paper. For instance, a sceptic like Kaalhaug Nielsen is doubtful about the further scope of the sort of politics which Greenland and other 'first world' northern territory have exemplified but he does not diminish the real achievement of Greenland and Greenlanders.⁷² Those of us who have worked in and with the genre need not accept his judgment but may recognise that he raises interesting questions. At every moment the political gains of indigenous peoples have revealed themselves not to be the great mountain-tops imagined when they and their friends were trying to reach them, but mere landmarks on a continuing plain. Each win ended one particular phase, opened another, and provided opportunities and new circumstances which required or allowed new efforts.

Two questions of special urgency are (1) territories as centres of advanced policy thought and policy-making, and (2) territories as part of a new international zone, e.g., the Circumpolar world, vs. their role as national or regional hinterlands serving as reservoirs of industrial resources.

Indigenous hinterland peoples mobilised politically against actively bad or inappropriate administration or policies threatening their identity, livelihoods, life practices, and accustomed rights. Initially they wanted the White Man to act more sensible or understanding, but soon saw that they would have to take charge themselves to safeguard their interests. They made headway – nowhere more than in Nunavik, Nunavut, NWT, and Yukon – with the help of non-indigenous expertise which placed their arguments in the forefront of contemporary thought and analysis. For instance, their grasp of environmental issues and development impacts was ahead of government policy-makers, for which reason they sometimes had quiet support from within official bodies whose own experts recognised the value of what they were proposing.⁷³ They also made legal, social, politico-constitutional, and politico-administrative proposals which were ahead of their time. Indeed, northern territories are products of these advanced proposals. They challenged existing notions of wildlife management, of roles of government, of legal rights and rights recognition, and much else. However, the long marginalised populations they represented did not always understand that they were getting the best and most up to date assistance, so that when transfers of power were achieved the bad old white administrators of the old régime might be retained, not least 'to show them who's boss now!', while scientific research or applied science bureaux were wound down as part of an ostentatious focus on 'development' in the conventional sense. In earlier paragraphs above, this has been called *the Wendigo effect* – that through contact with the monster you become one, too. Certainly the pressure to become 'just like' the rest of the industrial nation-state is great. However, maintaining advanced policy and policy thinking – and maintaining *difference* – gives a continued political advantage to an

⁷² Kaalhaug Nielsen 2001.

⁷³ There are often years of persuasion separating insight, policy change, and implementation within government administration.

otherwise marginal and electorally insignificant region.⁷⁴ Unlike the Southern Canada Indian movement, hinterland peoples like Inuit, Quebec Crees, Dene, *et al.* have always been too few and far away to make blunt political impact through numbers – so they have had to be smarter. They must continue to be smarter, and to show and exercise that smartness in national capitals.

This raises the second question. Are northern territories merely transition zones where the installation of some local faces with local accents will assimilate the region and its economy to industrial capitalism more quickly or more painlessly than if clumsy whites were giving the orders? Or are they something else? The Circumpolar movement and much of the indigenous international movement from the 1973 Arctic Peoples Conference in Copenhagen onwards have said, in effect, that indigenous hinterlands are *something else*. None of us connected with the older age brackets of northern territories' politics or political movement ever doubted that. The object was to use the powers and procedures of the nation-state to win and maintain formal hinterland difference while opting into the benefits and opportunities of wider national society. Just as these regions, especially Inuit regions, benefited from contact and cooperation with other similar peoples and regions across the Arctic at home and abroad, so does such need continue today. In the absence of a *political economy* literature for these northern territories and their near relatives elsewhere, e.g., Australia, international experience- and information sharing, as well as concerting of influence in international forums, is required for good 'selfish' reasons at home no less than for idealistic larger ones in the world.⁷⁵ A northern territory is essentially a cultural space and ecologically sustainable environment where one or more unique culture maintains distinct ways of life outside the normal 'rep by pop'⁷⁶ expectations of nation-states and their assimilative power, not least because the wider national public recognises the cultural and environmental imperatives for such regions.⁷⁷ Distinct difference is its *raison d'être*.

Nonetheless, the assimilative power of a nation-state *vis-à-vis* a hinterland region is tremendous. This makes the Cairns fear of 'parallelism' and such alleged fragmenting effects of indigenous autonomy unnecessary.⁷⁸ The real problem is that the sheer power and example of the industrial state will overwhelm any other practice and outlook among northern territory governments. Perhaps the political debates with northern territories will centre on this basic dilemma, and the sooner the better.

FINAL COMMENT

At a recent Circumpolar forum in Edmonton, Canada, the President of Iceland – who may be safely assumed to have no axe to grind in our usual indigenous ethno-political disputes – spoke of trends, needs, and priorities for Northern research, e.g.,

The federal structures of Russia, Canada and the United States have... brought regional, provincial and state governments into significant co-operation with the smaller nation-states in the Northern Regions. Thus an interesting form of regional and nation-state co-operation in economic, social and political affairs is now being created. New entities have entered the framework of co-operation in the Northern Regions. In many ways the area can now be seen as a laboratory situation of how the old nation-states and the regional, provincial and state governments within the federal structures can evolve intensive forms of international co-operation in the 21st century and thus transform the old traditional model of diplomatic exchange.⁷⁹

His own doctoral thesis was on Northern nationhood, as it happens, so he is a more than usually qualified observer when he proposes his first research priority under the rubric that 'some areas urgently need more research and deeper understanding, areas where new questions need to be asked and new concepts and referential frameworks need to be formulated so our actions and decisions, views and conclusions can be directed by knowledge and wisdom.' E.g.,

[In the Circumpolar world] there is political innovation – we could even say political creation – that, in the last ten years, has dominated the evolution of the North. New states have gained independence; increased rights have been given to local and regional institutions. The decision-making structures are in a continuous flux and

⁷⁴ Inuit movement studies showed that the Canadian public accepted and supported Inuit leaders' views of their people and homelands as trustees of a better national environment.

⁷⁵ The first time an Inuit Circumpolar Conference assembly was held in Canada – in 1983 in Iqaluit – the late Mark R. Gordon and others added to Resolution 83-05 on the range of Inuit political and constitutional work going on in Canada an outward-looking commitment, *Whereas, this work is accomplishing significant advances in human rights and constitutional development and is therefore relevant to the peoples of many countries...* and concluding, *Be it further resolved that the Inuit Circumpolar Conference disseminate information about this work in order to assist peoples undertaking similar efforts elsewhere in the world.* The work of Inuit and other Circumpolar peoples since then has aroused ever-more interest abroad.

⁷⁶ Political 'representation by population'.

⁷⁷ See also Brundtland 1987 for a classic environmental statement on indigenous hinterlands, and for another set of arguments for indigenous ethno-territorial imperatives, Smith 1990.

⁷⁸ Flanagan & Cairns 2001.

⁷⁹ Grimsson 2000, 109

the classical question – Who governs, where and how? – now requires new answers, bringing into focus the nature of democratic accountability in the modern world. We could even say that the North has become a working laboratory of new political institutions and relationships: local, regional, national and global.⁸⁰

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⁸⁰ Grimsson 2000, 111

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