

Remaking Arctic governance: the construction of an Arctic Inuit polity

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ABSTRACT. This article focuses on the construction of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), the aim being to offer the historical context within which the ICC came to serve as a significant voice for Arctic policy making and as a representative of Inuit peoples in general. It explores the role of the ICC in relation to the domestic, regional, and international political events taking place during its formative years in order to provide the basis through which the ICC came to be a political authority in the Arctic. While the main coalescence of events was around the theme of Arctic resource development, each event significantly helped lay the foundation for, and structures under which, Arctic policy would proceed into the future. This includes a changing Arctic narrative that has transformed the Arctic from a being a region concentrated on resource extraction and Cold War security into a region serving as a symbolic pinnacle for global sustainable development. Through the expanded political agency of the ICC and an international focus on the Arctic, a vision of the Arctic has emerged under which it is defined by its natural environment and by the indigenous peoples who inhabit this space. This is an INDIPO project paper (Tennberg 2006).

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Introduction

Indigenous actors and other non-governmental groups are becoming increasingly significant players in defining and making Arctic policy. In this article, the focus is on the construction of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) in an effort to offer the historical context in which the ICC came to serve as a significant voice for Arctic policy making and as a representative of Inuit peoples in general. In order to understand the role and influence of the ICC as a political actor, it is analysed in relation to the domestic, regional, and international political events taking place during its formative years. Varying authors have focused on the politics of Arctic governance (Tennberg 1996, 2000; Young and Cherkasov 1992; Keskitalo 2002; Neumann 1994, 2002; Nuttall 2000a) but fewer have directed their attention explicitly at the ICC (Lauritzen 1983; Lynge 1993; Nuttall 2000b). In particular, Lauritzen's work, through a personal account, successfully details the main issues enmeshed within the founding years of the ICC. The present paper adds to the work of these authors by tracing the construction of the ICC in relationship to continuing Arctic and international governance. As such, it focuses on the continuing relationship between the ICC and Arctic

politics in order to provide the basis by which the ICC has come to be a political authority in the present day region. The word governance is used simply as a term to include all Arctic political actors, including state governments, local governments, and non-governmental groups. It is through these overlapping and contesting political entities that Arctic policies are created and carried out.

In particular, this article analyses the making of the ICC during the early to middle 1970s and concentrates on Arctic oil exploration during this time and the relationship of oil to Inuit aims for self-determination in Canada and Alaska. This includes Alaskan and Canadian Inuit land claims, the Berger Commission and the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) programme in and around the Beaufort Sea. While each of these events coalesced around the theme of Arctic resource development, they each significantly helped lay the foundation for, and structures under which, Arctic policy would proceed into the future.

Furthermore, this article focuses heavily on the role of Eben Hopson, the founder of the ICC. Hopson was born in Barrow, Alaska in November 1922. He attended the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Barrow Day School and, after this, remained in Barrow because he was prohibited from going away to the Bureau of Indian Affairs high school. In 1956, he was elected to the Alaska Territorial Legislature and, when Alaska became a state, he was elected to the first State Senate. Hopson was actively engaged in organising Alaska's first regional land claims organisation in 1965 after which he became the first Executive Director of the Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA) and eventually the Executive Director of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN). In 1970, Hopson left the AFN to become Special Assistant for Native Affairs to Governor William Egan. In 1975, he served as Mayor of the North Slope and in 1976 he founded the ICC. Having already faced a bout of cancer, Hopson died on 28 June 1980, the opening day

of the Second Inuit Circumpolar Conference. During the late 1970s and following his emergence on the political scene he delivered many addresses that are valuable as indicating the evolution of his views in the cause to which he was committed (Hopson 1975, 1976a, 1976b, 1976c, 1976d, 1976e, 1976f, 1977a, 1977b, 1977c, 1978a, 1978b).

With regard to his significance in this context, he has been regarded as mainly responsible for the mission of the ICC as it remains today. This is 'to preserve the Arctic environment and to create a comprehensive Arctic policy' (Inuit Circumpolar Conference 1998). Hopson's efforts to create an Arctic policy reach back to, and centre on, the politics of oil in Alaska's North Slope including off shore oil drilling in the region. At that time, American and Canadian oil interests had already converged in some respects, including the US infrastructure that was constructed throughout Canada's Northwest Territories during World War II. Consequently, Canadian and US oil politics (particularly in the Beaufort Sea) often overlapped and are central to this article.

The politics of natural resource development contributed importantly to a merging relationship between Alaskan and Canadian Inuit in efforts to gain control over the ways in which Arctic resource development was to be carried out. This aim became the foundation of a pan-Inuit organisation that concerned the creation of an Inuit environmental policy to preserve the Arctic environment. It should be noted that the Greenland case was similar but an adequate synthesis of this history is beyond the limits and scope of the present paper.

Through an analysis of the speeches and policy documents of key ICC actors, this article presents the socio-economic and political environment during the period of ICC formation and the ways in which regional and international norms structured the conditions upon which a new discourse of Inuit politics was framed. This discourse grew alongside a parallel shift in the larger Arctic narrative. This transformed the Arctic from being a region concentrated on resource extraction or Cold War security to becoming a region serving as a symbolic pinnacle for global sustainable development; the 'global ecological barometer'.

Through the expanded political agency of the ICC and a rejuvenated international focus on the Arctic, a new vision of it emerged on the part of some actors, but not on the part of all. This vision is that of an Arctic defined by its natural environment and the indigenous peoples who inhabit this space. Moreover, the ICC has grown not only into a powerful political actor in Arctic governance but has further acquired the legitimacy to help determine the very definition of the region as a whole.

The prelude to a new Arctic environment: settling land claims and natural resource discoveries

Inuit land claims and the politics of oil in Alaska

The onset of several oil discoveries in Arctic Alaska led to a political and economic frenzy that heightened

and eventually dominated the discussions over Alaska statehood. Beginning in 1957, Richfield Oil Corporation discovered oil on the Kenai Peninsula. This was followed by very significant discoveries in Prudhoe Bay on the North Slope in 1967 by the Exxon and Atlantic Richfield Oil Companies. This latter company had been founded in 1966 from the merger of the Richfield Oil Corporation and the Atlantic Refining Company. The discovery proved to be the largest petroleum deposit in North America up to that date. The oil discoveries and the related questions of rights and royalties also precipitated renewed efforts to settle the unresolved Alaskan native land claims. This connection between oil and the rights over the land in which the oil was found melded Inuit self-determination and Alaskan oil into a single comprehensive issue, a connection which evolved and strengthened over time. As Hopson pointed out 'our Native Land Claims is an integral part of oil and gas development in Alaska and this is also true for Canada and Greenland' (Hopson 1976a).

When Alaska was granted statehood in 1959, there was extensive disagreement over the future structure and powers of the state and local governments. As land began to shift from federal to state ownership through the Statehood Act, the Athabaskan Indians from the Minto Lakes region responded by filing a petition with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management in 1961. This initial petition opened the door to a flood of subsequent protests that followed. In 1963, 1,000 natives from 24 different villages petitioned for a 'land freeze' on all Alaska land transfers until native rights issues were resolved. In 1966, the Alaska Federation of Natives was officially formed and Victor Fischer, a Constitutional Convention Local Government Committee member, resolved the escalating debate by making it possible for residents to choose among varying options for local self-government. It was determined that any one group would have the right to petition for one of several classes of local government depending on how much autonomy was sought (Chance 1990). The Inuit of the North Slope in particular organised the Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA) and filed a petition for the establishment of a first-class borough that would include the land of Prudhoe Bay. Incorporated in the petition was Inuit ownership of all 'traditional hunting land' covering over 88,281 square miles (Hopson 1975).

In 1969, in tandem with the native land petitions, a group of eight petroleum companies proposed an oil pipeline from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez. Furthermore, the state of Alaska received money from the federal government for land leases in Prudhoe Bay. The competition between all parties with vested interests over Alaska's territory and accompanying resources instigated the Secretary for the Interior, Stewart Udall, to enact a 'land freeze' on all federal land transfers until Congress had dealt conclusively with native land claims. The ambitions of the oil industry, the state, and the Inuit were far from congruent and growing antagonisms arising from their very divergent interests soon emerged. In the North

Slope in particular, oil corporation lawyers appeared before the Local Boundary Commission to oppose the Inuit petition for creating a North Slope Borough.

Hopson argued that:

We Inupiat, who owned this land, were not consulted by the Federal government or the State government on any of these real estate transactions [The lawyers on the other hand were arguing that the Inuit] petition was not fair to the oil industry . . . it was improper for [a] small, widely-scattered population to organize such a large area into a single municipal government capable of imposing property taxes upon Prudhoe Bay industrial property, especially in light of the fact that none of our community lived within 150 miles of the Prudhoe Bay oil field. (Hopson 1976a)

Despite the arguments of the oil industry, the Inuit petition for a North Slope Borough was approved and the State was required to hold a referendum for all registered voters within the proposed borough area and to elect borough officials (Hopson 1976a).

In 1971, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was passed into law. This was followed by elections and, in 1972, by the creation of the North Slope borough. The North Slope borough became a 'county like unit' of home-rule municipal government. At that time, the majority of powers were transferred from the borough villages to the local government. Most significantly, the North Slope borough was to be entirely funded by oil tax revenues. These revenues were to be distributed through the Inuit corporations that were created by ANCSA (Blumstein and Hume 1996–1998)

Self-determination through the inception of the North Slope borough was conceived of as more than mere political autonomy. It also represented a formal contract for the maintenance of cultural autonomy. This cultural form of sovereignty included, in theory, the right to maintain an historical relationship with the Arctic land. This included establishing user and policy rights as well as attaining conservation control concerning the economic development of Alaskan natural resources in areas inhabited by Inuit. Hopson, beginning with the initial petition to establish the North Slope borough, insisted on using the discourse of American liberal democratic ideology to make the case for Inuit self-determination. This language of American liberalism was used as a basis for continuing efforts to secure and maintain rights to the North Slope's resource production in the events following the passage of ANCSA. Hopson's overall and successful efforts to frame Inuit self-determination as a matter both of liberal democratic ideology and of indigenous cultural autonomy came to serve as a symbolic base upon which a modern Inuit political vision would be born and grow over time. As Hopson stated:

I am not against oil and gas development in the Arctic. We Inupiat have gained great financial and political strength because of [it] . . . [though] we in the Arctic are not happy about [it] . . . we understand that this development is necessary, and I, for one, want to

cooperate closely to insure that this development is done right. We can all benefit from development as we deliver to America her wealth that lies in our land, and beneath our seas. We are stewards of this wealth, and it is our responsibility to deliver it to all of America's people when they need to draw upon it. (Hopson 1976b)

Hopson regarded Americans as fellow Americans in that, while the Inuit were indigenous and had the right to self-determination as indigenous stewards, they were nonetheless American citizens. In this sense the North Slope borough, according to Hopson, was a natural function of American democratic ideology. Simultaneously, Hopson also asserted that the Inuit were unique in that, as indigenous peoples, they were the natural stewards over Alaska's Arctic resources (both on and off shore). Inuit autonomy was framed as an amalgamation of these parallel arguments, indigenous stewardship and liberal democracy and as a prevailing discourse for asserting Inuit self-determination in the Arctic (Hopson 1976b).

Land claims in Canada

In Canada, natural resources also provoked an intensification of Inuit aims for self-determination and for Canada's moves to resolve the issue. In 1970, the federal government proposed to transfer all responsibility for the Inuit living in northern Quebec from the federal government to the province of Quebec. A mixed committee of federal and provincial employees, known as the Neville-Robitaille Commission, was created in order to consult Inuit residents in Quebec about the proposal. The consultations found that the majority of Inuit were against the proposal. In fact, the Inuit themselves concluded independently as part of the Commission's activities that they did not wish to be the responsibility of either the federal government or of the Quebec government. The Commission itself instigated an increased desire for self-determination. Two political institutions came to the forefront of these efforts, the cooperatives, which had already been gaining political momentum since the 1960s, and the Northern Quebec Inuit Association, which was founded in 1971. Both of these political organisations continued throughout the duration of the following set of events (Duhaime and others 2001).

Shortly following the creation of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association, the premier of Quebec, Robert Bourassa, announced the development of a hydroelectric dam on James Bay in Northern Quebec. The Cree who lived there saw the project as a threat to their economic livelihood and subsequently unleashed a protest against the project. Accompanying the Cree, the Northern Quebec Inuit Association opted to join the protest and did so through the Indians of Quebec Association (IQA). The negotiations culminated with the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) in 1975. The agreement was the first indigenous land claims agreement in Canada (Bone and others 1998). Yet, by this time, another land

claims issue was already burgeoning west of Quebec, in the Northwest Territories.

Several years before this, in 1969, the indigenous peoples of the western Canadian Arctic, in conjunction with southern Canadian activists, formed the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE). Eventually, drawing upon earlier precedents of the JBNQA, COPE became the primary negotiating body for several land claims agreements including negotiations over Inuvialuit land claims and self-government. In October 1978, COPE and the Canadian government signed an agreement-in-principle to settle the Inuvialuit Claim and the final agreement concerning this matter was signed in June 1984 (Bone and Saku 2000).

In parallel with this, in 1971, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, ITC that later became ITK, a Canadian Inuit organization representing the rights of the Inuit at the national level was also created. The ITC eventually came to serve as the umbrella for many Inuit corporations and committees and, moreover, the official body joining Canada's Inuit together (Cooper and others 1984).

The drive for natural resource exploration in both the Canadian and Alaskan Arctic led to the creation of JBNQA and ANCSA. These put in place an official framework for Inuit self-government in Alaska and Canada. Yet, the effects of natural resource development, while stimulating a need to resolve native land claims, were to become cause for an international restructuring concerning the meaning and policy aims of the Arctic as a region. In Canada, the Inuit land claims and gas and oil exploration efforts in the Northwest Territories instigated a nationwide debate over the significance of Arctic development and, moreover, the role that the indigenous peoples would play in this development.

Transnational Inuit politics: creating a new international Arctic agenda

The discoveries and development of resources in the Arctic became critical to a new indigenous discourse focusing on the Inuit as legitimate political stewards over the Arctic. Hopson, in his role as mayor of the North Slope and as a strong trans-Arctic Inuit political voice, sought to expunge the image of Inuit society as pre-modern, interested only in maintaining a traditional lifestyle. Instead, over time he utilised sedimented stereotypes of indigenous peoples as nomadic and living by subsistence off the land to build a platform for a modern Arctic Inuit politics. This politics forwarded the Arctic as a resource rich, yet environmentally delicate, region which not only needed sound environmental policy but also, in keeping with thousands of years of successful stewardship, an Inuit framework for creating appropriate legislation. Central to this discourse was the notion of Inuit rights. Inuit rights became central rhetoric for various political efforts directed towards realising Inuit stewardship over Arctic development including oil exploration, hunting, fishing, and ensuring control over the land and seas in which these activities took place. This discourse of Inuit rights

has been couched as part of western liberal discourse, whether positive or negative (Fox 2002), an ideology to which the United States and Canada are intrinsically attached. Moreover, the formalisation of Inuit land claims settlements in both Alaska and Canada provided the Inuit elite with an opportunity to transcend the notion of Inuit rights as a local concern and to develop the idea of Inuit rights as a broader concern for overall Arctic economic development and environmental protection. According to G. Yabsley from the ITC:

Inuit have always lived on that land and used it. Inuit have a right to the land because of their heritage. This is the foundation for the legal concept, or meaning of 'aboriginal rights' . . . Aboriginal rights, in theory, are property rights, that is the recognition of ownership of land and the people who have lived on and used that land from the beginning of time. Native people are to be guaranteed the right to use that land. (Yabsley 1976)

Broadly speaking, the events of the 1970s concerning oil exploration and hydroelectric development would reconfigure a historically continuing relationship between Inuit and Arctic oil. Many Inuit have stressed that oil was an Inuit resource, used as sealants for local construction, including canoe building, as well as for trade among other Inuit, and indigenous peoples, for many years prior to European settlement. Hopson and other Inuit leaders asserted that Inuit control over the development of these resources was undermined as a result of colonisation (Hopson 1976a). For example, according to Z. Nungak, the Secretary Treasurer of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association:

We the Inuit are experiencing a time in which our land is being exploited and explored by various mining, oil, and 'progress' development companies. We are aware that development of various kinds is inevitable in our land at some time or other. We want to make it clear that we are not against any and all development. But this is our land and we will not be by-passed in planning, participation, and benefit of such development activities. (Nungak 1972)

In addition to resource development, in the 1970s new technological advances in oil, shipping, and mining, caused the 'Circumpolar North to come alive'. Colonisation undermined Inuit control over resources. Renewed interest in the Arctic brought the residuals of colonisation to the surface (Bloomfield 1981: 95). As one Inuk leader pointed out:

They did not discover us until way later, funny that we should have to be discovered, its only since you know 1800s, that this happened. 1867 they say all of Alaska [was bought]. I am sure its folly, I didn't sign no piece of paper that gave away our rights to my land . . . I didn't as a Native person . . . They resolve to get the oil, how do we settle this land thing to get that oil. (Ahlenius and others 2005)

Furthermore, an ideological debate was taking place at the international level. Civil and environmental rights

movements in the United States as well as decolonisation, (principally in British Africa) beginning in the 1960s, affected events in the Arctic. Combined, these issues were also coupled by two further significant sets of events related to oil exploration; Canada's Berger Commission on northern oil and gas development and the OCS programme accumulating interest in the United States. These two circumstances cultivated the central context upon which a new Arctic environmental policy would emerge.

Canada's Berger Commission

The first oil well in Canada was constructed in Norman Wells in 1922. Oil exploration continued through the Second World War, during which time the United States also built oil infrastructure throughout the Canadian northwest. The first Arctic island well, on Melville Island, began production in 1961 and oil was discovered in the Mackenzie Valley in 1969, two years after the discovery of oil in Prudhoe Bay (Berger 1977; 13).

The Canadian polar gas project was formed in 1972 to investigate the feasibility of a natural gas pipeline that would extend from the Arctic islands to southern Canada. However, it was not until the 1973 oil crisis that the drive to create large scale oil infrastructure projects accelerated. It was in this context that the Mackenzie Valley project was put into motion. The pipeline project included two different proposed schemes. The land involved in both schemes was controlled by the Ministry of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In March 1974, the Ministry requested that a commission be created to investigate the possible effects that the proposed Mackenzie Delta project might have on the northern environment. Justice Thomas Berger was appointed to conduct the commission and his mandate was 'to investigate the "social, environmental, and economic impact regionally" and propose terms and conditions appropriate to the construction, operation, and abandonment of a pipeline in the Yukon and Northwest Territories'.

Over the following years, the work of the Berger Commission included hearings that were held throughout Canada. Berger was supported by a neutral commission council composed of government experts in various areas. Testimony was heard from a wide range of interests. According to M. Goldie, legal counsel for Arctic Gas, 'the land claims question was not included in the Order in Council which set up the inquiry, and therefore was not relevant to the problems set before the commission.' Goldie further stated that the 'pipeline company will deal fairly and openly with whatever peoples or groups that have the power or authority or the right to deal with the land' (*Inuit Today* 1974). The argument made by Arctic Gas stood directly counter to the position of the native organisations. According to C. Hunt, legal consultant for the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada 'the land claims question is fundamentally basically tied to the whole issue of the pipeline in the question of social, economic, and environmental aspects of the pipeline. So we feel that

the work of the Commission must include reference to the entire question of Inuit land rights' (*Inuit Today* 1974). The Federation of Natives North of 60 proposed that no right-of-way should be granted until there was a land settlement acceptable to the native people. They further argued that right-of-way should not be granted if the documents filed, and research conducted, by Arctic Gas were not sufficient and should only be issued if the inquiry concluded that the proposed pipeline would be in the interest of Canadians in general and native people in particular (*Inuit Today* 1974). J. Bayly, lawyer for the ITC and COPE stated that 'initiatives such as the pipeline have too often been proposed together with promises that it will shepherd native people into the 20 century... [instead] too often it serves only to dislocate and disorient native peoples and leaves them unequipped for the 20th century, stripped of their lands and waters and the ability to follow their traditional pursuits once it has passed them by' (*Inuit Today* 1975).

Hopson also testified at the Berger Commission on behalf of the North Slope borough's own petroleum development and concerning the challenges of resource development throughout the Arctic:

In early 1975, I began hearing rumors about the conduct of the oil corporations in Canada as they explored the near-shore of the Beaufort Sea... Our Inupiat people of the Northwest territories complained of not being adequately consulted about these projects, and they began asking those of us in Barrow about our experiences with the oil industry... Our Inupiat people of Canada organized the Inuit Tapirisat, the Eskimo Brotherhood of Canada, and over the past two years, they have organized in regional Inuit associations similar to our regional Native associations organised in the late 1960s (Hopson 1976f).

In his testimony, Hopson explained the similar distress that was faced by the Inuit in the North Slope. He asserted that in the North Slope there were continuing problems between local government and the oil industry and he wanted to avoid the same problems not only in the Northwest Territories but also in the Arctic as a whole. Instead of contesting with the oil companies, Hopson reiterated the continuing importance of oil for the Inuit and promoted collaborative relationships between oil companies and local Arctic governments.

With the hearings complete, the commission released the first of its two reports in June 1977. The second followed several months later. In whole, the Berger Commission concluded that the Yukon pipeline should not be built and that the proposed Mackenzie Valley Pipeline should be postponed for ten years in order to deal with environmental and social impacts including the settlement of indigenous land claims. According to Berger:

I discovered that people in the North have strong feelings about the pipeline and large-scale frontier development. I listened to a brief by northern businessmen in Yellowknife who favour a pipeline through the North. Later, in a Native village far away, I heard

virtually the whole community express vehement opposition to such a pipeline. Both were talking about the same pipeline; both were talking about the same region – but for one group it is a frontier, for the other a homeland. (Berger 1977; vii)

Berger went so far as to conclude that the pipeline would undermine all local traditional economies and could, in fact, increase economic hardship in the region. Furthermore, if the indigenous land claims were not settled prior to project construction, large-scale business interests could undermine the assumed economic benefits the construction would have for local indigenous populations (Berger 1977; vii). Berger's conclusions delayed pipeline construction, notably on the basis of indigenous objections and thrust native land rights claims to the front of Canada's political agenda. The Berger Commission received an incredible amount of media attention and engendered a major national environmental movement. Through the Berger Commission, the Inuit, Dene, and Cree dispelled the vision of the north as an empty wasteland and the myth of 'white industrial society' as the representation of progress. Rather, they illustrated ways in which such industrial exploration meant the destruction of the lives of peoples, communities, their natural environment and the species that inhabit these areas:

Inuit, Indian, and Metis pursuit of environmental, social, and cultural values presented in the face of monolithic government-industry alliances promoting resource development projects, [caused] Canadians in and out of government [to recognise] that the Arctic was now no longer their own private backyard or family secret; rather, it was open to the world's media, notably including major American press. (Simon and Jull 1994: 19)

Overall, the Berger Commission set a new foundation under which future oil resource exploration and development would proceed in Canada. As a direct consequence, it helped initiate a perceived need by the Canadian government to resolve existing Inuit land claims. Indirectly, through the land claims, a new approach towards Arctic development would soon emerge including new understandings over who had the right to benefit from these developments. Furthermore, the issues surrounding the Berger Commission and the attention it generated for Canada's Inuit became complimentary discourse to the increasing momentum to create an Arctic wide Inuit organisation. Hopson not only used the Berger Commission to highlight a growing allegiance between all the Arctic Inuit, but he also used it as a demonstration of further testimony for the need to create an international environmental policy to protect the Arctic environment.

Alaska's Outer Continental Shelf programme

While the Berger Commission seemed to win the hearts and minds of many Canadians, debate over the OCS programme also affected the course and direction of Arctic governance. The issues surrounding OCS and

Alaska policy were similar to those relating to the Berger Commission in Canada in that they both formally brought Inuit into the political mainstream regarding oil extraction and development. In Alaska, discussions over United States Arctic policy go back to the Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska following the 1964 earthquake. The Federal Field Committee produced the first comprehensive Arctic resource inventory. Its focus was on indigenous peoples and subsistence issues. In its final report the committee advocated the settlement of the Alaska native land claims and the need to create an Arctic research policy (Brower and Stotts 1984: 324).

When the North Slope borough came into being in Alaska, oil development in Prudhoe Bay had already begun. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement created a Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission arising from which the United States Coastal Management Act was passed in 1972. The Act included an amendment requiring that federal activities be consistent with state and local government coastal programmes. In this period, the state of Alaska and the North Slope borough began increasingly to work together in efforts to secure oil rights under Alaskan rather than under federal jurisdiction. Over time, through the United States Coastal Management Act, the North Slope borough was able to help set federal coastal management standards according to its own local government standards (Brower and Stotts 1984: 329–332).

The Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission was given the responsibility of carrying on the work of the Federal Field Commission through the collection of information concerning Alaskan lands and resources (Brower and Stotts 1984: 326.). At the local level, the North Slope borough began to document traditional use areas and critical game habitats and to develop a comprehensive plan. This included a coastal zone management programme requiring ordinances and permits for future development in the Arctic in efforts to help minimise future environmental damage (Brower and Stotts 1984: 331). The work of the North Slope borough on the commission concerning the OCS discussions led the borough to become responsible for certain language in federal legislation which transferred naval-military land to the civilian control of the Department of the Interior. Included in the legislation was an authorisation to set up a National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) task force providing equal participation of the borough and the new Arctic Slope Regional Corporation in all comprehensive NPR-A land use investigations.

The language in the legislation provided a critical opening for future Inuit input in borough land development (Neakok 1977). The legislation further included the creation of an Interim Zoning Ordinance which provided the North Slope borough with the means to exercise control over petroleum activities along the mid-Beaufort Coast until an official Coastal Management Programme was approved and adopted by the North Slope Assembly. Consequently, through these measures the North Slope

borough became capable of influencing federal policy concerning Arctic Coastal Zone Management. In addition to federal influence, the North Slope also helped to create Alaska's own OCS programme that was submitted in 1975 and became official legislation in 1977 (Brower and Stotts 1984: 329–332). Through all three levels of government combined, the role of the Inuit through the North Slope borough became an active collective voice in Alaska's Arctic resource discussions. According to Hopson:

Our regional governments must be strong, home-rule municipalities with unrestricted revenue authority common to home-rule municipal governments in North America. We must have full planning and zoning powers, and the power to develop and enforce regional coastal zone management regulations in cooperation with Federal, State, political and territorial governmental agencies, and the oil and gas industry . . . I see the Coastal Zone Management Program as a good opportunity to develop our doctrine of local government to the point that home rule means home rule over resource development management and regulation . . . the land claims movement is tightly connected to our responsibility to guard and protect our land. (Hopson 1978a)

The North Slope's involvement in OCS policy soon expanded beyond Alaska and the federal government. In 1976, Hopson attended a joint United States-Canadian Beaufort Sea Conference in Seattle. At the Conference, Hopson learned that Canadian scientists, employed in a 5-year Beaufort Sea project had concluded that, with the limited offshore technology at that time, any Beaufort Sea OCS operations would be unsafe. They subsequently argued against issuing final approval for exploration in the Mackenzie Bay. Despite this advice the Canadian Cabinet opted to proceed with the DOME/CANMAR project. This was based upon a small Canadian company, Dome Petroleum and its subsidiary Canadian Marine, and its plans for drilling on the outer continental shelf and in the Beaufort Sea (Brower and Stotts 1984: 328; Hopson 1977c).

During this meeting, Hopson recognized the necessity for formal international Arctic cooperation in order to safeguard the environment. Believing that Arctic shelf cooperation must be international in scope he began to pursue an agenda for a formal international Arctic policy. In sum, discussions over the OCS coupled with the attention to the Arctic environment accrued through the Berger Commission foreshadowed what would soon serve as a symbolic centrepiece within an emerging transnational organisation formally uniting Inuit from Greenland, Alaska, and Canada. The driving force of what was soon to become the ICC was the production of an effective Arctic environmental policy to safeguard the future of the Arctic environment.

Both the Berger Commission and the OCS programme formally linked local Inuit autonomy and resource rights to a larger politics of international Arctic economic development. The politics surrounding Arctic resource

development brought to question sedimented beliefs and assumed ideologies concerning Arctic economic development, the Arctic as 'the last frontier', and the relationship between indigenous populations and government, for example, paternalistic sentiments towards Inuit rights. Hopson illustrates this sentiment in the following:

There is only one Beaufort Sea. It is a single ecological system shared by the North Slope Borough, and the Northwest Territories. We Inupiat are a single Beaufort community living under two national flags. We must contend with two different political systems, and two sets of rules governing oil and gas development, to protect our environmental values within our larger Beaufort coastal community. For this reason, we have undertaken to create a circumpolar Inupiat Assembly with which to work with the multi-national oil industry to develop a single set of rules for the industry to follow for safe and responsible circumpolar Arctic gas and oil development. (Hopson 1976a)

Arctic governance remade

We Inuit are an international community of some 100,000 residing mostly in small villages along the Arctic coasts of Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. We are loyal citizens of the United States, Canada, and Greenland, but we are Inuit, or Eskimo, first and foremost . . . We Inuit are hunters . . . As the indigenous, native people of the Arctic, we enjoy certain native rights and entitlements . . . Much of the legal foundation for native rights in North America was developed through European colonial administration, and confirmed in many old treaties transferring political sovereignty over new world territories. (Hopson 1978b)

Strong international Inuit community organization would provide us added strength in negotiating for more home rule. We feel that there is room for Eskimo sovereignty within the democratic traditions of our national government. (Hopson: 1975)

In June 1977, the first meeting of the ICC convened in Barrow, Alaska. The meeting comprised 18 delegates from each region with more than 300 other Inuit and non-Inuit observers. The primary goal was to create the ICC and its charter and to establish its objectives that were to 'preserve the arctic environment'. The formal initiation of the ICC essentially 'created the first bodies for Eskimo cooperation in cultural, community, and environmental matters' (Petersen 1984: 726). At this time, Hopson was elected President.

Hopson, throughout his political career, persistently pushed for a collaborative effort to legislate and construct a new image of the 'Arctic'. This image included the recognition and rights of indigenous peoples. From the inception of the ICC, the creation of an international Arctic policy dominated the agenda. The language of its mission and accompanying policy initiatives of the ICC officially codified the amalgamation between Inuit autonomy, Arctic economic development, and environmental

protection. As an institution, the ICC provided the means to put this union into practice. The emergence of the ICC 'startled Canadians' in particular as the ICC three-yearly meetings became televised in Canada. Inuit leaders suddenly found themselves having to explain that they did not seek secession from Canada but rather 'they were trying to join Canada as citizens with all the rights and benefits that other Canadians took for granted' (Simon and Jull 1994: 7). The impact of this new transnational Inuit organization upon future Arctic governance was soon to be discovered.

Future inter-state Arctic cooperation, such as the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) and the Arctic Council were both enacted in the midst of an already changing Arctic political space. The ICC not only participated in the creation of both the AEPS and the Arctic Council, but also has since played an ongoing role in determining the definition and discourse of the arctic policies that transpired. In addition to resource development, renewed international interest in the Arctic in lieu of a waning Cold War, combined with the onset of the ICC, provided the setting for a new refashioned Arctic space to materialise.

Shifting Arctic politics: towards a post-Cold War world

While planning for the first ICC conference and supporting the Canadian Arctic Inuit with domestic issues, Hopson also pursued international Arctic cooperation through the United States political system. Using his domestic influence, he called upon all Arctic states to create a regional regime that could draft an international Arctic policy. In a letter to President Carter in July 1976, Hopson made efforts to persuade the United States to take an active lead in fostering Arctic governance. He went on to assert his hopes that the ICC would be an integral authority to help achieve this goal: 'We hope that our Inuit Circumpolar Conference will initiate dialogue between the five Arctic coastal nations necessary to lead to formal agreements for safe and responsible Arctic oil and gas development' (Hopson 1976c). Despite these efforts for an international Arctic policy, it would be twenty years before an official inter-state Arctic cooperative regime would actually come into being. Regionally and internationally there was little if any such cohesion in engaging in Arctic regime building at that time. This sentiment is illustrated in a 1981 *Foreign Affairs* article entitled 'The Arctic: last unmanaged frontier'. L. Bloomfield, the author, noted that:

It is a mark of the times that the only continuing Arctic Forum to date is a Circumpolar Conference of Alaskan, Canadian, and Greenlander Inuit, initiated at Barrow, Alaska in June 1977. Transarctic diplomacy was thus pioneered not by the six governments of the adjacent states, but by a non-governmental 'transnational' association of native peoples. (Bloomfield 1981: 90)

However, the end of the Cold War eventually forced the Arctic states not only to begin to redefine their relationships within the international community but equally to delineate their role as part of an emerging 'Arctic community'. Secretary General M. S. Gorbachev's speech in 1989 in Murmansk activated an international transformation of the Arctic from being an area entirely ignored, considered uninhabited, or, simply, a centrepiece for military confrontation into an 'international region conceived primarily on the basis of environmental and indigenous concerns' (Keskitalo 2002). As Gorbachev stated:

A new, democratic philosophy of international relations, of world politics is breaking through. The new mode of thinking with its humane, universal criteria and values is penetrating diverse strata . . . our policy is an invitation to dialogue, to a search, to a better world, to normalization of international politics . . . the potential of contemporary civilization could permit us to make the Arctic habitable for the benefit of national economies and other human interests of the near-Arctic states, for Europe and the entire international community . . . Let the North of the globe, the Arctic, become a zone of peace. Let the North Pole be a pole of peace. (Gorbachev 1987)

With a range of environmental concerns already dominating the Arctic, the end of the Cold War in 1990 left a political vacuum and simultaneously created a new space for discussing the Arctic and the inertia to act on these concerns. While the international community needed time to regroup following the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the ICC was in a fortunate position to forge its already much solidified Arctic agenda. For the ICC, the aftermath from the Cold War period hit much less severely. Though the Inuit were left with the military and nuclear build-up of the Cold War, they, nevertheless, were already equipped with a post war agenda of international Arctic cooperation. This had begun with Hopson in the early 1970s and had expanded to include the ICC Inuit Regional Conservation Strategy, that received the Global 500 award from the United Nations Environment Programme in 1988, and the principles and elements for a comprehensive Arctic policy passed by the ICC in 1992. (Reimer 1993–94) The following ICC quotation illustrates this shift:

Today, the greatest and certainly the most direct threat to the security of Arctic residents stems from damage to the environment. The Arctic, in effect, has been treated as a dumping ground by governments, military establishments and industries concerned only with the needs of southern societies . . . The ICC believes that . . . the Arctic [should] evolve into a zone of peace, based on the concept of common security. This concept must be defined not only in military terms, but in environmental, social, cultural and economic terms as well. And it must take into account the rights, values and perspectives of the Arctic's indigenous peoples. (Simon 1988)

Arctic politics revisited

During my two years term as the Chair of the Arctic Council I have learnt to know the Inuit Circumpolar Conference as a professional, convincing and alert international actor, as Permanent Participant of the Arctic Council, and as an effective NGO [non-governmental organisation] at the United Nations. The Arctic Council is a unique partnership between government representatives and indigenous peoples . . . sitting at the same table . . . We all contribute to the work on a de facto equal footing. (Stenlund 2002)

The end of the Cold War provided the ICC with a vital opportunity to emerge onto the international scene. By the time the Arctic Council was created in 1996, twenty years after the founding of the ICC, the ICC had composed a solid discourse concerning how best to manage development and the environment in the Arctic. This discourse had by then become sedimented into mainstream Arctic policy including much of the vision by which sustainable development would come to be defined and perceived by all of the Arctic states. The already established political agency of the Inuit is exemplified in the various commitments made in the Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council in 1996. One member-state official of the Arctic Council contended that 'it was this group and not any Arctic government that was responsible for introducing the principles of sustainable development into the circumpolar forum' (*The Economist* 1996). Beginning with the mission of the Arctic Council, the representatives of the eight governments declared that:

The Arctic Council is established as a high level forum to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic . . . [and to] adopt terms of reference for and oversee and coordinate a sustainable development program. (Arctic Council 1996)

While the first ICC conference was based on the need to 'deal with Arctic oil' a recommendation was that it should be treated as a problem rather than a solution. Hopson had argued, however, that there was one positive aspect of oil exploration: gas development could bring heat to Inuit homes. Yet, these advantages have proved far more reaching. While not as overtly tangible, the constitutive historical relationship between the Inuit, the Arctic, and its resources over time were crucial to the construction of a new Arctic narrative that the ICC not only helped to compose but also through which the ICC has sustained and increased its effectiveness. Through the amassed legitimacy built up over time, the ICC has acquired the authority for determining the shape and direction in which Arctic development is defined and proceeds. As Simon and Jull note 'the Inuit through the ICC implicitly and explicitly redefined the

North as a region' (Simon and Jull 1994:10). In this context, the ICC is not a 'new transnational actor' in global affairs, nor is it merely one of many NGOs influencing international politics. The ICC serves as the culmination of a more complex and multidimensional narrative of Arctic international relations. The autonomy that the Inuit have attained domestically through the land claims, and internationally through the ICC, serves as the latest formation in the process of continuing shifts in Arctic politics and development. The most recent construct of this reality, an amalgamation of indigenous traditions and western liberal democracy is sufficiently summarised through the following statement by ICC executive member M. Simon in a speech presented to the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Social Policy Service, Inter-Commission Task Force on Indigenous Peoples:

Self-sufficiency in the modern context does not, however, simply mean the right to subsistence harvesting in its narrowest sense. New ideas about the role of resources in a mixed economy are being considered and acted upon. Inuit want to continue to hunt and eat what they hunt, but they also see the importance of commercial enterprise based on sustainable exploitation of their local resources. (Simon 1990)

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