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THE ARCTIC – DESOLATE LANDSCAPE OR LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

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Par le capitaine de corvette A.V. Compton

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ABSTRACT

The Arctic landscape has fascinated humans for centuries. Incredibly, the earliest motivation to discover and settle this desolate landscape can be traced to the same primary motivation of present day – economics. From the earliest explorers centuries ago to modern day international mining corporations, potential economic gain harnessed by the Arctic region has fuelled human interest in the region across the globe. Incredibly, the primary complicating factors in these economic pursuits have remained unchanged over the last few centuries – geography, politics, international policy and the indigenous people. Sadly, it seems the world has failed to learn lessons from the past, as we continue to neglect these critical facets of the Arctic region. As Canada assumes the Chair for the Arctic Council in May 2013, it is finally time for the Government of Canada to learn lessons from the past, and to formulate a strategic Arctic Policy that will embrace, rather than marginalize, these fundamental aspects of the Circumpolar region. This paper will critically analyse the mistakes of the past and present, and ultimately formulate and propose a strategic Arctic Policy for the Government of Canada to enact through the Arctic Council. Mistakes have been made, and current national and international policies concerning the Arctic fail to address the core of these extant issues. Canada is in a unique position to become the lead nation in the Circumpolar space. A cohesive, relevant strategic policy is the first step, which is what this paper will recommend.

The Arctic – Desolate Landscape or Land of Opportunity?

“Humans are an infant species, a mere 150,000 years old. But, armed with a massive brain, we’ve not only survived, we’ve used our wits to adapt to and flourish in habitats as varied as deserts, Arctic tundra, tropical rainforests, wetlands and high mountain ranges.”¹

- David Suzuki

INTRODUCTION

The White House publication, *Introduction to Outer Space*, first postulated in 1958 that the exploration of outer space was the next logical objective to satisfy human curiosity.² Outer space was indeed a realm where, “no man had gone before,”³ and the resultant human fascination with space exploration sufficiently occupied the minds of scientists, academics and the general public alike for decades afterwards. Ironically, a vast, expansive and equally fascinating environment remained unexplored during this time, and it was right here on earth. Even today, over forty years later, over 94 percent of the Arctic remains uncharted.⁴ Much of the Arctic landscape is inaccessible by humans – either due to limited life-supporting infrastructure, prohibitive ice cover, or, notably, an inherent lack of cohesive policy direction. David Suzuki accurately portrays human life as relatively short to the age of planet earth, a mere blip on the radar when taken in context to the age of the solar system.⁵ However, Suzuki also insightfully remarks that humans possess the intellectual capacity to not only survive, but *thrive* in some of the

¹David Suzuki, “We Can Learn From Nature’s Genius,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/science-matters/2012/11/we-can-learn-from-natures-genius>.

²The White House, “Introduction To Outer Space,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.fas.org/spp/guide/usa/intro1958.html>.

³Ibid

⁴United States Geological Survey, “Scientists Explore Changing Arctic Ocean,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=3363>.

⁵David Suzuki, *From Naked Ape To Superspecies: Humanity And The Global Eco-crisis* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2004), 79.

most ostensibly desolate landscapes on earth.⁶ Intuitively, then, it is rather a question of *human will*. Human will is the primary catalyst for the creation of a cohesive political structure, the ideal being an elected democracy. Democracies generate laws, from which national strategic policy is derived. Within the modern democracy in which Canadians live, this cohesive effort must not only be managed at the individual level, but also coordinated at the highest levels of government in the form of strategic Government of Canada (GoC) policy. And it is a central, cohesive and coordinated Arctic policy, which the GoC currently lacks. This paper will formulate, critique, and ultimately propose formal Arctic policies to the GoC.

In order to effectively and legitimately formulate and recommend a strategic federal policy for the Arctic, the Arctic space must first be as fully understood as possible. In studying extant federal policy (formulated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Internal Trade – DFAIT)⁷, the GoC places a significant emphasis on understanding a region in the creation of foreign policy. This model will be followed in the formulation of an Arctic policy. This detailed understanding follows the same basic construct – understanding the place, politics, economics, policies and the people.⁸ This strategic construct can be deconstructed into metrics, based on geographic location, political climate, economic conditions, national policy and human influence. In essence, each individual factor requires its own unique form of measurement, in order to empirically determine applicability of a given policy. Place, politics, economics, policies and the population will all conduct this measurement through their own perspective – or

⁶David Suzuki, *It's a Matter of Survival* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 235.

⁷Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Canada’s Foreign Policy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/index.aspx?view=d>.

⁸Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Canada’s Foreign Policy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/index.aspx?view=d>.

lens. In essence, utilizing a different template (or lens) between different regions would be a self-defeating exercise. Although this strategic lens contains only five domains, each can, and must, be further sub-divided into more definitive categories.

Historically, the Arctic Council has been a moderately useful forum for environmental issues and cooperation with circumpolar states. However, it has the real potential to become a viable mechanism to attain Canadian national and international objectives. Ultimately, Canada has been a facilitator, coordinator and enabler on the international stage – but never the absolute lead. Is our upcoming Chairmanship of the Arctic Council a realistic opportunity for Canada to take the definitive lead, while the United States is occupied in the Middle East and Asia-Pacific regions? Or is the Arctic Council destined to remain a simple forum focused on environmental regulation and protection, coordinated search and rescue, and collaborative interaction with our circumpolar nations? This paper will propose viable and attainable strategic policy recommendations for the GoC, with particular consideration to the geography of the arctic, its politics and political history, economic potential, and indigenous people.

The first chapter will clarify what the Arctic really means. Unfortunately, there are various definitions of what is, and is not technically the Arctic and this is one of the fundamental reasons we lack a coordinated, cohesive Arctic policy at the strategic level. Within an emotionally-charged realm such as the Arctic, with growing international competition for resources, ownership and uninhibited access, a near-universal definition of the Arctic must be understood in order to establish an effective framework upon which more complex policies can be both formulated and accepted internationally. The definition of the Arctic requires both a cartographic (physical) analysis as well as a

narrative analysis. What is understood as “the Arctic” varies widely, and, at times, fundamentally between even the most conciliatory neighbouring nations. Finally, a broad definition that considers both rhetoric and major discourse of the Arctic will be proposed.

The paper will then focus on why the world is interested in the Arctic. Even the most casual study of international news will yield a marked interest in the Arctic.⁹ International interest varies from purely resource-driven economics and industrial migration, increased shipping access, environmental protection, national sovereignty concerns, international security concerns, and concern over the welfare of the indigenous population. Whatever the motivation, the world is talking about the Arctic today more than ever before, and individual, national and international attention is now cast on the Arctic region like never before.¹⁰ Next, particular Canadian interest in the Arctic will be examined. Canada, like other circumpolar nations, has developed an approved Northern Strategy, delineating four critical pillars of Northern development including exercising Arctic sovereignty, protecting the environment, promoting economic and social development and improving and devolving Northern governance.¹¹ Canadian national interest must also take into consideration historical interest, current interest, and, most importantly, hypothesize what our potential future interests will be in the Arctic region. This historical analysis will conclude the first chapter.

Chapter two will critically analyse the geography of the Arctic. The first task is to determine, physically, which nations share, and therefore possess an inherent claim to, the

⁹The Arctic Institute, “The United States as an Arctic Actor,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.thearcticinstitute.org/2011/12/3498-united-states-as-arctic-actor.html>.

¹⁰Arctic Center, “What is the Arctic Region?,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.arcticcentre.org/?DeptID=5477>.

¹¹Government of Canada, “Canada’s Northern Strategy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.northernstrategy.gc.ca/index-eng.asp>.

Arctic (later defined as the circumpolar) region. However, geographical analysis must go beyond the simple physical space. Geography must also consider geographical *interests* in the region, specifically, the marked increase in geographic-focused policy, and moreover *claim*, to the Arctic space as the Northwest Passage becomes navigable by non-Arctic nations (China and the European Union as the front-runners to this recent trend.)¹² Historical geographic interests will be examined, followed by current geographic interests in the region in context to history. This preliminary analysis will facilitate an educated proposal as to who may have geographic interests in the future, which will further inform what Canadian strategic Arctic policy should be. Future geographic interests are certainly a function of increased globalization, expanding ice melt, and “non-circumpolar” state interest. Geographic interests are also compounded by the marked increase of international shipping in the region by non-Arctic nations.¹³ A careful analysis of shipping traffic in the Arctic will be conducted in support of this section.

Chapter three will explore the politics of the Arctic region through the analytical framework of discourse analysis. This framework will be utilized to examine political tensions of the north, past, present and future. Politics, particularly in the context of a complex region such as the north, can be further sub-divided into the *political history* of the north (referring to leadership and policies) and the *politics* of the north (referring to power and influence). Both of these elements must be fully explored in order to foster a complete understanding of the political climate of the Arctic. Next, current political challenges and international political dynamics will be analysed. Then future political

¹²Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, “Arctic China,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.sipri.org/media/pressreleases/arcticchinapr>.

¹³Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment, “Current Marine Use and the AMSA Shipping Database,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.arctic.gov/publications/AMSA/current_marine_use.pdf.

challenges (and opportunities) will be explored, both in a national and international context. This section will conclude with a discussion on political tensions and touch points. What political aspects are *not* issues in the north will be explored, along with the most emotive aspects, in order to provide a potential window into what the most palatable future policy recommendations might be for the GoC to adopt.

Chapter four will study economic opportunities in the north. Specifically, economic financial interest will be explored from a national and international perspective. The section will begin with a historical review of economic interests in the Arctic region, and then how increased access, compounded by globalization, has shaped current economic development interests, with particular delineation between economic systems of the north and financial interests in the north. Based on this analysis, a proposed economic model will be examined. Overall, economics will be overlaid through comparison and contrast to the previous sections on geography and politics. In essence, geography and politics can be a function of economics, whereby economics is the driving catalyst. This section will conclude with an analysis of industrial migration, and, ultimately, how a future recalibration of the Arctic space is an inevitable issue in the future.

Chapter five will focus on the most over-looked, yet most critically important aspect of the north – its people. Indeed, the people of the north do not overlook themselves; in fact they have taken ownership of their homeland through a carefully managed system of land claims.¹⁴ Unquestionably, the people of the north have been

¹⁴Institute for Research on Public Policy, “Inuit and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.irpp.org/po/archive/dec07/fenge.pdf>.

marginalized by national governments for decades.¹⁵ Thus it is more critical than ever before to conduct a discourse analysis – to fully adopt the perspective of the people of the north before proposing relevant, just and inclusive strategic policy. The arctic population will be studied from a historical perspective, as well as current trends and future demographic predictions. Past and current examples of marginalization of indigenous people (including the Oka Crisis and Idle No More movement) will be examined throughout the discourse analysis. Essentially, government and business cannot simply steamroll over the local population in the relentless pursuit of economic gain. This results in two plausible approaches for the federal government – the creation of an economic “corridor” (thereby marginalizing the local population) or to fully include the population in planning and development of northern resources. The latter approach certainly seems to be the preferred method when consulting the GoC website.¹⁶ However, closer inspection of both national and international policy reveals that these initial policies lack both the clarity and substance required to effect tangible results in the region. Beyond arctic resource management, northern planning and development must also include security, macroeconomics, and regional politics. These concepts will be compared and contrasted with the established thread of geography, politics (and political history), and security. Ultimately, we cannot simply *transpose* external ideals onto the people of the north. We must adopt an *inclusive* approach. Further, Canada must not overlook our recent experience in Afghanistan. Although half a world away, western experience in winning (and losing) the hearts and minds of the Afghan people must be

¹⁵American Society for International Law, “Arctic Sea Reports,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.asil.org/losreports/vol3/4%20-%20Indigenous%20peoples%20in%20the%20Arctic.pdf>.

¹⁶Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy Pamphlet,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy-brochure-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique.aspx?lang=eng&view=d.

harnessed so that our lessons learned are not tragically repeated within our own borders. Recent lessons learned with the Keystone and Keystone XL pipeline project must also be carefully studied in order to foster a relationship of respect and mutual trust with the indigenous people of the north.¹⁷ Approaches by other circumpolar nations must also be compared and contrasted with proposed Canadian strategic policy.

Chapter six will focus on the Arctic Council as a potential venue for Canada to both propose Canadian strategic policy and to assert itself as the lead nation in this unique venue. The history of the Arctic Council will be examined, along with its original, current, and potential future mandate. Indeed, Canada will once again assume the Chair of the Arctic Council in May 2013, however Canada must not simply “warm the chair” on its return to this critical position. The intention is to recommend tangible, specific policies in this paper in order to enable the GoC to further its national interests in the Arctic Council, beyond only environmental protection and Search and Rescue policy.¹⁸

¹⁷TransCanada, “Keystone XL Pipeline Project,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.transcanada.com/keystone.html>.

¹⁸Arctic Council, “Arctic Council,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/>.

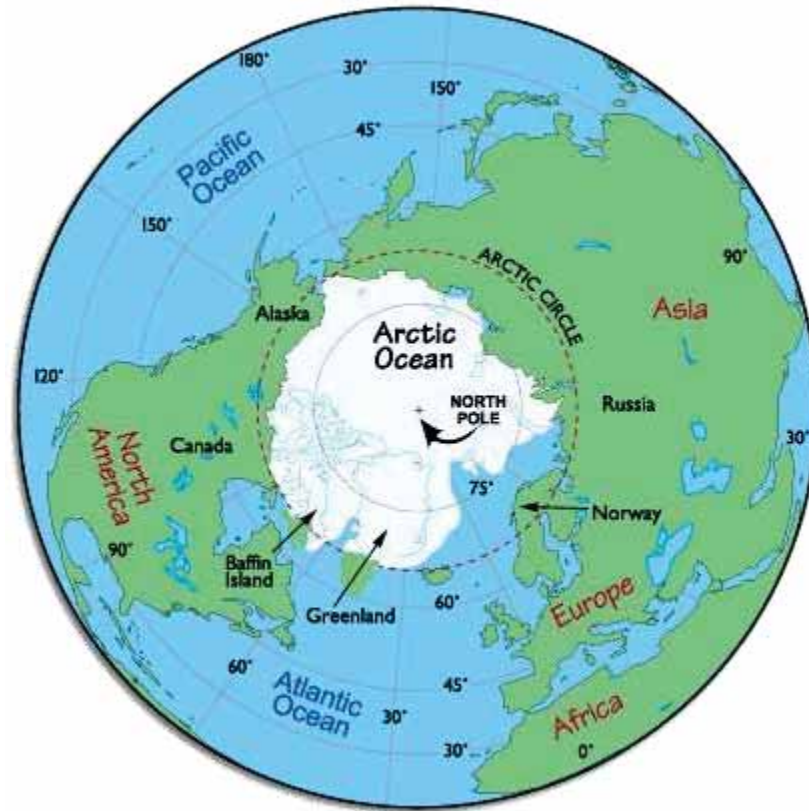
CHAPTER 1 – BACKGROUND

William Shakespeare astutely observed, “What’s past is prologue.”¹⁹ This line from *The Tempest*, although cryptic foreshadowing for Antonio and Sebastian’s deadly act, also serves as a timeless reminder that history is at best an indication of things to come, and at worst a fate destined to be repeated if it is not properly understood and analysed. Historical lessons learned from the human experience must also be applied to the arctic, if we are to fully capitalize on its inherent opportunities, and to avoid difficult lessons learned in this expansive land. First, a definition of what the arctic is, and is not, must be formulated. The first critical task of this paper is to “unpack” the term “arctic”, in a historical context, our current understanding and the future definition.

Simultaneously, the definition of the arctic must be easily understood and agreed to not only by Canada, or even circumpolar nations, but all stakeholders involved in the arctic problem. Although a rudimentary approach, perhaps it is useful to examine what defines “the arctic” as a common dictionary term. The Oxford Dictionary defines the arctic as, “relating to the regions around the north pole.”²⁰ Ostensibly this is a far too simplistic definition for such a complex space. Indeed, this one line definition lacks inclusive properties (What about the sea? The polar cap? Territorial waters? Exclusive economic zones? The airspace?) This definition is certainly not detailed enough to satisfy academic or scientific minds, however, the inherent danger of a too prescriptive definition of the arctic is that critical elements will surely be overlooked, thus not qualifying as “true” arctic space.

¹⁹William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine (New York: Washington Square Press, 1994).

²⁰Oxford Dictionaries, “Arctic,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/Arctic?q=arctic>.



World Atlas – “The Arctic”²¹

A second common term for the arctic space is “the north”. The north is defined as, “the northern part of the world or of a specified country, region, or town.”²²

Evidently, this definition is more definitive, and clearly includes an area of the earth.

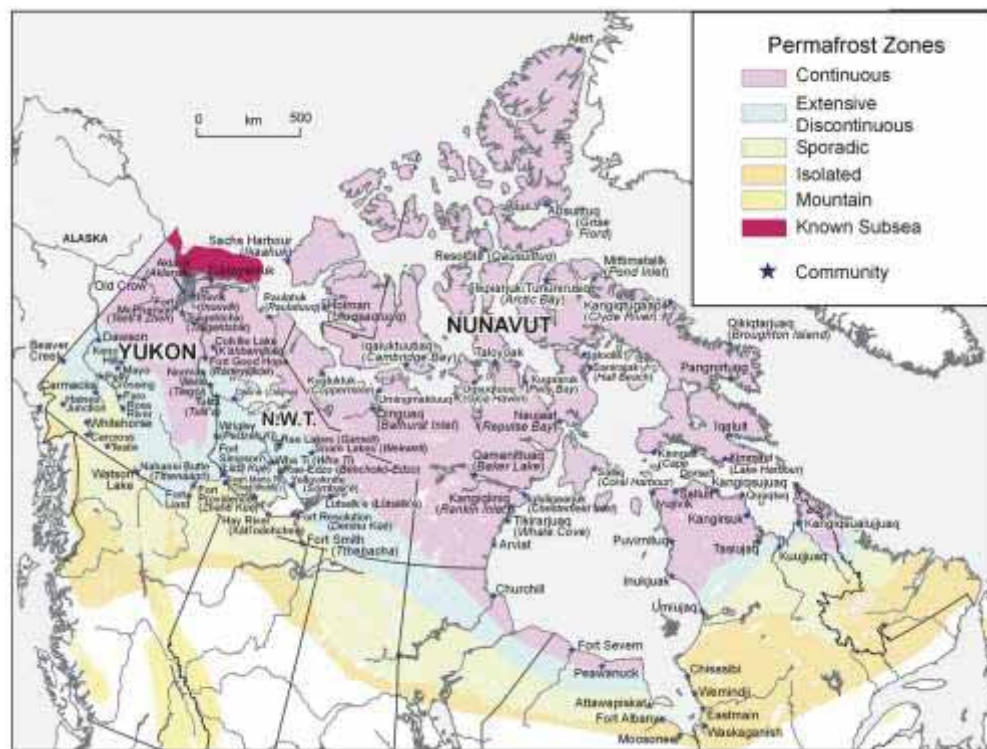
However, what is “north” is a relative term, dependent on where a person lives. What is “north” to a resident of Ontario can indeed be south to a resident of Baffin Island.

Interestingly, although the term “the north” is more universally acceptable at first glance, in fact it is a term fully dependent on perspective. And, ironically, the world’s failure to fully adopt the perspective of the indigenous people of the “north” is at the very core of

²¹World Atlas, “The Arctic,” last accessed 8 April 2013, <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/polar/arctic.htm>.

²²Oxford Dictionaries, “Arctic,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/Arctic?q=arctic>.

the challenges facing the GoC in developing a viable, relevant strategic policy.²³ The GoC and international partners must be careful not to marginalize and incorrectly label the “arctic” or “the north” from the very outset.



Natural Resources Canada – “The North”²⁴

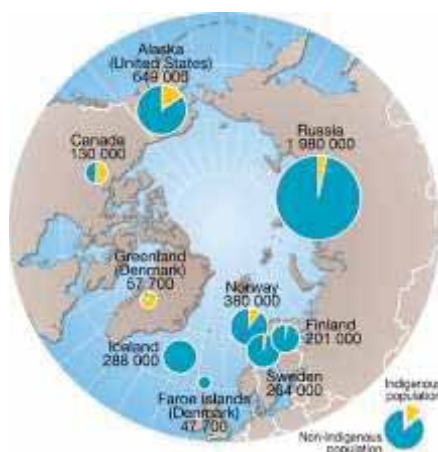
A third and more rarely found term for this region is *circumpolar*. Circumpolar relates to the arctic region, including the ocean, airspace and land, and, most importantly, the circumpolar *peoples*.²⁵ Another promising aspect to the term circumpolar is its full adoption by the Inuit people. In fact, the Inuit peoples of Canada created the Inuit

²³Mark Nuttall, *The Arctic: Environment, People, Policy* (Amsterdam: Harwood Publishers, 2000).

²⁴Natural Resources Canada, “The North,” last accessed 8 April 2013, <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/FarNorth/>

²⁵Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Canada and the Circumpolar World,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/index.aspx?view=d>.

Circumpolar Council (ICC) in 1978, which serves still today as a major international association representing over 150,000 peoples.²⁶ The ICC is also a fully international organization, encompassing representation from Canada, Alaska, Greenland, and Russia.²⁷ A comparative analysis between the official GoC foreign policy website and the ICC website indicates that the ICC has developed meaningful arctic policy for its people far ahead of the GoC.²⁸ In summary, it appears that non-Inuit organizations have liberally interchanged the terms, “arctic”, “north” and “circumpolar”, whereas the actual Inuit people has adopted the term “circumpolar” for decades, “Circumpolar region means the Inuit homeland.”²⁹ In the spirit of fully inclusive policy, and to reduce international confusion, or worse a sense of marginalization, the terms “arctic” and “north” will hereby be referred to as *circumpolar* – the land, sea, ice and airspace surrounding the north pole - the Inuit *homeland*.



International Polar Year – “Circumpolar Population Distribution”³⁰

²⁶Timothy Leduc, *Climate Culture Change: Inuit and Western Dialogues With a Warming North* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010), 5.

²⁷Inuit Circumpolar Council, “Inuit Circumpolar Council,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://inuitcircumpolar.com/index.php?auto_slide=&ID=16&Lang=En&Parent_ID=¤t_slide_num.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

Now that the circumpolar region has been defined, an examination of historical, current and future interest in this region must be conducted. Why has the world been so interested in the circumpolar region in the past? Not surprisingly, interest in the region was sparked by European expansion in the nineteenth century.³¹ Vancouver's expedition sought economic potential in the circumpolar region, and understood that this was only achievable through full comprehension of the geography and available resources.³² The overall intent was to expand British claims in the region, primarily for economic interest.³³ It was the Americans who first focused on the Inuit people as a fascinating aspect of the arctic, and Franklin understood their resident knowledge was the key to unlocking the vast resources of the winter landscape, noting the resilient Inuit could "outdo us in killing the seal, could regale on abundant food where we would starve because we could not endure it. [We] could not well manage without aid."³⁴ Admittedly, the voyages of the British and the Americans also studied geography, ethnology, and the environment, however, these secondary efforts were ultimately in support of one key objective – to exploit the natural resources in order to further claim to the British Empire, and, ultimately, traverse the Northwest Passage as a primary trade route for these new

³⁰International Polar Year, "Circumpolar Population Distribution," last accessed 8 April 2013, http://www.grida.no/graphicslib/detail/population-distribution-in-the-circumpolar-arctic-by-country-including-indigenous-population_1282.

³¹Vasiliki Kravariotis Douglas, *Arctic Development and Historical Analysis* (Edmonton: University of Alberta), 216.

³²Stephen Bown, *Madness, Betrayal and the Lash: The Epic Voyage of Captain George Vancouver* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2008), 3.

³³Vasiliki Kravariotis Douglas, *Arctic Development and Historical Analysis* (Edmonton: University of Alberta), 216.

³⁴Vasiliki Kravariotis Douglas, *Arctic Development and Historical Analysis* (Edmonton: University of Alberta), 216.

colonial colonies.³⁵

Evidently, even from the very first exploration of the circumpolar region, economics were the primary driving factor of international interest. How then, if at all, have these international interests in the region changed over time to the present day? To understand this dynamic, it must be acknowledged that the circumpolar region was largely ignored for over 100 years.³⁶ From the early explorers until recently, the circumpolar region was, ironically, left out in the cold. The primary reason for this was access – early explorers were keenly aware of its rich resources, however, access was deemed impossible in this forbidding environment. However, global warming has had a marked effect on the polar ice cap and, in conjunction with globalization and technology (nuclear powered shipping) human access to the circumpolar region is rapidly increasing.³⁷ In fact, a recent US geological survey estimated that over 25% of the world’s natural resources remain uncovered in the circumpolar region.³⁸ The current furry of geopolitical interest in the region is squarely focused on natural resources, fish stocks, and a more expeditious shipping route through the Northwest Passage.³⁹ Admittedly, international government espouse the importance of the environment, national sovereignty, and yes, even “saving the polar bear.”⁴⁰ But the cold reality cannot be ignored – the earth is rapidly running out of natural resources, and the answer to our

³⁵ Vasiliki Kravariotis Douglas, *Arctic Development and Historical Analysis* (Edmonton: University of Alberta), 216

³⁶ James Kraska, *Arctic Security in an Age of Climate Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3.

³⁷ Diploweb, “The Arctic : a Global Hot Topic,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.diploweb.com/The-Arctic-a-Global-Hot-Topic.html>.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Diploweb, “The Arctic: a Global Hot Topic,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.diploweb.com/The-Arctic-a-Global-Hot-Topic.html>.

⁴⁰ The Independent, “Protect the polar bear, save the planet,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/leading-article-protect-the-polar-bear-save-the-planet-401786.html>.

gluttony, quite possibly, lies beneath the thinning ice of the circumpolar region.

Future international interest can be readily ascertained by looking at current planning efforts. The next Arctic Summit – hosted and sponsored by The Economist magazine, in one such indicator. It is called, “Arctic Summit 2013: A New Vista for Trade, Energy and the Environment.”⁴¹ Of note the environment is mentioned at the end, almost dismissively, as it is described on the summit’s website, which describes how the polar ice cap is shrinking, and, “setting alarm bells ringing for environmentalists, but opening up new perspectives for trade and development.”⁴² Although this economic-driven perspective is drawn from a capitalist organization, the same messaging can be seen in international policy as well. A quick *tour de table* of the five circumpolar nations reveals interests for economic gain over anything else. Russia has foregone issues of military interest in favour of economics, geological resources, and improved infrastructure to support Russian shipping in the region.⁴³ United States strategic interests for the future include oil, gas, mining, shipping and rare minerals, with an economic potential in the trillions of dollars.⁴⁴ Norway is also focused on the vast economic potential of the arctic in the future, in particular regarding oil and gas development, which attributed to 22 percent of Norway’s GDP in 2009.⁴⁵ Finally, Denmark has also established clear economic objectives for their future involvement in the arctic. Denmark activity has included aggressive arctic exploration, polar

⁴¹The Economist, “Arctic Summit 2013,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://cemea.economistconferences.com/event/arctic-summit>.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Real Clear World, “Russia in the Arctic: Economic Interests Trump Military Ambitions,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2012/11/28/russia_in_the_arctic_economic_interests_trump.

⁴⁴Council on Foreign Relations, “A Strategy to Advance the Arctic Economy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.cfr.org/arctic/strategy-advance-arctic-economy/p27258>.

⁴⁵Center for Strategic and International Studies, “U.S. Strategic Interests in the Arctic,” http://csis.org/files/publication/100426_Conley_USStrategicInterests_Web.pdf.

exploration, and mapping of the arctic floor to prove its claims to the Lomonosov Ridge, an area believed to contain significant amounts of oil and gas deposits.⁴⁶ In summary, international interest in the circumpolar region has been driven by its vast economic potential, from the historical expeditions of Captain George Vancouver, to present day, and into future strategic planning. Is the Canadian interest in the circumpolar region immune to the immense pressures of economic-driven politics? A historical, current and future analysis is required.

Canada's historic national interests in the circumpolar region date back formally to 1670, almost 200 years before Canada became a sovereign nation, when the Hudson's Bay Company and Charles II claimed Rupert's Land (essentially the Hudson's Bay drainage basin) until 1870.⁴⁷ British rule was later transferred to Canada in 1870, along with present-day Northwest Territories and Nunavut.⁴⁸ These initially sovereignty and territory claims transformed into economic interests over the next 125 years, as numerous northern expeditions combined with technological advances permitted a more detailed mapping and geographic analysis, resulting in the discovery of more than 25% of the earth's untapped resources.⁴⁹ The federal government sponsored frequent expeditions to the circumpolar region in an effort to stake both sovereignty and economic claim to the land. Notable nationally sponsored expeditions included arctic patrols in the 1870s, culminating in the historical claim of Baffin Island by Captain W. Wakeham.⁵⁰ Albert

⁴⁶Macleans, "Who owns the North Pole?," last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www2.macleans.ca/tag/lomonosov-ridge/>.

⁴⁷The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, "Rupert's Land Purchase," last accessed 20 February 2013, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/ruperts_land_purchase.html.

⁴⁸The Canadian Encyclopedia, "Arctic Sovereignty," last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/arctic-sovereignty>.

⁴⁹U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Arctic Oil and Natural Gas Potential," last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.eia.gov/oiaf/analysispaper/arctic/index.html#atrc>.

Peter Low sailed north to Cape Herschel in 1904, conducting important mapping and charting for the GoC.⁵¹ These efforts were combined with those of Captain Bernier between 1904 and 1925, and Vilhjalmur Stefansson in the western arctic in the early 20th century.⁵² Canadian national interests in the circumpolar region are unquestionably rooted in territory and sovereignty claims, leading into purely economic ideals. Have these interest evolved over the past 100 years to present day?

The Canadian federal government unequivocally states its interests in the circumpolar region today, and can be readily accessed online. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) has the lead for arctic strategy, and has published an Arctic Foreign Policy Pamphlet.⁵³ Incredibly, the GoC priority for strategic interest in the arctic is listed in priority – beginning with territorial boundaries, dynamic *economic* growth and trade, the northern communities, and finally a healthy ecosystem.⁵⁴ Indeed, the GoC admits that economic interests trump the northern peoples and the environment. Canada's current interests in the circumpolar region are further detailed under each of these four pillars. Canadian sovereignty reigns supreme, effectively resolving existing boundary disputes (to be discussed in the Geography section), recognition of the Canadian continental shelf and arctic governance.⁵⁵ Although economic development is technically the second pillar, it is apparent that this pillar is not

⁵⁰Canadian Nautical Research Society, "A Dundee Ship in Canada's Arctic," last accessed 20 February 2013, http://cnrs-scrn.org/northern_mariner/vol08/nm_8_3_51-61.pdf.

⁵¹Mark Nuttall, *Encyclopedia of the Arctic: A-F* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1211.

⁵²Gísli Pálsson, *Travelling Passions: The Hidden Life of Vilhjalmur Stefansson* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2005), 75.

⁵³Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, "Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy Pamphlet," last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy-brochure-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique.aspx?lang=eng&view=d.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵ Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, "Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy Pamphlet," last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy-brochure-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique.aspx?lang=eng&view=d.

achievable without the first pillar; the two pillars are effectively interdependent.

Canadian economic development interests include sustainable development, trade and investment opportunities, and, notionally, northern development.⁵⁶ Canada's third pillar (and current interest) is the arctic environment, including environmental management, climate change, and international environmental standards.⁵⁷ (An interesting side note is Canada's withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol in 2011 due to "economic reasons" – the first nation to withdraw).⁵⁸ The final stated strategic interest of Canada in the arctic is to improve and devolve governance to the northern people. This includes increased participation in developing arctic policy with northern peoples, continued support of existing indigenous people's arctic initiatives and the inclusion of youth in arctic dialogues.⁵⁹

The fundamental question in this paper is what Canada's future interests in the circumpolar region will be in the future. Based on the above analysis of international interests (historical, current and future) combined with Canadian historical and current interests, sufficient information exists to make an educated guess on where Canadian interests will be focused, and thus what the most viable policy recommendations should be for the GoC as they assume the Chair in the Arctic Council this May. A potential answer to this question can be drawn once again from the GoC website; however it does not reside within the Arctic Foreign Policy itself. The GoC has rather released a Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy, which includes focus on sovereignty,

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "Canada pulls out of Kyoto Protocol," last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2011/12/12/pol-kent-kyoto-pullout.html>.

⁵⁹Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, "Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy Pamphlet," last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy-brochure-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique.aspx?lang=eng&view=d.

economic and social development, protecting the environment, and devolving governance.⁶⁰ The GoC has clearly stated that its future strategic interests are, in effect, the same as its current interests in the circumpolar region. A more detailed analysis of the complete strategic policy (beyond the speaking notes on their website) reveals a more detailed analysis on what the GoC intends for the future. Bilateral (Canada-US) and multinational relationships are highlighted as essential (particularly in light of the several competing boundary and land claim issues on the rise in the region, to be discussed later).⁶¹ Shared bilateral and multinational interests include trade, transportation (access), environmental protection, “development” of natural resources, climate change and scientific cooperation.⁶² Interestingly, the GoC does spend more time explicating future arctic policy than the rest of the circumpolar nations – which is a promising stance for the GoC to adopt, and will certainly act as a vehicle to deliver tangible effect on the international stage, armed with sound, achievable strategic policy recommendations that will be generated by this paper as the analysis of the circumpolar region continues with an examination of the geography of the region in the next section.

⁶⁰Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy Pamphlet,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy-brochure-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique.aspx?lang=eng&view=d.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

CHAPTER 2 – GEOGRAPHY



Center for Strategic and International Studies, “U.S. Strategic Interests in the Arctic.”⁶³

Ostensibly no other factor concerning the circumpolar region is more relevant than physical geography. Everything that defines this remote region is evidently a result of geography – a long, complicated shared border between five countries, territorial water disputes, right of innocent passage in international waters, a diverse and unique people, all combined with the inherent inaccessibility of a freezing, desolate landscape at the top of the earth. However, the geography of the north is defined by far more than snow, ice, and remoteness. This chapter will explore the very complex nature of the circumpolar geography, including a definition of the physical space, an analysis of the diverse

⁶³Center for Strategic and International Studies, “U.S. Strategic Interests in the Arctic,” http://csis.org/files/publication/100426_Conley_USStrategicInterests_Web.pdf.

countries that share the region, and a study of sea routes including the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage (and their tangible impacts on the region). In support of the objective of this paper, geographic interests in the region will be explored, with a focus on their historical, current, and future potential impact on national and international policy. Further, international geographic interests in the region must have a metric, and the marked increase of international shipping in the region will be studied as a predictive factor for the future. Ultimately, future Canadian arctic policy must not be drafted in isolation, rather it must be fundamentally shaped by international arctic policy, and, moreover, international geographic interest in the circumpolar region.

As a testament to the complexity of the circumpolar region, there are several internationally accepted definitions of what includes the geographic space of the arctic. After an exhaustive search for definitions of the space, one constant is that every definition includes the sea, land, ice and airspace around the North Pole.⁶⁴ A more recent scientific definition of the arctic space delineates all area north of 66 degrees 32 minutes latitude north.⁶⁵ Predictably, as international interest in the circumpolar region has increased over time, various definitions of what is physically included in this space have also multiplied, from scientists, to politicians, environmentalists to historians. Other notable and commonly used definitions of the arctic include the area within the Arctic Circle, the area where the sun never sets during summer solstice (21 June), the area north of the treeline, and finally the locations where the mean temperature never rises above 10

⁶⁴Robert Brown, *The Polar Regions: A Physical and Economic Geography of the Arctic and Antarctic* (London: Methuen, 1927), 1.

⁶⁵National Snow and Ice Data Center, "What is the Arctic?," last accessed 20 February 2013, http://nsidc.org/arcticmet/basics/arctic_definition.html.

degrees Celsius isotherm in the summer.⁶⁶ In the final analysis, what academics or scientists classify as the arctic geographic space is not important – rather, the legal consensus of international states is the definition that will have lasting effect. And, amazingly, after considerable research, there is still no universally accepted international definition of what is and is not included in the circumpolar geographic space.⁶⁷ In effect, geographic legal disputes are ongoing today amongst the Arctic Five (Canada, U.S., Russia, Denmark and Norway.)⁶⁸ Unquestionably this dispute is centred on economics and, specifically, the potential ownership of mineral and resource-rich deposits contained in the continental shelves in the Exclusive Economic Zones of the five countries.⁶⁹ Not surprisingly, Canada, which has huge potential for the extraction of resources should the definition of the “extended continental shelf” be modified, has also not adhered to an established definition of the circumpolar region.⁷⁰ The GoC website perhaps summarizes the problem of defining the geographic space of the arctic by referring to its vast, untapped economic potential, “Canada balances recognition of the inherent rights of a coastal state... with the mineral resources (that) are the common heritage of mankind.”⁷¹ Evidently, a clear, universally accepted definition of the geographic arctic space is not available. However, for the purposes of this paper, the reference to the arctic space will include the five major arctic coastal states – Canada, Russia, the U.S., Denmark and

⁶⁶Canadian Geographic, “How will a receding tree line and melting permafrost affect life and land in the North?,”

http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas/themes.aspx?id=ipy&sub=ipy_environment_trees&lang=En.

⁶⁷Center for Strategic and International Studies, “U.S. Strategic Interests in the Arctic,”

http://csis.org/files/publication/100426_Conley_USStrategicInterests_Web.pdf.

⁶⁸Radio, “Arctic “five” discuss regional cooperation,” last accessed 20 February 2013,

<http://english.ruvr.ru/2010/03/30/5813814.html>.

⁶⁹United States Congress House of Representatives, To Provide for Exploration, Development, and Production of Oil and Gas Resources on the Arctic Coastal Plain of Alaska, and for Other Purposes, December 27 2010.

⁷⁰Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Canada’s Extended Continental Shelf,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.international.gc.ca/continental/index.aspx?view=d>.

⁷¹Ibid.

Norway. This group of highly interested and motivated states is defined as the “Arctic Five.”⁷²

Until climate change and global warming began to melt the polar ice cap, the circumpolar region was a strategic concern for only two countries – the United States and Russia. The two global superpowers waged the Cold War over the arctic region for decades, where strategic military employment of long range bombers, nuclear submarines and long range fighter bomber intercept flights were the accepted order of the day.⁷³ However, global warming and the resultant climate change in the circumpolar region markedly increased accessibility to the arctic. Through this increased access and exploration, combined with technological advances, vast mineral deposits, natural gas, and untapped oil reserves were discovered. Conservative scientific estimates have projected that up to 25 percent of the earth’s natural resources reside underneath the polar ice cap.⁷⁴ This discovery, combined with the global trend of over-consumption, has inevitably resulted in resource-hungry nations actively seeking additional natural resources for power, heat, and ultimate survival.⁷⁵ The active pursuit of geographic ownership in the circumpolar region has been predominantly led by five countries – Canada, the U.S., Russia, Denmark and Norway, termed The Arctic Five.⁷⁶ Arguably the most aggressive nation of the Arctic Five has been Russia – with notably more

⁷²James Kraska, *Arctic Security in an Age of Climate Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 4.

⁷³Stephen Ambrose, *The Cold War: A Military History* (New York: Random House, 2006), 257.

⁷⁴U.S. Geological Service, “An Estimate of Undiscovered Conventional Oil and Gas,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2012/3042/fs2012-3042.pdf>.

⁷⁵Aslaug Mikkelsen, *Arctic Oil and Gas: Sustainability at Risk?* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 357.

⁷⁶James Kraska, *Arctic Security in an Age of Climate Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 4.

involvement in sovereignty and the resultant economic claims⁷⁷ that the United States (which may be attributable to their protracted engagements in the Middle East – to be addressed later). Whereas several circumpolar states have attempted to veil their economic interests within environmental policies or the protection of the indigenous peoples, Russia has overtly messaged its strategic intentions as economically driven.⁷⁸ Stark evidence of this was the 2007 voyage of two Russian nuclear submarines, with associated surface support, to the arctic ocean floor, in an overt “sovereignty patrol” in the Russian attempt to claim to resource-rich Lomonosov Ridge.⁷⁹ Canada, the second nation in The Arctic Five, has also taken a similarly aggressive stance on circumpolar resources, loosely veiled within claims of security and sovereignty.⁸⁰ Although the GoC does mention “vibrant northern communities” and “healthy and productive ecosystems” on its Arctic foreign policy website, further analysis reveals a rather overt stance regarding Canadian national sovereignty claims, and of course their resultant impact on ownership of untapped natural resources in the region.⁸¹ Additionally, Arctic Sovereignty is one of the fundamental pillars in the Canada First Defence Strategy, a strategic capstone document which guides force generation and force employment of the Canadian Forces and overall management of the Department of National Defence.⁸² The United States is the third of five major nations which shares coastal geographic ownership in the

⁷⁷Michael Byers, *Who Owns the Arctic?: Understanding Sovereignty Disputes in the North* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2009), 149.

⁷⁸Jordon Pate, *Russia in Asia & the Arctic: Positioning, Posturing & Prospects* (New York: Nova, 2012).

⁷⁹Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, “Sovereignty issues loom as Arctic sea ice shrinks,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2012/09/12/f-franklin-who-owns-the-arctic.html>.

⁸⁰Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy Pamphlet,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy-brochure-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique.aspx?lang=eng&view=d.

⁸¹ Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy Pamphlet,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy-brochure-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique.aspx?lang=eng&view=d.

⁸²National Defence, “Canada First Defence Strategy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/pri/first-premier/index-eng.asp>.

circumpolar region. U.S. strategic interests in the circumpolar region have been well documented, and the Department of State strategic objectives include protecting the environment, natural resource development (read economics), security and defence, cooperation with other arctic nations, indigenous people and scientific research.⁸³ The close relationship of these six strategic objectives and geography is undeniable, and the U.S., like other circumpolar nations, is also deeply concerned with geographic boundaries and resource ownership of the resource-rich continental shelf.⁸⁴ Denmark, the fourth nation in the Arctic Five, also has a progressive and geographically-focused strategic arctic policy.⁸⁵ In light of the increased access to the region from climate change, Denmark, in partnership with Greenland (which actually falls within the circumpolar region) chaired an international conference to delineate arctic shelf claims.⁸⁶ Denmark has focused heavily on the aspect of the changing geography in the circumpolar region, and its future economic impacts on resource claims over the next few years, up to 2020.⁸⁷ Finally, geographic interest has also been focused from the highest strategic levels of government in the fifth Arctic Five nation, Norway. Norway has arguably adopted the most deliberate foreign policy approach to circumpolar geographic ownership, embedding its sovereignty and resource claims firmly in the United Nations Convention of Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).⁸⁸ Norwegian initiatives aimed at resolution of the

⁸³U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Arctic Policy," last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/g/oes/ocns/arc/index.htm>.

⁸⁴Center for Strategic and International Studies, "U.S. Strategic Interests in the Arctic," http://csis.org/files/publication/100426_Conley_USStrategicInterests_Web.pdf.

⁸⁵Kingdom of Denmark, "Strategy for the Arctic 2011– 2020," last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://uk.nanoq.gl/~media/29cf0c2543b344ed901646a228c5bee8.ashx>.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Kingdom of Denmark, "Strategy for the Arctic 2011– 2020," last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://uk.nanoq.gl/~media/29cf0c2543b344ed901646a228c5bee8.ashx>.

⁸⁸Norway Foreign Affairs, "The High North," last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/campaigns/the-high-north.html?id=450629>.

evolving geographic boundaries in the circumpolar region include The High North Policy, a white paper for the High North, a treaty on maritime delimitation between Norway and Russia and even strategic dialogue between Asia and the West on circumpolar geographic claims.⁸⁹ Although only five nations technically share geographic boundaries with the circumpolar coastal region, international geographic interests are emotive, diverse and overall extremely complex. This increased, marked focus on geography extends beyond physical territorial borders, the exclusive economic zone and even the extended economic continental shelf. The inherent relevance of geography extends into the arctic sea, and is nowhere more prevalent than in the analysis of the two primary shipping routes – namely the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage.⁹⁰

Perhaps the most dynamic and influential geographic elements of the circumpolar region are the Northern Sea Route (NSR) and the Northwest Passage (NWP). The NSR and NWP are the two primary shipping routes that are available to transit the circumpolar region from east to west or west to east.⁹¹ The NSR extends from the Bering Strait east to the Norwegian Sea and the NWP extends from the Bering Strait east to the Davis Strait.⁹²

⁸⁹Norway Foreign Affairs, “The Arctic – the New Crossroads between Asia and the West,” http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/Whats-new/Speeches-and-articles/e_speeches/2012/arctic_asia.html?id=707621.

⁹⁰Franklin Griffiths, *Politics of the Northwest Passage* (Quebec: McGill University Press, 1987), 128.

⁹¹Government of Canada, “The Arctic Region,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/researchpublications/prb0561-e.htm>.

⁹²Terence Armstrong, *The Northern Sea Route: Soviet Exploitation of the North East Passage* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 28.



Center for Strategic and International Studies, “U.S. Strategic Interests in the Arctic.”⁹³

Not surprisingly, initial human interest and exploration of the NSR and the NWP were firmly based in economics.⁹⁴ The initial concept of utilizing the Northern Sea Route as a potential shortcut from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean was proposed by a Russian diplomat, Dmitry Gerasimov in the 16th century.⁹⁵ However, initial passage of the NSR was arduous, time consuming, and often deadly, with the majority of explorers abandoning the concept of transiting the NSR in favour of the more permissive waters of Central and South America.⁹⁶ Exploration and eventual transit of the NWP was first accomplished by Norwegian polar explorer Roald Amundsen in 1903.⁹⁷ However, due to the pervasive counter-clockwise tides, the NWP has been, until very recently, an impassable route to transit for shipping due to pack ice, effectively jamming the NWP solid with massive ice fragments from the Beaufort Sea.⁹⁸ As eluded to earlier, recent dramatic climate change, in the form of global warming, has markedly reduced ice cover

⁹³Center for Strategic and International Studies, “U.S. Strategic Interests in the Arctic,” http://csis.org/files/publication/100426_Conley_USStrategicInterests_Web.pdf.

⁹⁴Ibid, 103.

⁹⁵Michael Allaby, *Exploration: New Lands, New Worlds* (New York: Infobase, 2010), 158.

⁹⁶Ibid, 155.

⁹⁷Lynne Cox, *South With the Sun: Roald Amundsen, His Polar Explorations, and the Quest for Discovery* (New York: Random House, 2011), 162.

⁹⁸University of Guelph, “Northwest Passage,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.arctic.uoguelph.ca/cpe/environments/marine_water/cool/NWpassage.htm.

in the circumpolar region. The result is a passable (during certain months of the year) navigable passage through either the NSR or the NWP. International shipping that chooses to utilize either of these routes can reduce a Pacific-Atlantic transit by weeks and even months. The tangible effect of this shorter transit time is less money spent on fuel, ships crews, wear and tear on ship's hulls, and offering a *distinct economic advantage* to their customers through delivering goods and services much more efficiently as opposed to the southern route through the Panama Canal.⁹⁹ Perhaps the most useful metric to measure the increasing importance of viable shipping routes through the NSR and the NWP is a statistical study of shipping transits through the circumpolar region. In 2011, 34 ships transited the NSR, moving a combined cargo of over 820,000 tons.¹⁰⁰ This represents a 10-fold increase in shipping through the NSR in the last two years.¹⁰¹ A similar trend is emerging in the NWP, where the first commercial ship completed the transit in 2008, and 18 ships completed the transit in 2010.¹⁰² Admittedly, a total of 52 ships transiting through the arctic region routes does not seem outwardly significant; however the most significant factor that requires study is the *trend analysis*. This marked increase in shipping, condensed in a short period of time, compounded by ever-increasing circumpolar temperatures (and thus reduced polar ice cap and pack ice) is a clear indicator of the marked impact and importance that circumpolar geography will have on Canadian and international arctic policy in the future.

Circumpolar geography is indeed one of the fundamental factors that must be

⁹⁹Geology, "What Is the Northwest Passage?," last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://geology.com/articles/northwest-passage.shtml>.

¹⁰⁰Barents Observer, "Slow start on the Northern Sea Route, » last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://barentsobserver.com/en/arctic/slow-start-northern-sea-route-27-08>.

¹⁰¹Barents Observer, "46 vessels through Northern Sea Route," last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://barentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2012/11/46-vessels-through-northern-sea-route-23-11>.

¹⁰²Climate Signals, "Northwest Passage," last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://climatesignals.org/2010/10/18-ships-clear-northwest-passage>.

considered when developing Canadian circumpolar policy. Geography impacts Canadian national interests, security, sovereignty, economic potential and international relations with neighboring arctic coastal states. Critically, the geography of the circumpolar region is not static; rather it is ever-changing. Thus, Canadian arctic policy must be flexible, adaptive, and responsive to both our national needs and the interests of our international partners. Ultimately, circumpolar geography cautions strategic policymakers to craft arctic policy in close collaboration with our international partners, and must not be created in isolation.¹⁰³

¹⁰³Observatoire de l'Arctique, "Developing an EU Arctic Policy," last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.arctique.uqam.ca/IMG/pdf/Thesis_Ida_Holdhus.pdf.

CHAPTER 3 – POLITICS

Undeniably, political dynamics have the potential to be the most divisive and destructive force to a successful circumpolar policy. Competing political personalities, feuding parties jockeying for position in preparation for a subsequent election, and dissenting voices of marginalized political entities within Canada, and moreover competing political interests on the international stage can defeat a cohesive, constructive policy for the circumpolar region before it is ever drafted. However, getting the correct national and international political balance right can also act as a strategic enabler for Canadian arctic policy. In an effort to fully harness the enabling aspects of politics, the concept must be fully deconstructed, analysed and then applied. *Politics* can be distinguished between the *political history* of the north (leadership and policies) and the *politics* of the north (power and influence). Next, current and future political challenges will be explored in both the Canadian national and international context. Finally, divisive political tensions and touch points will be addressed. Divisive, emotive, and ultimately party-driven political interests in the circumpolar region must be directly addressed in order to generate and recommend Canadian arctic policy that will stand the test of time.

Two critical aspects that influence the circumpolar region are *political history* and *politics*. Political history is, “the narrative and analysis of political events, ideas, movements, and leaders.”¹⁰⁴ In effect, political history is focused on decisions made by nations and states, rather than individuals. Politics, comparatively is, “the art of influencing people on a civic or individual level when 2 or more parties are involved.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴Maryanne Cline Horowitz, *New dictionary of the history of ideas* (New York :Charles Scribner's Sons: 2005), 33.

¹⁰⁵Scott London, “Building Collaborative Communities,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.scottlondon.com/articles/oncollaboration.html>.

Thus, whereas political history is focussed on the state, and entails leadership and policies, politics is focussed on the individual citizen, and entails civic power and influence. Evidently, both political history and politics have strategic ramifications for a successful circumpolar policy, and must be carefully analysed in turn. National *political history* of the circumpolar region has routinely been played out on the international stage, and is ultimately rooted in the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).¹⁰⁶ UNCLOS specifies two critical definitions which have been at the very root of international political debate for over 50 years – Territorial Waters (TTW - extending 12 nautical miles from a coastal state) and, the most politically charged definition – Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ – extending a further 200 nautical miles from TTW).¹⁰⁷ The concept of the EEZ is particularly relevant to the political history of the circumpolar region as it also denotes a nation’s claim (or ownership) to any natural resources contained within the EEZ, and, moreover the continental shelf.¹⁰⁸ UNCLOS, TTW and EEZ thrust the major coastal states (in particular the Arctic Five) into heated political debate on both the national and international level. This phenomenon has become more politically charged as global warming melts the polar ice cap, permitting a more detailed analysis of the once hidden resources of the north, and the incredible economic potential that the circumpolar region presents to the coastal state which can legally claim this resource-rich environment for their own interests.¹⁰⁹ National *politics*, as discussed, is focused on the individual at the civic level.¹¹⁰ Although politics may be

¹⁰⁶United Nations, “United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/UNCLOS-TOC.htm.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Robin Churchill, *Marine Management in Disputed Areas: The Case of the Barents Sea* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 8.

nationally focused (as opposed to internationally), and consider the individual at the civic level (as opposed to other nation states), the strategic impact of Canadian politics cannot be underestimated. A relevant, responsive, flexible and overall cohesive national political approach is fundamental in order for Canada to succeed on the international stage. In essence, an undivided national political approach to the arctic problem is a key enabler for any strategic policy to be successful. A recent example of an internal national issue that resulted in international ramifications for Canada is the Idle No More Movement.¹¹¹ In summary, both the political history and the politics involved in the circumpolar debate are critical in order to both create and enforce a cohesive, relevant strategic circumpolar policy.

International political dynamics unquestionably pose the most tangible strategic challenges to the successful enforcement of Canadian circumpolar policy. It is therefore important to identify these challenges, rather than avoiding them or simply wishing them away, in order to fully grasp their meaning, intent, and ultimate influence. The goal for Canadian policy makers is to not only fully comprehend these international political challenges, but to also perceive them as potential opportunities which can be leveraged for our own national interest. Dr. Franklyn Griffiths, a Canadian professor at Yale and expert in circumpolar politics, astutely asserted that international political dynamics have two possible outcomes – they can either be viewed as competitive, exclusionary and ultimately result in a “race for resources”, or they can be viewed and leveraged as a vehicle for mutual cooperation, working productively towards an end state for

¹¹⁰Scott London, “Building Collaborative Communities,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.scottlondon.com/articles/oncollaboration.html>.

¹¹¹APTN, “Idle No More,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://aptn.ca/pages/news/2013/01/25/pm-harper-believes-idle-no-more-movement-creating-negative-public-reaction-say-confidential-notes/>.

international benefit.¹¹² Fortunately, current Canadian political strategy for the circumpolar region recognizes these inherent challenges, and it has made the required initial steps towards a cooperative, mutually beneficial strategic policy for the region.¹¹³ The Canadian Northern Strategy is an inherently “political” document, drafted by the GoC and the Department of Foreign Affairs and strikes a balance between recognition of international power and influence (political history at the national level) and leveraging the concepts of politics by both empowering and leveraging the concepts of individual and civic needs of a cohesive strategic capstone document. Key political concepts addressed in the Northern Strategy include exercising Canadian arctic sovereignty (state), protecting the environment (state and civic), promoting economic development (state and civic benefit) and improving northern governance (empowering the civic population).¹¹⁴ Of note, the other coastal states also strike this critical political balance between national state interest and the interests of the individual at the civic level. Russia, the U.S., Denmark and Norway have also developed a Northern Strategy that is not mutually exclusive, and all nations stress the importance of international cooperation in the pursuit of mutual benefit in the context of economic opportunities.¹¹⁵ The international political *intent* for a mutually beneficial, cooperative approach in the circumpolar region is evident, however it remains to be seen how these various policies will actually be enforced, particularly as the natural resources of the arctic become more accessible and thus readily available. Essentially, strategic policy is an easy thing to espouse in the

¹¹²Franklyn Griffiths, *Canada and the Changing Arctic Sovereignty, Security, and Stewardship* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press: 2011), 72.

¹¹³Government of Canada, “Canada’s Northern Strategy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.northernstrategy.gc.ca/index-eng.asp>.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹¹⁵Donald Rothwell, *The Polar Regions and the Development of International Law* (Cambridge University Press: 1996), 225.

absence of a clear and present requirement to *enforce* them. Further, there currently exists not vehicle to action these policies – a political arena to actually enact our strategic arctic policy. This paper will later propose that The Arctic Council is perhaps the most appropriate forum to accomplish this critical task.

Beyond the conciliatory overtones contained within these strategic policy documents, there are several political “touch points” – emotive, divisive and competitive aspects to claims and ownership of critical territory in the circumpolar region.¹¹⁶ Prior to exploring the political touch points both within Canada and on the international stage, it may prove beneficial to discuss what is *not* at issue in the circumpolar region. Nationally, political parties within Canada generally agree on a few key tenets regarding relevant arctic policy. There is no documented dissent nationally that the primary objective of any Canadian arctic policy must assert Canadian sovereignty as a fundamental building block in our policy.¹¹⁷ Canadian sovereignty in this context includes internationally recognized Canadian boundaries founded in international law, the Canadian continental shelf, TTW, and the EEZ. Second, Canada is politically unified regarding the importance of economic and social development. Sustainable development, social development opportunities for indigenous peoples, and addressing health issues of the northern people are all agreed upon aspects across the Canadian political spectrum.¹¹⁸ Third, protecting the environment is not a contested political issue within Canada. There is a Canadian political consensus on an eco-system based management approach, and

¹¹⁶Roger Howard, *The Arctic Gold Rush: The New Race for Tomorrow's Natural Resources* (New York: Continuum: 2009), 14.

¹¹⁷Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy_booklet-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique_livret.aspx?lang=eng&view=d#sovereignty.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*

addressing climate change issues.¹¹⁹ However, several politically charged disputes (touch points) remain unsolved, and are worthy of close analysis, and ultimate inclusion into Canadian strategic circumpolar policy in an effort towards resolution. The most notable touch point is existing boundary disputes in the circumpolar region, in particular Hans Island.¹²⁰



Hans Island¹²¹

Admittedly, this small, uninhabited island lacks any tangible resources or tactical advantage. However, territorial claim of Hans Island has strategic implications, particularly as it has remained unresolved for decades, and acts as a microcosmic representation of the inherent difficulty nation states experience in resolving land disputes. Hans Island serves as a cautionary example, with strategic impact.¹²² A second strategic touch point of political friction resides in the Beaufort Sea. Territorial claims in

¹¹⁹Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy_booklet-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique_livret.aspx?lang=eng&view=d#sovereignty.

¹²⁰Rongxing Guo, *Territorial Disputes and Resource Management: A Global Handbook* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2007), 134.

¹²¹Menas Borders, “Canada and Denmark in Hans Island Negotiations,” last accessed 8 April 2013, <http://menasborders.blogspot.ca/2011/01/canada-and-denmark-in-hans-island.html>.

¹²²Ibid.

the region differ between Canada and the U.S., and have the potential to be resolved if the U.S. ratifies UNCLOS, which they refuse to complete.¹²³ As a result, ownership of this resource-rich region remains unresolved between the two coastal nations, and provides a second example of a strategic political dispute in the circumpolar region. A third political touch point on the international level exists in the Northwest Passage. Canada considers the NWP as Internal Waters, whereas all other maritime nations (in particular the Arctic Five) consider it an International Strait (thus permitting free, unencumbered access).¹²⁴ Designation of the NWP as Canadian internal waters would permit Canada to enforce environmental laws, as well as fiscal laws on shipping transiting the passage.¹²⁵ Of critical importance is the central role that Canada plays on all three of these active disputes. Indeed, Hans Island does not entail the same long term economic impact that claim of the Beaufort Sea does, however the overall strategic impact of these three disputes is undeniable – they remain unresolved, are clearly exposed on the international political stage, and will require careful management by Canadian policy makers in the near future.

Both political history and politics are critically important when discussing the problem of a viable strategic circumpolar policy for Canada. These two fundamental political elements have impact from the individual all the way up to the strategic international stage. The good news is that Canada seems to have a cohesive, unified national approach to the arctic problem. In effect, Canada has its national house in order,

¹²³Ibid, 65.

¹²⁴Donald Rothwell, *Navigational Rights and Freedoms, and the New Law of the Sea* (Netherlands: Kluwer Law, 2000), 209.

¹²⁵Donald Rothwell, *Navigational Rights and Freedoms, and the New Law of the Sea* (Netherlands: Kluwer Law, 2000), 209.

at least from a political perspective (which will be further debated in Chapter 5 – People). Of particular concern, from an international political perspective, are the unresolved disputes over ratification of UNCLOS, what constitutes national claims to resources contained in the continental shelf (which often extends well beyond TTW and EEZ), and the overall strategic impact of the Arctic Five in fundamental disagreement as to who owns what in the circumpolar region. The current state of international political dispute further strengthens the argument for a comprehensive, responsive, relevant and flexible Canadian circumpolar policy. But before this policy can be drafted, and recommended for action within the venue of the Arctic Council, a more detailed analysis of the circumpolar region is warranted. This analysis continues with a focus on arguably the most critical building block of any viable arctic policy – economics.

CHAPTER 4 – ECONOMICS

It has become evident that economics is a driving factor in the circumpolar discussion, whether discussing the origins of arctic exploration, the human interest in the changing geography of the region, or analyzing national and international political interests in the northern space. Unquestionably, there have been tangible economic interests in the north, even from the earliest days of Captain George Vancouver's voyage¹²⁶ up to and including present day strategic circumpolar policy.¹²⁷ Indeed, any discussion on economics of the circumpolar region must include both a study of national economic interests and international economic interests (and their inherent competition). As such, this section will explore the history of economic interests in the north, both from a national and an international perspective. This analysis will be historical in nature, acknowledging how the constantly-changing circumpolar environment has recently sparked a renewed interest in economic financial gain, as access to resources has become more viable. Economic financial interest will be presented in relation to fast-paced globalization, including enhanced communications, increased shipping, and the inherent global competition for resources. Next, current economic interests will be explored, and the concept of circumpolar economic systems will be delineated from financial interests in the north). Finally, a future economic model will be proposed, based on historic lessons learned and current economic experience in the arctic. A prediction of the most viable future economic model for the circumpolar region is required prior to shaping

¹²⁶Stephen Bown, *Madness, Betrayal and the Lash: The Epic Voyage of Captain George Vancouver* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2008), 3.

¹²⁷Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, "Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy," last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy_booklet-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique_livret.aspx?lang=eng&view=d#sovereignty.

strategic circumpolar policy. Without question, industrial migration and the continued human economic interest will have an inevitable, marked recalibration of the northern space.

Economic interests, specifically, the potential for national and international financial gain from the systematic exploitation of natural resources from the circumpolar region, have been the cornerstone of geographic and political dynamics in the north. The historic exploration of the northern region has also revealed the possibility of a shorter route, or transit from the Atlantic to Pacific regions of the world – all in the pursuit of more expeditiously moving goods and services across the globe. As discussed in previous sections, the phenomenon of global warming and climate change have recently made this distant possibility more of a reality in the northern space. Thus, a study of economic potential must be first grounded in history, from both a national and international perspective. Years before the concept of oil exploitation in the circumpolar region became *en vogue*; Canada regarded the region as a viable economic hub for fur trading.¹²⁸ Arguably, the establishment of fur trading outposts locally within the circumpolar region had the most tangible economic impact on the north in the last 200 years.¹²⁹ However, economic interests in the circumpolar region were certainly not limited to a Canadian national context. Indeed, fur trading was a useful mechanism for several European explorers to contribute economic dividends back to their home nations.¹³⁰ Dutch explorer Adriaen Block was an excellent example of one of the pioneers of the arctic fur trade who first realized the economic financial value of the

¹²⁸Harold Adams Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 2001), 367.

¹²⁹*Ibid*, 352.

¹³⁰DocStoc, “Fur Trade,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.docstoc.com/docs/6440267/Fur_trader.

north.¹³¹ Remarkably, these early explorers realized the inherent economic potential of the circumpolar region, centuries before the region would become a more permissive environment for economic development, and, ultimately, economic exploitation. Arctic economic interests were so strong they flourished in the absence of globalization, advances in communications and transportation technology, and, moreover, a global demand for scarce natural resources by a global society which would later seek these precious resources due to over-consumption.¹³²

Current economic interests in the circumpolar region are founded on the linear framework of the fur trade industry, however the recent phenomena of globalization, communications technology and transportation capabilities have certainly compounded current economic pursuits in the region.¹³³ “Only when the ice breaks will you truly know who is your friend and who is your enemy.”¹³⁴ This timeless Inuit proverb unwittingly foreshadowed the global economic frenzy in the circumpolar region. It clearly reflects the transient nature of brotherhood, neighbourliness and solidarity, which is only truly tested when the foundation of friendship is tested. The increasing international appetite for scarce natural resources combined with the concept of economic globalization, has created a veritable race for economic leverage in the north.¹³⁵ Globalization has definitively facilitated a level of economic activity in the north, “that has outgrown national markets through industrial combinations and commercial

¹³¹DocStoc, “Fur Trade,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.docstoc.com/docs/6440267/Fur_trader.

¹³²Roger Howard, *The Arctic Gold Rush: The New Race for Tomorrow's Natural Resources* (New York: Continuum: 2009), 84.

¹³³Center for Strategic and International Studies, “U.S. Strategic Interests in the Arctic,” http://csis.org/files/publication/100426_Conley_USStrategicInterests_Web.pdf.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵The Spectator, “Race is on for Arctic treasures,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.thespec.com/news/world/article/804071--race-is-on-for-arctic-treasures>.

groupings that cross national frontiers.”¹³⁶ In effect, the insatiable human appetite for natural resources has outstripped national supply, and countries all over the world must actively pursue natural resources outside of their own national borders in order to secure their national interests.¹³⁷ The most blatant example of this expeditionary search for natural resources is exercised by China – who actually shares no physical boundaries with any territory in the circumpolar region. Thus, rather than undertaking an effort to strengthen or legitimize existing territorial claims (as Canada, the U.S. and Russia have done) China has actively deployed fleets of icebreakers, commercial shipping and scientists into the circumpolar region in an effort to exploit more readily-available natural resources underneath the shrinking polar ice cap.¹³⁸ Further testament to this emerging concept of expeditionary resource development within the modern, technological context, China is also seeking arctic resources such as rare metals in order to manufacture complicated cellphone technologies and modern military guidance systems.¹³⁹ The increased global economic importance of the circumpolar region is not only driven *by* globalization and technology – the arctic region also possesses the very resources utilized to *enable* globalization and technology. The complex economic problem of the circumpolar region is rapidly becoming a self-perpetuating phenomenon, evidently with no end state.

A succinct study of current economic interests in the circumpolar region indicates a marked shift from simple fur trading to natural resources, rare minerals and oil.

¹³⁶Merriam Webster, “Globalization,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/globalization>.

¹³⁷The Spectator, “Race is on for Arctic treasures,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.thespec.com/news/world/article/804071--race-is-on-for-arctic-treasures>.

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Ibid.

However, the fundamentals of economic development practiced by explorers centuries ago remain extant in modern pursuits of rare metals, mining, exploitation of mineral deposits and fishing.¹⁴⁰ As such, the concepts of circumpolar economic *systems* and simple financial *interests* must be delineated. Gérard Duhaime and Andrée Caron define the arctic economy by three defining characteristics; global exploitation of natural resources, manufacturing and construction, and service industries as a function of the *market* economy.¹⁴¹ The first sector, natural resource exploitation, accounts for global revenue of over \$62 billion per year.¹⁴² However, resource exploitation activities are mostly conducted by non-regional actors, labour and resources from outside the circumpolar region.¹⁴³ The second sector, manufacturing and construction, also accounts for less local economic impact in the circumpolar region than in the countries where manufacturing and development is more advanced. The third sector, service industries, does actually involve the local economy, accounting for approximately 50 percent of all economic activity in the region.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, all three sectors of the circumpolar economy must be treated as *one system*, as the economic models of all other countries are also treated as a whole. The requirement to treat the entire arctic economy as one system (you do not need to italicize this term the second time) is essential, because this is how other countries are characterized, and also because the circumpolar region is vast, its economic activity is geographically dispersed, and treating the region as a set of isolated sub-economies (the three sectors above) unfairly categorizes it as an inferior economy to

¹⁴⁰The Spectator, "Race is on for Arctic treasures," last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.thespec.com/news/world/article/804071--race-is-on-for-arctic-treasures>.

¹⁴¹Statistics Norway, "The economy of the circumpolar Arctic," last accessed on 20 February 2013, http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/00/30/sa_economy_north/sa84_en/kap2.pdf.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

that of “more developed” regions of the world. When all three sub-sectors of the circumpolar economy are regarded as one economic system, arctic economic activity totals \$225 billion. In actuality, the circumpolar economy is comparable to that of Malaysia (\$222 billion) and Switzerland (\$237 billion).¹⁴⁵ Treated as an economic system (versus the simple model of economic financial *interests*) the circumpolar Gross Domestic Product (GDP) accounts for 0.44 percent of the global economy, far greater than its demographic weight of 0.16 percent.¹⁴⁶ Properly understood as an economic system, the circumpolar economy generates more income, per capita, than any other region in the world.¹⁴⁷

Now that historic and current economic models are more clearly understood, it is possible to predict a future economic model for the circumpolar region, for further consideration in drafting strategic arctic policy for the GoC. A timely visit and subsequent speech by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in the Yukon in February 2014 implied what this potential economic model might look like.¹⁴⁸ Harper spoke to the vast economic potential of the circumpolar region, particularly in mining natural resources in the north. He clearly explicated his belief that, “the Arctic’s natural resources will propel Canada’s future economic hopes.”¹⁴⁹ Clearly the timing and focus of this northern tour are indicative of Canadian national economic interests in the circumpolar region, and Harper also openly acknowledged the emerging competition for natural resources in the region with countries such as China, as mentioned above, stating that the GoC, “would

¹⁴⁵ Statistics Norway, “The economy of the circumpolar Arctic,” last accessed on 20 February 2013, http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/00/30/sa_economy_north/sa84_en/kap2.pdf.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Calgary Herald, “Future lies in Arctic resource development, Harper Says,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.calgaryherald.com/business/energy/resources/Future+lies+Arctic+resource+development+Harper/7947507/story.html?__lsa=6f9a-06f9.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

review northern resource projects where China had a controlling interest.”¹⁵⁰ This recent project announcement at the Minto mine is in addition to another 24 economic projects gaining traction in the circumpolar region, totalling \$38 billion in new revenue for the region and establishing 8,000 new jobs.¹⁵¹ However, just as Harper acknowledged that Canadian arctic economic policy cannot be developed in isolation of other countries (namely China); he also acknowledged another critical factor that must be central to any successful northern economic development – the local population.¹⁵² Harper acknowledges a key tenet to GoC economic policy must, “also generate wealth for Northerners” and follow a process where, “aboriginal voices must not be left out from consultation.”¹⁵³ The critical inclusion of the local populace, the people of the circumpolar region, is indeed a key requirement for a cohesive, relevant strategic circumpolar policy for the GoC, and will be explored in the next section.

Economics is indeed a fundamental aspect in considering strategic northern policy. From the early days of fur trading, to the modern exploitation of rare metals for military satellites, economic interests have been a tangible, relevant consideration for national and international policy makers alike. However, the quest for simple financial gain must not be sought in isolation from the other key factors such as geography and politics. Moreover, an arctic policy generated in isolation from the interests of our international partners is destined for failure. But perhaps the most strategic failure, both at the national and international political level, is the consideration of the local peoples.

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹Calgary Herald, “Future lies in Arctic resource development, Harper Says,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.calgaryherald.com/business/energy-resources/Future+lies+Arctic+resource+development+Harper/7947507/story.html?__lsa=6f9a-06f9.

¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Ibid.

From Canadian lessons learned during the Oka Crisis to the current Idle No More movement, careful consideration and consultation with the indigenous peoples of the circumpolar region is more important today than ever before for a successful circumpolar policy, which will be explored in the following section.

CHAPTER 5 – THE PEOPLE

The current population of the circumpolar region is approximately 4 million people.¹⁵⁴ This is a large population; however, when considered in comparison with the sheer size of the circumpolar region, the arctic has one of the lowest population densities in the world today.¹⁵⁵ Although modern advances in communications technology, transportation and media have connected the circumpolar population like never before, the true challenges faced by such a small population dispersed over such a large geographic area within a forbidding, desolate climate remain relatively misunderstood. This dynamic, combined with the fact that only 10 percent of the arctic population are actually indigenous, poses a significant challenge for the GoC to first fully understand the perspective of the people in order to enable a relevant, responsive, human-centred circumpolar policy. That said, realizing that there is indeed an inherent knowledge gap in our understanding of the arctic people is the first necessary step in addressing this important issue. This section will explore who the circumpolar people are – not who we think they are or ought to be – but rather, through a discourse analysis, attempt to understand the needs and ramifications for a future GoC arctic policy. In our national and international race for circumpolar resources, the GoC must carefully address the human dynamic of the arctic – lessons learned in the Oka Crisis and the Idle No More Movement must not be repeated in the northern space.

Contrary to the systems approach of the circumpolar economy, the dynamics of the arctic population must not be analysed as one system, but rather a complex cultural

¹⁵⁴Arctic Council, “Peoples of the Arctic,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/arctic-peoples/122-peoples-of-the-arctic>.

¹⁵⁵Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, *Impacts of a Warming Arctic - Arctic Climate Impact Assessment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6.

mosaic. In essence, all circumpolar peoples are not homogenous. In fact, for such a relatively small population, the arctic population is one of the most ethnically diverse cultural mosaics found anywhere on earth.¹⁵⁶ First, a distinction must be made between *circumpolar people* and *indigenous people*. The circumpolar population are labelled as such due to a function of where they currently reside – within the accepted circumpolar region. Indigenous people have lived in the arctic region for *thousands of years*.¹⁵⁷ Indigenous people have a close connection to the land they have inhabited for thousands of years, and account for only 10% of the circumpolar population (~400,000).¹⁵⁸ The other 90 percent of the local population have immigrated to the region, primarily over the last 100 years in search of more readily accessible natural resources. Further, the 400,000 indigenous people are not a homogenous group. This 10 percent of the population contains over 40 different ethnic groups, 8 nationalities, several languages (with 8 subdivisions), and diverse methods of sustenance such as reindeer herding, fishing and hunting.¹⁵⁹ Undeniably, the one common factor that can be applied to all people in the circumpolar region is climate change – and its inherent ramifications - good and bad - for their chosen way of life. The first impact on the indigenous population is already evident – as a result of high immigration to the region over the last 100 years, only 10 percent of the current population is indigenous. This is a stark statistic – only 1 in 10 people who *actually live* in the circumpolar region today fully comprehend their connection to the land, and the critically important perspective of the local population. The other remaining 90% are decedents of industry, the scientific community or short term visitors.

¹⁵⁶Arctic Centre, “Arctic Indigenous Peoples,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.arcticcentre.org/?DeptID=7768>.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

It is this population who will have to deal with the consequences of any mismanagement of the natural environment long after the resource-hungry corporations pack up and leave years from now. Therefore a second critical marker has been identified – that we must adopt the perspective of the *indigenous* population (not simply the *circumpolar* population) if we are to truly comprehend the impact of GoC strategic arctic policy.

“Hearts and minds” – since the strategic boondoggle of the Vietnam War, never has such a strategic lesson learned demanded so much careful attention by international governments in their expeditionary pursuits worldwide. But this lesson has also been learned the hard way nationally within Canada as well, most notably during the Oka Crisis in 1990.¹⁶⁰ The Oka Crisis was a story of treaty violations, land claims, natural resources, alienation, and ultimately broken promises.¹⁶¹ In effect, Oka should be realized by the GoC as a cautionary “socio-economic” tale for the circumpolar region. The culmination of simply “steamrolling” the indigenous population in the pursuit of economic gain will inevitably result in tactical, operational, and strategic failures for the GoC, and, most importantly, the indigenous population. Lessons learned analysis from the Oka Crisis resulted in two potentially viable approaches for the GoC in approaching the circumpolar region – creating an economic “corridor” through the northern region, extracting natural resources (with minimal inclusion of the local population), or fully including the indigenous population in northern planning and development models for arctic resources.¹⁶² Unquestionably, the “corridor” method is a terribly short-sighted governmental approach. While some political entities may see this option as “cleaner” –

¹⁶⁰Harry Swain, *Oka: A Political Crisis and Its Legacy* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), 181.

¹⁶¹*Ibid.*

¹⁶²Roger Howard, *The Arctic Gold Rush: The New Race for Tomorrow's Natural Resources* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 181.

with limited time or effort spent on understanding and resolving local land claims, territory disputes, or indigenous ambitions, it cannot be argued that this “surgical” method, although “profitable” in the short-term, will ultimately leave the indigenous population stripped of their livelihood. Indeed, the indigenous population may be employed for the short-term during high-intensity resource-extraction operations; the final result will not enable the population with a sustainable way of life.¹⁶³ The experience of the Russian government in Sakha provides proof of this long-term problem as a result of short-term gain.¹⁶⁴ Since the completion of high-intensity, short-duration resource mining in the Sakha region, the indigenous population has been left with no viable means to sustain themselves. As a result, the Sakha population has resorted to tourism, entertaining more than 1.5 million tourists per year.¹⁶⁵



Sakha, Russia¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³Roger Howard, *The Arctic Gold Rush: The New Race for Tomorrow's Natural Resources* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 181.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶GeoCurrents, “Introduction To Sakha,” last accessed 8 April 2013, <http://geocurrents.info/place/russia-ukraine-and-caucasus/siberia/introduction-to-yakutia-sakha-and-russias-grandiose-plans-for-the-region>.

The natural environment is not accustomed to such a dramatic influx of human traffic, and the resultant damage from carbon monoxide emissions, vegetation trampling, and garbage has left the region a veritable Western wasteland.¹⁶⁷ Should the indigenous population have been engaged from the very start of the process, perhaps the end-state could have been different. Granted, long-term economic planning and resource management may not be the forte of the indigenous population, however that is where the critical responsibility resides for the GoC to educate, guide and mentor the local population in the pursuit of sustainable development models. Short-term, selfish, economic gain of private industry must be tempered by the GoC, and carefully managed in an inclusive, deliberate process alongside the indigenous people of the circumpolar region. The first step in this process is the negotiation and implementation of a modern, responsive and relevant land claims agreement.

Fortuitously, the GoC has in fact negotiated a modern, responsive land claims agreement with the people of the north – the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.¹⁶⁸ In fact, the GoC adopted an excellent approach of inclusiveness in generating this agreement, working alongside northern leaders throughout the process in order to ensure the document was responsive to the needs of the people of the north.¹⁶⁹ When the Nunavut Land Claim was originally negotiated in the 1970's and 1980s, the GoC and northern people disagreed on whether or not political self-governance would be included. Again, the GoC responded appropriately in 1995 when the agreement was ratified to

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸Nunavut Tunngavik, "Negotiating and Implementing the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.tunngavik.com/files/2010/04/negotiating-implementing-the-nlca.pdf>.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

permit Aboriginal self-governance.¹⁷⁰ However, Aboriginal rights, benefits and self-governance came at a cost. In exchange, the indigenous people of the north agreed to cede their inherent claims, right and interests, “to land and waters in the settlement area, and vouched never to undertake legal action based on those claims.”¹⁷¹ In effect, the GoC, “obtained legal certainty of ownership of land and natural resources, enabling it to issue to third parties unencumbered rights to develop those resources.”¹⁷² There, it would seem that any future GoC strategic policy for the circumpolar region would be uninhibited by any existing land claims, titles to ownership of natural resources, or territorial disputes. However, the 1995 agreement, though robust in its content, has never been *implemented*.¹⁷³ Even after 18 years, the GoC has failed to actually implement the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. The GoC even established the Nunavut Implementation Commission in 1999 to accomplish this task, but has yet to succeed. Moreover, of the 193 original specific obligations to the Aboriginal people agreed to by the GoC, only 98 have ever been honoured.¹⁷⁴ Failure by the GoC to effectively honour this contract culminated in a lawsuit filed by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) for \$1 billion in damages.¹⁷⁵ The most recent development in this lawsuit was a ruling in favour of the NTI by Justice Earl Johnson of the Nunavut Court of Justice June 27th 2012.¹⁷⁶ This was the fourth motion ruled in favour of the NTI, and awarded \$14.8 million in damages to the NTI.¹⁷⁷ Sadly, this prolonged legal battle seems indicative of

¹⁷⁰Ibid.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²Ibid.

¹⁷³Ibid.

¹⁷⁴Nunavut Tunngavik, “Negotiating and Implementing the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.tunngavik.com/files/2010/04/negotiating-implementing-the-nlca.pdf>.

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

the current relationship between the GoC and the circumpolar people. Justice Johnson further described the situation as a “failure” by the GoC to honour its commitments to the Inuit people, and, “such failure works against building a genuine and constructive partnership with Inuit and all other land claims parties.”¹⁷⁸ Essentially, in this case the Inuit people were brought directly into negotiations and mediation with the GoC, but were ultimately let down by the politicians. So it would seem that not only should the local population of the circumpolar region be engaged directly, and early, in the process of policy negotiation, but any subsequent agreements must be *honoured*.

Ultimately, there is no more critical factor to a successful strategic circumpolar policy than the people. It is the local populace who can enable northern development, paving the way for mutually beneficial economic opportunities in the north. The circumpolar people can be the most critical asset to any potential GoC arctic policy, but, at the same time, the most vocal opponents to northern development should this important relationship be mismanaged. Historical examples from the Vietnam War, the Oka Crisis, and the Idle No More movement indicate the best course of action for government is to engage the people early, adopting a completely inclusive relationship of mutual respect and trust. However, even the best circumpolar policy can quickly become derailed should the GoC not honour its commitments. And, ironically, the government *is* people – not merely an institution. *People* (within the GoC) must realize the critical importance and potential of engaging other *people* in the circumpolar region for our mutual, long-term benefit. Circumpolar policy, no matter how complex, will ultimately succeed or fail on personal relationships. The GoC must first foster and solidify these interpersonal relationships on an internal national level prior to engaging our global

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

partners in an international forum – such as the Arctic Council.

CHAPTER 6 – THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

The Arctic Council, established in Ottawa in 1996, has served as a moderately effective intergovernmental forum for promoting, “cooperation, coordination and interaction among the arctic states on common arctic issues.”¹⁷⁹ Unquestionably, the arctic council has served as a useful forum to coordinate environmental protection policy, and more recently an international agreement on Search and Rescue (SAR).¹⁸⁰ However, the full potential of this facilitative international forum has not yet been realized. Critical issues on sovereignty, security, economic development and territorial claims involving billions of dollars in potential revenue have not been addressed in the Council. In order to determine if this is a viable venue for GoC circumpolar policy proposal and endorsement, the Arctic Council must be more deeply understood. What was the original mandate of the Arctic Council? What is its current mandate? As Canada once again assumes Chairmanship of the Arctic Council in May 2013, is it possible to shift the focus of the Arctic Council from simple environmental focus to the pressing strategic issues faced by the region today? Can the future of the Arctic Council effectively address divisive international issues of geographic boundaries, national political interests, needs of the circumpolar people, international politics, and competitive economics? This section will conclude with a researched, deliberate recommendation on the future framework for the Arctic Council, and if this international venue is a viable opportunity for Canadian policy makers to progress GoC circumpolar policy.

Established in Ottawa in 1996, the Arctic Council’s original mandate was to establish an international forum to facilitate “cooperation, coordination and interaction

¹⁷⁹Arctic Council, “About the Arctic Council,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about>.

¹⁸⁰Ibid.

among the arctic states.”¹⁸¹ Of critical importance, the original mandate also strove to include active involvement of indigenous communities on common arctic issues. The Arctic Council is comprised of Member States (Canada, U.S., Russia, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway), Permanent Participants (indigenous people’s organizations representing almost 500,000 people), Observer States (France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, U.K.) and Ad-hoc Observer States (China, EU, Italy, South Korea, Japan, Turkey).¹⁸² Essentially what denotes a Member from an Observer is geography – only countries who have territory within the circumpolar region can be Member States. Observer States have less influence in Arctic Council Working Groups, whereas Ad-Hoc Observer States have even less influence within the Arctic Council, and must request permission to attend any Arctic Council meeting.¹⁸³ Perhaps the most illustrative example of the difference between a Permanent Observer and an Ad-hoc Observer was when China applied for Permanent Observer status in 2006.¹⁸⁴ Due in large part to protest from Norway and other smaller Permanent Observer countries, China’s application remains denied by the Arctic Council. Ultimately, the Arctic Council is hesitant to allocate a higher seat to such a powerful international economic giant such as China.¹⁸⁵

The original mandate of the Arctic Council focused on two major themes;

¹⁸¹ Arctic Council, “About the Arctic Council,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about>.

¹⁸² Arctic Council, “Member States,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/members>.

¹⁸³ Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples’ Secretariat, *Sharing Knowledge: Workshop on Climate Change Impacts* (Denmark: Norden, 2008), 57.

¹⁸⁴ Nunatsiaq News, “China, Korea, EU woo Arctic Council at Norway conference,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674china_korea_eu_woo_arctic_council_at_norway_conference/.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

promoting environmental protection and sustainable development.¹⁸⁶ The Ottawa Declaration in 1996 (establishing the Arctic Council) realized its focus on these two primary themes through the establishment of four Working Groups; The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) – focusing on anthropogenic pollutants, the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR), and Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME).¹⁸⁷ The first few years of the Arctic Council were particularly successful in shifting the focus from simple environmental protection to sustainable development as well. This two-pronged theme for the Arctic Council remained intact for the first 10 years.

The current mandate and overall focus of the Arctic Council began to take shape in 2006, with the addition of several Working Groups and Action Plans.¹⁸⁸ The Arctic Contaminants Action Group (ACAP), Arctic Biodiversity Assessment, Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP), Arctic Climate Impact Assessment and Arctic Human Development Report were established / initiated.¹⁸⁹ The Arctic Council, empowered through the success of its four original Working Groups, made a fundamental focus shift in 2006 from simple environmental impact assessments to the complex issue of sustainable development.¹⁹⁰ The success of an international, collaborative group (with a constantly shifting Chair) is indeed a promising indicator for the Arctic Council to undertake future, more complex initiatives in the future. Specifically, the viability of the

¹⁸⁶U.S. Department of State, “Establishment of the Arctic Council,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.state.gov/e/oes/ocns/opa/arc/ac/index.htm>.

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

¹⁸⁸Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Arctic Council,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/council-conseil.aspx?view=d>.

¹⁸⁹Ibid.

¹⁹⁰Ibid.

Arctic Council as a venue for future circumpolar challenges regarding sovereignty, security, resource management, economic pursuits and territorial claims must be analyzed.

Perhaps the most promising recent development indicating this potential new role for the Arctic Council was the establishment of the Task Force on Search and Rescue (TFSAR) in 2009.¹⁹¹ This task force was a fundamental shift in the Arctic Council mandate – a departure from environmental protection and sustainable development, the TFSAR was the first deliverable of the Arctic Council with “teeth” – and task force which clearly delineated groupings and taskings for each circumpolar nation. The TFSAR is not simply a list of guidelines or best practices; it contains very specific direction and deliverables to the Arctic Council members.¹⁹² The scope and application of the TFSAR was unprecedented for the Arctic Council. It demonstrated the ability of the Arctic Council leadership to effectively negotiate issues of internal waters, territorial seas, state boundaries, and national sovereignty.¹⁹³ The TFSAR, viewed in its entirety, almost serves as a successful practical exercise for what could be future mandate challenges of the Arctic Council. The TFSAR leadership quickly agreed on several potentially divisive issues in order to attain the end-state of a collective SAR plan, including many issues that this paper predicts must be addressed in the implementation of GoC circumpolar policy; entry into territory, exchange of experience, combining resources in support of mutual objectives, funding, settlement of disputes, and geographic

¹⁹¹Arctic Council, “Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://arctic-council.npolar.no/accms/export/sites/default/en/meetings/2011-nuuk-ministerial/docs/Arctic_SAR_Agreement_EN_FINAL_for_signature_21-Apr-2011.pdf.

¹⁹²Ibid.

¹⁹³Ibid.

scope of the agreement.¹⁹⁴ Thus, it seems within the art of the possible to impose GoC strategic circumpolar issues such as sovereignty, security, resource management, economic pursuits and territorial claims. However, these issues were effectively dealt with by the Arctic Council with effective Search and Rescue as the end-state. The ultimate question remains – will this environment of mutually-beneficial cooperation remain when the attainment of natural resources, and ultimately economic gain are the end-state?

As the U.S. completes the 13th year on the Global War on Terror (GWOT), addresses emerging threats in the Middle East and Northern Africa region (MENA) and begins to turn an eye to the Asia-Pacific region, it is apparent that the Obama administration simply does not have the current capacity to simultaneously assume the lead role in the circumpolar region, let alone the Arctic Council. In fact, the U.S. were the most vocal opponent to any mention of security as a mandate for the Arctic Council in 1996, fully realizing even 17 years ago they simply did not have the capacity to address such a divisive, complex issue within the Council.¹⁹⁵ This effectively leaves a “leadership void” in the Arctic Council. Indeed, the role of the Chair continues to rotate every two years; however with the exception of the TFSAR (which was mutually beneficial) the mandate of the Council has revolved around the themes of coordination, collaboration, and interaction.¹⁹⁶ A study of the role of each chair over the last 17 years would indicate that each nation effectively “warms the chair” – moderately progressing

¹⁹⁴ Arctic Council, “Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://arcticcouncil.npolar.no/accms/export/sites/default/en/meetings/2011-nuuk-ministerial/docs/Arctic_SAR_Agreement_EN_FINAL_for_signature_21-Apr-2011.pdf.

¹⁹⁵ iPolitics, “Push to reform Arctic Council raises as many questions as it solves,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.ipolitics.ca/2012/02/17/lackenbauer-security-and-the-arctic-council/>.

¹⁹⁶ Arctic Council, “Member States,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/members>.

the work of existing Working Groups and Action Plans, but ultimately not rocking the boat on the critical issues of security, sovereignty and economics. The ultimate question remains – is the Arctic Council the appropriate forum, and is 2013 the right time for Canada to assume a definitive lead? In light of the success of the TFSAR (regarding sovereignty, territory and roles and responsibilities) combined with the fact that the U.S. seems overly uninterested in assuming the absolute lead – is this Canada’s time?

Whitney Lackenbauer, a Research Fellow of the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, posits that the issues of hard security are best enacted through existing institutions – namely the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the North American Aerospace Command (NORAD).¹⁹⁷ Lackenbauer points out that many circumpolar nations downplay the potential of armed conflict in the region, as the area is not a permissive environment for combat operations.¹⁹⁸ Further, the inclusion of security policy within a small, select group such as the Arctic Council would be counter-productive to the very founding principles upon which the Council was based – open, frank discussions in a transparent, collaborative working environment.¹⁹⁹ In preparation for Canada’s chairmanship of the Arctic Council in May 2013, The Munk School of Global Affairs held a conference entitled, “Canada as an Arctic Power: Preparing for the Canadian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council 2013-2015”.²⁰⁰ Conference attendees included policymakers, indigenous leaders, businesspeople, academics, and the interested public. On the issue of potentially including sovereignty and security issues into the

¹⁹⁷ iPolitics, “Push to reform Arctic Council raises as many questions as it solves,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.ipolitics.ca/2012/02/17/lackenbauer-security-and-the-arctic-council/>.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ The Munk Institute, “Canada as an Arctic Power: Preparing for the Canadian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council 2013-2015,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.arctic-report.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Canada-as-an-Arctic-Power.pdf>.

mandate for the Arctic Council, they arrived at an interesting conclusion – we already have.²⁰¹ The Arctic Council’s recent management of SAR, emergency measures, and environmental security issues have already crossed the seemingly impenetrable threshold of serious security discussions within the Arctic Council, “the Arctic Council already is dealing with security issues: environmental security, human security and oil spills.”²⁰²

In summary, although the Arctic Council mandate was grounded in cooperation, collaboration, and interaction, this does not inherently preclude an eventual mandate shift towards security, sovereignty, and issues surrounding competitive economics. In fact, this strong foundation of an open, transparent forum fostering frank open discussion seems to be the perfect venue to pursue the potentially divisive issues that will soon emerge in the circumpolar region. Further, as Canada assumes the Chairmanship in May 2013, it would seem that this is the most opportune time to propose strategic GoC circumpolar policy in this forum. It is time for the Arctic Council to transition from a moderately effective intergovernmental forum which promotes cooperation, coordination and interaction to a more robust decision-making body. Indeed, the core principles of cooperation and collaboration will and must not be abandoned – rather they will be leverage as effective tools by the GoC in generating, proposing, and enacting binding circumpolar policy. The time is now to tackle the lingering, unaddressed circumpolar issues of territorial geographic disputes, international political agendas, the needs of the indigenous people, exploitation of natural resources, and economic enterprise. The first step the GoC must address is the drafting of coherent, relevant and responsive strategic

²⁰¹The Munk Institute, “Canada as an Arctic Power: Preparing for the Canadian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council 2013-2015,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.arctic-report.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Canada-as-an-Arctic-Power.pdf>.

²⁰²Ibid.

circumpolar policy. Based on the previous analysis and careful consideration of circumpolar history, geography, politics, economics, the people and the Arctic Council, the final chapter will make circumpolar policy recommendations to the GoC for approval, and introduction and ultimate engagement within the forum of the Arctic Council in 2013.

CHAPTER 7 - POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Unquestionably, 2013 marks a year of opportunity for the GoC. As Canada once again assumes the role of Chair this May, strategic policy makers must realize that, as identified above, the Arctic Council is an opportune forum to introduce GoC strategic circumpolar policy to the world. As discussed, the Arctic Council offers a unique forum for the GoC which is multilateral, cooperative, consensus-based and has international credibility. These fundamental dynamics, combined with the fact that no single nation has assumed a definitive “lead role” in the Arctic Council, justifies this unique forum as a strategic opportunity for Canada to promote its strategic circumpolar policy. Therefore, a relevant, responsive and cohesive circumpolar policy must be adopted by the GoC prior to assuming the role of Chair. The GoC has drafted an Arctic Policy which addresses most of the salient points in previous chapters of this paper; however the current GoC Arctic Policy does not fully address all of the critical aspects identified in this paper, notably absent is the dynamic of *politics*.²⁰³ Further, the existing GoC Arctic Policy is worded in the conciliatory approach that has underpinned the Arctic Council – a strategic policy of cooperation, collaboration, and consensus.²⁰⁴ Although these characteristics are essential to any strategic policy, they must be accompanied by more assertive, forthright language as seen in the circumpolar policy of our international partners. This section will recommend such strategic circumpolar policy to the GoC, for ultimate endorsement by the Arctic Council.

The first essential policy recommendation that must be adopted by GoC strategic

²⁰³Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Arctic Council,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/council-conseil.aspx?lang=eng&view=d>.

²⁰⁴Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Arctic Council,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/council-conseil.aspx?lang=eng&view=d>.

policy makers concerns the *place* – or geography of the circumpolar region. The current Arctic Policy of the GoC somewhat addresses the issue of geography through a policy on Sovereignty, however the existing policy does not fully address the current challenges inherent in circumpolar geography head on, and lacks a clear way ahead in addressing this complex, divisive issue.²⁰⁵ While the current policy on sovereignty clearly addresses Canada’s inherent right to exercise national sovereignty, monitoring, protection and patrol of the circumpolar space, it falls short of addressing several current geographic territorial disputes between Canada and the U.S., in particular the Beaufort Sea.²⁰⁶ This disputed region must be resolved through the U.S. ratification of UNCLOS, which the U.S. continues to avoid.²⁰⁷ This decision is largely due to the vast natural minerals and oil reserves believed to exist within the Beaufort Sea region.²⁰⁸ Further, the current arctic policy fails to address the issue of the continental shelf – a natural physical extension of the Canadian Exclusive Economic Zone that also contains resource-rich territory, with the potential for significant economic gain on the Lomonosov Ridge.²⁰⁹ Canada must move decisively to resolve these latent issues of geography and the circumpolar space, and ratify the existing policy on sovereignty. First, Canada must engage the U.S. directly to seek a timely resolution to the Beaufort Sea territorial dispute. Addressing this issue directly, with a trusted ally such as the U.S., with whom we share decades of mutually

²⁰⁵Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy_booklet-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique_livret.aspx?lang=eng&view=d#sovereignty.

²⁰⁶Alaska Dispatch, “Study: Canadians uncompromising in Beaufort Sea boundary dispute,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/study-canadians-uncompromising-beaufort-sea-boundary-dispute>.

²⁰⁷Ibid.

²⁰⁸Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, “MP urges Harper to act in Beaufort Sea dispute,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/story/2009/11/26/north-beaufort-sea.html>.

²⁰⁹Macleans, “Who owns the North Pole?,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www2.macleans.ca/tag/lomonosov-ridge/>.

beneficial policy decisions, will effectively set the conditions to resolve further geographic issues with our international circumpolar partners. Second, Canada must engage Russia, Denmark and Sweden on the issue of the continental shelf and the Exclusive Economic Zone. These lingering issues of geography must be addressed early and in priority after Canada assumes the position of Chair in order to assume the role of lead nation, or “lead facilitator” for subsequent circumpolar policy issues.

Policy Recommendation 1 – Circumpolar Geography

Within our Circumpolar Foreign Policy, Canada hereby identifies the first pillar towards recognizing the importance of the circumpolar region as **Geography**.

First, existing territorial disputes with our international partners must be *addressed and resolved*.

Second, Canada *calls upon* the United States to ratify UNCLOS, in a final effort to *resolve* extant boundary disputes between our two nations.

Third, Canada *urges* its international partners to adopt a universal definition of the Continental Shelf, in an effort to officially define each nation’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and the resultant inherent ownership of any natural resources contained within the EEZ.

Finally, Canada will *assume* the lead role in facilitating these negotiations within its role as Chair in the Arctic Council.

The second critical policy recommendation that must be adopted by GoC strategic policy makers concerns the politics of the circumpolar space. This strategic concept, though pervasive in all that we do on the international stage – is notably absent in the current Arctic Policy.²¹⁰ Effective political dynamics can be the ultimate enabler or

²¹⁰Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy_booklet-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique_livret.aspx?lang=eng&view=d#sovereignty.

ultimate failure of strategic policy. Canada must adopt an active approach to international politics as a fundamental principle of our circumpolar policy. Specifically, the internal (national) political dynamics must be cohesive prior to transitioning to the international stage. In effect, we must ensure our internal Canadian political house is in order. Once national *politics* have been effectively addressed at the individual civic level, national *political history* may be addressed on the international stage. International politics that must be effectively addressed in the Arctic Council will enable meaningful progress on UNCLOS, Territorial Waters, and the Exclusive Economic Zone. The resultant of this strategic policy will be international consensus of strategic political borders, and thus ownership of the associated natural resources within the space. The strategic importance of fully incorporating politics into circumpolar policy increases exponentially as the polar ice cap continues to melt, and will only become more divisive and thus more complex as time passes. The time to act is now – Canada must harness this unique opportunity as Chair. From an opposing perspective, *not* including the fundamentals of international politics into GoC circumpolar policy can be estimated as a potential strategic failure, as witnessed by historical examples such as the Oka Crisis and the Idle No More Movement. In these national examples, divisive national politics effectively resulted in a strategic messaging failure for the GoC.²¹¹

²¹¹The Star, “Idle No More movement brings Canadian history into focus,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/2013/01/26/idle_no_more_movement_brings_canadian_history_into_focus.html.

Policy Recommendation 2 – Circumpolar Politics

Within our Circumpolar Foreign Policy, Canada hereby identifies the second pillar towards recognizing the importance of the circumpolar region as **Politics**.

First, Canada *adopts* an active approach towards international politics, founded on the solid, cohesive foundation of a unified national political approach to the circumpolar region.

Second, Canada *calls upon* our international partners to adopt a cohesive, active approach to resolving strategic political issues within the forum of the Arctic Council. International consensus on strategic issues will prove to be *mutually beneficial* for all parties concerned.

Third, Canada *urges* its international partners to adopt the Arctic Council as the forum to resolve circumpolar political issues on the international stage.

Finally, Canada will *assume* the lead role in facilitating these negotiations within its role as Chair in the Arctic Council.

The third key circumpolar policy recommendation that must be adopted by GoC strategic policy makers concerns the economics of the region. The current GoC Arctic Policy does somewhat address the issue of economics; however it ineffectively mixes this topic with *social development*.²¹² This combined approach is problematic for two reasons – first the inherent complexities of international economic competition for valuable resources is not fully addressed, and second the critically important issue of social development is only afforded a passing consideration (whereas the next policy recommendation proposes the important aspect of People is addressed separately). The current arctic policy on economics misses the mark of engaging the international quest for arctic resources for what it is – the pursuit of economic gain for national purposes. The current GoC economic policy focuses more on sustainable development, the

²¹²Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy_booklet-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique_livret.aspx?lang=eng&view=d#sovereignty.

challenges for Arctic energy, trade opportunities, and mitigating environmental impact.²¹³ Indeed, these are all admirable characteristics of any foreign policy; however it is more important to note that this policy is far more general and conciliatory than the policies of our international partners.²¹⁴ In effect, the GoC currently fails to address the harsh reality of the emerging economic environment in the circumpolar region – an international race for resources. Therefore, it is recommended that the GoC adopt a more robust circumpolar economic policy, which incorporates the dimensions of international competition, globalization, viable sea lines of communication (The Northern Sea Route and The Northwest Passage), including a frank discussion on the potential human and environmental impacts of this emerging economic recalibration of the circumpolar space.

Policy Recommendation 3 – Circumpolar Economics

Within our Circumpolar Foreign Policy, Canada hereby identifies the third pillar towards recognizing the importance of the circumpolar region as **Economics**.

First, Canada *delineates* economics from social development, which will be addressed in Policy 4 – Circumpolar People.

Second, Canada *recognizes* that the circumpolar region contains a wealth of valuable resources, and the economic environment of the circumpolar region is inherently *competitive* between Canada and our international partners.

Third, Canada will *engage* its international partners in a transparent, frank dialogue concerning the potential use of the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage. It is only through international *cooperation*, rather than the current *divisive* approach to these waterways, which will prove mutually *beneficial* for the economies of our circumpolar partners.

²¹³Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy_booklet-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique_livret.aspx?lang=eng&view=d#sovereignty.

²¹⁴Center for Strategic and International Studies, “A New Security Architecture for the Arctic: An American Perspective,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://csis.org/files/publication/120117_Conley_ArcticSecurity_Web.pdf.

Finally, Canada will *assume* the lead role in facilitating these negotiations within its role as Chair in the Arctic Council.

The fourth principal circumpolar policy recommendation that must be adopted by GoC strategic policy makers concerns the people of the region. The current GoC Arctic Policy does include a policy entitled, “Improving and Devolving Governance: Empowering the Peoples of the North” which covers critical aspects including local control over economics, politics and engaging the northern peoples on GoC Arctic Policy.²¹⁵ However, as explored in the People chapter above, the GoC has fundamentally failed to effectively incorporate the needs and wishes of the indigenous people of the circumpolar region. The current GoC Arctic Policy uses language such as “Canada is taking steps”, “Canada is committed”, “Canada will engage Northern people”, and “Canada will encourage.”²¹⁶ However, as discussed in Chapter 5, the GoC has failed to live up to its promises to the indigenous people of the circumpolar region. Although the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement was a modern, responsive agreement between the GoC and the people of the north, the GoC has to date never implemented the agreement.²¹⁷ In essence, the GoC has not yet properly addressed the critical issue of *the people* of the circumpolar region. As a result, legal action has been initiated, and been recently successful against the GoC for breach of contract. Ironically, the current GoC

²¹⁵Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy_booklet-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique_livret.aspx?lang=eng&view=d#sovereignty.

²¹⁶Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy_booklet-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique_livret.aspx?lang=eng&view=d#sovereignty.Ibid.

²¹⁷Tunngavik, “Negotiating and Implementing the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement,” last accessed 20 February 2013, <http://www.tunngavik.com/files/2010/04/negotiating-implementing-the-nlca.pdf>.

Arctic Policy addresses the critical importance of an inclusive policy, “Canada recognizes and values the important role Northern governments... in shaping Canada’s international actions.”²¹⁸ Ultimately, the existing GoC Arctic Policy concerning the people of the north is sound – it effectively includes inclusion, active participation, strengthening capacity, devolving governance and empowering the people of the north.²¹⁹ Sadly, this sound strategic policy is undermined by broken promises by the GoC. A relationship of marginalization and mistrust between the GoC and the people of the north will ultimately weaken the effectiveness of any strategic circumpolar policy – whether geographic, political or economically based. The overarching and predominant recommendation for the GoC circumpolar policy is to adhere to the existing policy on devolving governance and empowering the people of the north. Only after this fractured relationship is restored can any proposed strategic GoC circumpolar policy ultimately succeed on the international stage of the Arctic Council in May 2013.

Policy Recommendation 4 – Circumpolar People

Within our Circumpolar Foreign Policy, Canada hereby identifies the fourth pillar towards recognizing the importance of the circumpolar region as **People**.

First, Canada *commits* to resolving existing treaty disputes with northern peoples by honouring the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

Second, Canada *recognizes* that a healthy, prosperous, and mutually beneficial relationship with the northern people is based on trust. Canada will lead by example,

²¹⁸Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy_booklet-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique_livret.aspx?lang=eng&view=d#sovereignty.

²¹⁹Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy,” last accessed 20 February 2013, http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy_booklet-la_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique_livret.aspx?lang=eng&view=d#sovereignty.

fostering a new era of complete transparency and inclusiveness with our northern people

Third, Canada will urge its international partners to resolve any existing disputes with northern peoples in their regions, and to further foster and strengthen a bond of mutual trust and respect. Only after these relationships are fully restored can the full potential of the circumpolar people and their homeland be realized for the benefit of all.

Finally, Canada will *assume* the lead role in facilitating these efforts within its role as Chair in the Arctic Council.

Based on an in-depth review of circumpolar history, the current circumpolar policy of our allies, and the foreseen future of the circumpolar region, it is critical that the GoC adopt these strategic circumpolar policy recommendations in the formulation of strategic policy at the Arctic Council in May 2013. Misaligned current strategic GoC policy is evident, particularly through the discourse analysis of people and economics, and these failures must be remedied soonest. If the GoC can adopt the lessons learned from historical events, the current posturing of our circumpolar allies, and most importantly the future aspirations of non-circumpolar actors such as China, Canada has the real potential to capitalize on existing opportunities in the circumpolar region.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the human fascination with early space exploration holds similar parallels to the modern day fascination with the circumpolar region of earth. However, this fascination must be tempered with a sound understanding and appreciation of the unique environment of the circumpolar region, just as space exploration was enabled through a preliminary understanding of space. Many of the same core principles of understanding apply – knowledge of the geography, understanding of national and international politics, and an awareness of the inherent economic challenges. The key additional dynamic in the circumpolar region, unlike space, is the people. Indeed, a careful, deliberate analysis and consideration of the indigenous people of the north is fundamental in shaping global interest in circumpolar pursuits. A distinct advantage we have in circumpolar exploration, as opposed to space exploration, is that indigenous peoples already reside in the north, and have for hundreds of years. Rather than adopting a divisive approach of marginalization and exclusion, the GoC must harness the knowledge of the northern peoples in order to achieve mutual benefit. The indigenous people must not be considered a challenge to strategic circumpolar policy, but rather an asset to government policy makers, both nationally within Canada and on the international stage. Definitively, *understanding* must be the primary objective of strategic policy makers. Although existing GoC arctic policy does stress the importance of understanding the region, the *strategic policy* shaping this understanding has been superficial at best. Fundamental understanding of the circumpolar space must delve deeper into the core issues facing this region, understanding the place, politics, economics, and the people.

This paper began by addressing the critical lesson learned – the best predictor of future events are past events. As such, a detailed analysis was conducted on the background of the circumpolar region. The first realization was that there is little consensus either nationally or internationally of what the arctic really is. The arctic was defined, and more accurately renamed as the circumpolar region. National and international interests in the region – from a historical and current perspective – were studied, with the goal of predicting future global interest in the region. Conclusively, international interest in the region is increasing exponentially, and will continue to increase as continued global warming further melts the polar ice cap, thus granting more unrestricted access to natural resources and sea shipping routes. Finally, historical analysis and future indicators were summarized and applied to the Canadian national interest. Canadian national interest is increasing, and will continue to increase.

Next, circumpolar analysis continued with the physical space – circumpolar geography. Strategic geographic analysis must go beyond the physical space, geographical interests in the region must be carefully observed by the GoC in order to shape a viable circumpolar policy. Historic, current and future geographic interests in the region were explored, both from a national and international perspective. An in-depth knowledge of who will have geographic interests, and what those interests will be in the future, is fundamental to shaping strategic circumpolar policy. This chapter highlighted the compounding factor of increased international shipping by non-Arctic nations in the region. Indeed, the geographic aspirations of non-Arctic nations cannot be ignored – to do so would be naïve, particularly in light of the strategic emphasis on the circumpolar region by China. In summary, circumpolar geography must be carefully considered by

our strategic policy makers in crafting a relevant GoC circumpolar policy.

Chapter three analysed the political history and the national politics of the circumpolar region. The GoC must have a critical understanding of individual, local, regional and international politics, combined with consideration of the political history of the north. Both national and international political dynamics must be considered, and continue to be monitored by strategic policy makers in order to ensure that current circumpolar policy remains relevant. Admittedly, palpable political tensions exist, both at the national and international level. What is critically important is that GoC policy makers recognize these tensions, develop mitigation measures, and subsequently craft strategic policy with these political factors in mind. In summary, there is considerable current political dispute surrounding the circumpolar region, and GoC policy makers must be mindful of these dynamics moving forward.

Chapter four focused on the economic challenges and opportunities in the circumpolar region. The inherent financial interest of nations cannot be ignored, rather it must be fully recognized by the GoC as a strategic enabler – that has the potential to become a critically divisive issue on the international stage as nations race for valuable, scarce resources contained in the circumpolar space. GoC policy makers must be aware of historic economic trends in the region as well as current economic interests in the circumpolar region. Further, strategic policy must also be fairly predictive, realizing that the conundrum of pure economic interest for national gain is a pervasive issue in the north, and will continue to be the cornerstone of any relevant, viable circumpolar policy. Much like the dynamic of the northern people, economics can and must be considered in conjunction with the geographic space (boundary and territorial considerations) and

politics (from a national and international perspective). In essence, international politics have and will continue to be the vehicle of choice for strategic policy makers to further national economic interests. Economics will inevitably be a catalyst in driving the future recalibration of the circumpolar space. The job of GoC strategic policy makers is to harness this catalyst as a controlled enabler for Canadian economic interests.

Chapter five focussed on the most critical aspect of the circumpolar region thus must be considered by the GoC – the people. The indigenous people of the north have historically been marginalized by strategic policy makers, and moreover treated as an inherent obstacle to GoC objectives in the circumpolar region. Indeed, this fractured relationship is a direct result of the policy approach adopted by the GoC – Canadian political actions have created the current relationship of mistrust. A new approach is required in order to adopt a plan that will be mutually beneficial for the GoC and the northern indigenous people. Unequivocally, the GoC must honour the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Only then can substantive northern planning and development gain traction on the international stage. Ultimately, the GoC must first get its own national house in order before proposing a credible strategic circumpolar policy on the international stage. As Chair of the Arctic Council in 2013, Canada has a unique opportunity to lead by example, to mend relationships with its own indigenous people, and to then encourage our international partners to do the same. The GoC cannot impose national ideals and objectives onto the northern people – we must adopt an inclusive approach. The GoC strategic circumpolar policy must first enable and *demonstrate* national solidarity in order to succeed as Chair in the Arctic Council.

Strategic policy is only as effective as the medium through which it is conveyed.

Ultimately, the GoC could craft and propose the most coherent, relevant and responsive circumpolar policy in the world – however, if this policy is not effectively communicated and enabled – it is only relevant on the national stage. Chapter six studied the Arctic Council as a potential forum for Canada to propose, communicate, and ultimately receive international endorsement for Canadian strategic objectives. Indeed, the Arctic Council, since its creation in 1996, has merely been a forum for transparent cooperation, collaboration and interaction amongst our international partners. However, 2013 provides a unique opportunity for Canada. This May Canada assumes the role of Chair of the Arctic Council, and will be placed in a viable position to enact our own circumpolar agenda. Our most competitive ally, the U.S., have been historically uninterested in assuming the definitive lead role in the Arctic Council, with national efforts and objectives focused on the Middle East and Asia Pacific Regions. Arguably, this is a golden hour for Canada. The GoC can transform the role and responsibility of the Arctic Council to include internationally-endorsed decisions on geographic boundaries, the resolution of political divisions, the pursuit of mutually beneficial economic pursuits and effective restoration of our relationships with indigenous peoples. For the first time since its creation in 1996, the Arctic Council is in a position to transcend the simple roles of cooperative working groups, collaborative environmental task forces, and search and rescue seminars. And most importantly, this transition can be lead and championed by the GoC as Chair in May 2013. This strategic effort must first be enabled by a cohesive, relevant strategic circumpolar policy.

Chapter seven sought to achieve this objective on behalf of the GoC. After a careful analysis of current GoC Arctic Policy, combined with a study of the Arctic

Council as a viable forum to present this strategic policy, the paper presented strategic policy recommendations. These policy recommendations are themed based on the four fundamental aspects identified within the circumpolar region – geography, politics, economics and people. Historical lessons learned were taken into account, combined with current considerations in the circumpolar region, and finally combined with a predictive analysis of future strategic challenges in the region. The final result is four draft strategic circumpolar policies for the GoC. This paper recommends that these policies be *adopted* on a national level, followed by ratification, proposal and finally international *endorsement* within the Arctic Council.

In the final analysis will Canada utterly fail as Chair of the Arctic Council, or finally become part of the successful recalibration of the circumpolar space?

Unfortunately, if what's past is indeed prologue, Canada will repeat the mistakes of the past. The GoC still fails to reconcile every strategic concept outlined in this paper.

Geographic disputes over territorial seas and the Exclusive Economic Zone continue to fester, and the GoC cannot repair this relationship with our closest neighbour and ally, the U.S. If we cannot resolve boundary disputes with our longest friend, how can we possibly expect to resolve future boundary issues with other circumpolar nations?

Politically, the GoC continues to be its own worst enemy. National division regarding the most viable strategic approach to a northern strategy remains problematic. If the GoC cannot get its own national political house in order, the odds of seamlessly transitioning to a cohesive international approach to circumpolar issues is not realistic. Perhaps the unrealized potential of economic gain will be sufficient to overcome these extant strategic issues. After all, economic interest seems to be the primary catalyst for arctic

exploration, and ultimately, exploitation. While this capitalistic notion remains at the fore of both national and international politics, the ultimate failure of the GoC as chair of the Arctic Council will certainly be the circumpolar people. Ironically, the very individuals who conceptualized a capitalistic democracy will be the expendable casualties of the very system they laboured to create.

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