Building an Arctic Community of Knowledge

The Promotion and Reception of Canadian Resource Management and Economic Development Models in the Russian North

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This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing that is the outcome of work done in collaboration with others, except as specified in the text and Acknowledgments.

This dissertation does not exceed the allowable word limits set by the Degree Committee of the Department of Geography.

[Signature]

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Summary

A common assumption about globalization is that knowledge and ideas circulate freely. In this dissertation, I challenge this notion through an analysis of ways in which a Canadian development team worked to promote Canadian political and economic institutions in the Russian North. Their need for multiple strategies to render Canadian knowledge mobile and applicable to northern Russia demonstrates that moving ideas across cultural and political boundaries was not a straightforward process. These strategies were techniques for imposing discipline on Canadian-Russian communication, primarily through assumptions of similarity, and closure upon knowledge disembedded from the contentious political realities of the Canadian North. They included: 1) obscuring the problematic relationships between indigenous peoples and the Canadian and Russian states through idealization and the imposition of a non-confrontational notion of dialogue; 2) referring to a shared Arctic indigenous identity to render Canada/Russia differences irrelevant; 3) positing a teacher-student relationship to construct a community of knowledge in which Canadian ideas and vocabularies were dominant; and 4) employing the language of the model to demonstrate that Canadian knowledge was complete and not open to reinterpretation.

The Russian participants, many of whom came from Russia’s wealthiest oil and gas producing regions, were not passive recipients of knowledge and they responded to Canadian efforts with strategies of their own. The movement of knowledge resulted in increasingly close, although by no means equal, social relationships between Canadian and Russian project participants. However, this closeness, which I argue represents an emerging sense of community in the North, did not guarantee the transfer of knowledge. Rather, familiarity with Canada enabled Russians to become increasingly adept at subverting Canadian strategies of similarity and closure and challenging the applicability of Canadian models. I conclude that methods of communicating knowledge cross-culturally must work with, rather than against, these forms of agency and suggest how such communication might be achieved.
Chapter 1: Purpose, Background, Methodology, Theory

1.1 Introduction

A common myth about globalization is that ideas and knowledge can now circulate freely. This, of course, is not always the case. Knowledge and ideas are embedded in particular places and societies and do not lend themselves straightforwardly to export. In this dissertation, through a study of a development project designed to promote Canadian northern economic development and natural resource management models in the Russian North, I analyze 1) various motivations behind and strategies for moving knowledge across political and cultural boundaries in the Arctic and 2) ways in which knowledge is transformed during this journey. Throughout, I describe and analyze how indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians and Russians, involved in the Canadian operated ‘Institution Building for Northern Russia’s Indigenous Peoples Project’ (INRIPP or ‘the project’), interacted and the effect that these interactions had on the mobility of political and economic knowledge.

In this dissertation, the act of moving knowledge is seen as an intensely social process. As sociologist of science David Turnbull suggests, ‘to move knowledge from the local site and moment of its production and application to other places and times [requires] a variety of social strategies...for creating the equivalencies and connections between otherwise heterogeneous and isolated knowledges’ (2000: 20). Therefore, I examine the movement of knowledge in tandem with the development and enactment of increasingly close, although by no means equal, social relationships between Canadians and Russians involved in INRIPP. I argue that this process can be understood as a kind of community building and point out ways in which this type of closeness can both facilitate and hinder the transfer of ideas and models. I pay

1 This dissertation, however, is not an evaluation of INRIPP. Rather, participating in INRIPP allowed me to make observations about the process of moving knowledge cross-culturally and to witness particular encounters that inspired my analysis and provided me with specific examples. Much of the critique in this dissertation is better understood as a critique of the general structure of development efforts and of common assumptions made about the nature of knowledge and how it can be shared. These should not be taken as criticisms specific to this project, which is widely, and in my opinion, rightly, considered to be one of the more successful development projects in the Russian North to date.
particular attention to how and why certain Canadian practices and models, specifically co-management of natural resources and northern economic development corporations, were selected and the beliefs that propelled these models into global or, more precisely, Arctic circulation.

By and large, Canadians involved in INRIPP forwarded a vision of the Arctic as significantly uniform space and attempted to take their knowledge on the precarious journey from one location within it to another by: 1) engaging in dialogue, which they believed was a humble and neutral way in which they could connect with Russians and describe Canadian practices without appearing to prescribe solutions; 2) referring to an assumed shared Arctic indigenous identity as a way of overcoming Canadian/Russian differences; 3) positing a relationship of teachers and learners and working to enforce Canadian vocabularies and practices within this hierarchy; and 4) conveying Canadian institutions, such as co-management boards and economic development corporations, as technical, complete, and non-normative models capable of being replicated in Russia. I believe that this approach may be misguided. Despite Canadians' efforts to mask the prescriptive nature of their endeavor with the language of partnership, the Russian participants still believed that the Canadians were 'lecturing' them rather than sincerely engaging in dialogue. They sensed, on many levels, the unequal power relationship implied by being on the receiving end of a development project and occupying the student role within a community of learning. Furthermore, Russians continued to argue for recognition of their history and present realities, rather than acquiescing to Canadian assertions about the relevance of Canadian knowledge to the Russian North because of similarities related to indigenous peoples, oil and gas development, and the Arctic environment. Moreover, the Canadian commitment to the idea of communicating their co-management boards and economic development corporations as schematic, ahistorical, and de-cultured technical models often served to make these institutions, which are most definitely Canadian social artifacts, difficult to decipher.

There are important differences between northern Canada and northern Russia that emerged as obstacles to moving models and knowledge during INRIPP. These differences are illustrated and analyzed throughout following chapters, along with difficulties INRIPP participants faced in achieving quality communication across
social distance. Despite these challenges, I believe that such endeavors remain worthwhile and I highlight relationships of power and simplistic assumptions about knowledge and how it might be moved in hopes that my analysis may serve as a corrective on some points. Canada and Russia do share issues related to, for example, increasing levels of oil and gas exploration on northern indigenous peoples’ areas of land use. Sustained communication around such issues could prove useful to increasing the quality and efficacy of governmental and institutional responses in both countries. Ideally, attempting to move knowledge across boundaries requires extensive self-reflection of those who would promote a particular model or practice abroad. The self-reflection necessary to successfully convey knowledge to an outsider could result in improved institutions and relationships at the point of origin, as it would necessitate asking difficult questions about whether or not institutions and techniques of governance actually work. Furthermore, the presence of an outside audience for and external pressure in what could be a purely domestic debate (i.e. problems taking place between indigenous land users and industry at the regional level) may result in better justifications and perhaps even better institutional arrangements.

In this introductory chapter, a brief overview of INRIPP is provided. I then outline my methodological approach and provide a snapshot case study of Russian-Canadian interaction that introduces themes that run throughout later chapters. This brief ethnographic moment illustrates the ways in which knowledge transfer is not a clean-cut exercise in telling and listening, or offering and accepting, but rather a more thorny process of learning that involves emotional and non-verbal responses. This necessitates analyzing knowledge transfer both as a discourse and a performance, examining not only what is and may be said, but the manner and context in which these statements are uttered. Subsequently, I review the literature on globalization and networks that provides the theoretical foregrounding for the central lines of inquiry in this dissertation. This literature, however, is much more of a starting point than a path for analysis as most globalization and network theorizations do not contain the necessary tools for analyzing and conceptualizing the process of knowledge exchange and, therefore, proved difficult to link to my fieldwork observations. The role assigned to identity in theorizations of what makes cross-cultural knowledge exchange possible is also questioned and I then argue that
community is a more significant factor than identity in moving knowledge across borders. The notion of community is central to my analysis in subsequent chapters, in which I illustrate how strategic Canadian and Russian actors engaged in relationships of influence and power and both built and resisted an Arctic community of knowledge. Finally, I outline the remaining chapters and highlight the ways in which each chapter is designed to deepen the analyses in globalization and network literature by addressing different aspects of and strategies for rendering knowledge mobile.

1.2 INRIPP and the Arctic Context

INRIPP – one of several cooperative endeavors involving Arctic indigenous peoples and governments – was based in the belief that relevant knowledge should be shared across the state boundaries that transect the Circumpolar North. Since the end of the Cold War, the governments and peoples of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Russia, Canada, Iceland, and the United States have increasingly engaged in a variety of cooperative activities designed to address shared issues and to raise the profile of the Arctic as a political and geographical region.\(^2\) The most prominent recent effort involving all Arctic countries has been the 1996 establishment of the Arctic Council as a high-level intergovernmental forum in which Arctic issues can be debated by the eight ‘Arctic’ states (listed above) along with ‘permanent participants’ representing various indigenous peoples of the North.\(^3\) The growth of interest in the Arctic and the subsequent proliferation of activities designed to promote stable and ongoing international cooperation in the far North have to do with the Arctic being a relatively secure source of non-renewable resources (such as oil, gas, and minerals), the

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\(^2\) See the introductory chapter in Young (1992) for an overview of different perceptions of the Arctic over the past two hundred years. Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, cooperation in the Far North generally took the form of agreements dealing with a particular environmental or military issues with limited geographic scope, such as the Marine Environmental Cooperation Agreement between Canada and Denmark/Greenland to protect the ecosystems of Baffin Bay and the Davis Strait, or more multilateral agreements focusing on a single species, such as the conservation of polar bears or the protection of Northern fur seals. Since the end of the Cold War, various regional cooperative endeavors that take multiple issues into their mandate, such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, have flourished, particularly in the European Arctic. See Young (1998) for an overview of the Arctic in world affairs and a chronology and description of various political and resource regimes and how they came about.

\(^3\) Permanent participants include: the Aleut International Association (US and Russia), the Arctic Athabaskan Council (Canada and the US), the Gwich’in Council (Canada and the US), the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (Canada, US, Greenland, and Russia), the Saami Council (Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia), and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (Russia).
awareness of the elevated impact of global environmental problems (such as global warming and transboundary pollutants) on the Arctic environment, and the increasing politicization of Arctic indigenous peoples (Chatuverdi 1996; Osherenko and Young 1989; Young 1998).

The Canadian government has played an extensive role, elaborated upon in chapter two, in shaping recent political developments in the Arctic. Canadian policy statements indicate that Canadian politicians envision the Arctic as a sphere in which Canadian international political and economic influence can be increased. Consequently, Canadian politicians and bureaucrats have actively pursued a region-building agenda in the Arctic – working to establish and increase the international profile of the Arctic and to promote and support multilateral cooperative projects amongst Arctic states and northern residents. For example, the Canadian government was instrumental in founding the Arctic Council and in placing sustainable development at the heart of its agenda (Keskitalo 2004; Tennberg 2000).

INRIPP represents one such northern region-building effort. On the Canadian side, the project, operating in Russia from 1996-2005 and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), was a cooperative effort between the Inuit Circumpolar Conference-Canada (ICC) and the Circumpolar Liaison Directorate (CLD) of the Department of Indian and Northern Development (DIAND). This collaboration between a federal agency (DIAND) and the ICC, a non-governmental organization representing the Inuit of Canada, the United States (Alaska), Greenland and north-eastern Russia, reflects the overall structure of the project, which functioned at two levels: 1) the Canadian Inuit share their political and economic experience and knowledge with Russia’s northern indigenous peoples and 2) Canadian governmental bureaucrats work with Russian elected officials and bureaucrats involved in indigenous and northern policy making.

The stated rationale behind this approach is that:

the best trainers to help indigenous peoples build strong institutions are other indigenous peoples who have built successful institutions themselves, as is the case with the Inuit of northern Canada. On the other hand, institution-building
for Russia's northern aboriginal peoples stands a better chance at success if the Russian government's policies and departments dealing with Aboriginal peoples are strengthened...\(^4\)

Therefore, the goal of the project was to train indigenous leaders from various Russian regional and federal organizations while simultaneously exerting influence over the political system in which these leaders must operate. Consequently, ICC-Canada representatives worked closely with the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) and its regional affiliates, while the Canadian governmental organization worked with Goskomsever (the federal State Committee on the North) and later regional governments (Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug and Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug primarily).

![Diagram of Canadian-Russian partnerships under INRIPP]

\(^4\) ICC-Canada website, INRIPP Newsletter.
The project was geared towards increasing the capacity of Russian indigenous organizations and their representatives to engage in activism at the regional, national, and international level through a transfer of Canadian models and expertise. INRIPP consisted of formal pedagogy in the form of organizational and business training courses for Russian indigenous interns; seminars relating to particular issues affecting indigenous peoples, such as natural resource management and economic development; and travel programs in the Canadian North (primarily the Northwest Territories and Nunavut) for Russian indigenous leaders and Russian bureaucrats. Much of this training was carried out through the Russian Indigenous Training Centre (RITC), which was established with INRIPP funding. The parts of INRIPP in which I took part represented an effort to describe and transfer Canadian approaches to the co-management of natural resources (resource management that involves government, industry, and indigenous peoples in decision-making) and economic development.

The majority of participants in this program, excluding federal bureaucrats from Moscow and Ottawa, came from Canadian and Russian areas that can be broadly construed as Arctic or ‘The North.’ Many of the regions represented in the project (such as Southern Siberia or the Russian Far East) fall outside the strict definition of the Arctic as demarcated by the 90th parallel or by the tree line. However, in practical politics and in Arctic social science research, such regions are united under the Arctic or northern rubric because they share issues relating to remoteness and marginality from federal centers of power, indigenous peoples, and reliance on natural resources, from herding and fishing to mining and oil extraction (Nuttall 1998). Indigenous peoples considered northern, such as the Inuit and Gwich’in who participated on the Canadian side of the project or the Khanty, Nentsy, and Nanai (to name a few) on the Russian side, share political issues relating to this remoteness from both federal and regional power centers and also have in common many traditional subsistence and cultural practices that stem from and rely upon the Arctic landscape.

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5 This diagram depicts the relationships between organizations that relate to the specific aspects of INRIPP described and analyzed in this dissertation and is not an exhaustive portrayal of all functions and relationships established under INRIPP.

6 Consequently, I use the words ‘Arctic,’ ‘North’ and ‘Circumpolar North’ interchangeably.
1.3 Fieldwork and Methodology

I conducted research for this dissertation from November 2003 through January 2005. My initial fieldwork consisted of participating in the project as an informal member of the Canadian delegation and exchanging my efforts as a note-taker, report-writer, and study tour planning assistant for access to various INRIPP events and interviews with other members of the Canadian delegation. Later, I worked independently, returning to Russia to conduct semi-structured interviews with INRIPP participants. Although I endeavored to become as involved in INRIPP as possible, my participation was limited both by finances and the time I had allotted to fieldwork. As a result, some of INRIPP’s activities and efforts to transfer Canadian knowledge and experience, such
as ongoing training programs for indigenous economic development officers, fell outside the scope of my dissertation research.

My research is characterized by extensive travel – I accompanied Canadian Inuit and bureaucrats to Siberia for seminars on the co-management of natural resources and economic development and traveled with Russian indigenous interns and bureaucrats coming to the Canadian North for a study tour. The element of movement allowed me to observe the process of knowledge exchange in many sites and to look for continuities and discontinuities as these encounters played out against shifting physical and social landscapes. However, this aspect of movement and travel in my research makes vivid ethnographic rendering of these encounters quite challenging, as there is no specific physical location to provide a sturdy and detailed backdrop against which these gatherings can be described. The ideas discussed and people involved were traveling to meet each other at a variety of sites across the North, but were simultaneously quite rooted as both the ideas and people were shaped by their origins, which rarely emerged in detail.

Given the shifting geographical locations of the multiple meetings between Canadians and Russians in this project, I describe certain locations to situate the moments I am presenting, but these should not be taken as exhaustive portrayals of any of the specific places in which the project took place. There are three time and place specific fieldwork moments to which I refer throughout the text. These are: 1) a seminar on co-management of natural resources in Khanty-Mansiysk, the capital city of the oil-rich Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug (KMAO) in central Siberia, to which I traveled with a Canadian delegation in November, 2003 and once again in the fall of 2004; 2) a sustainable development study tour of the Canadian North, in which I accompanied 10 Russian indigenous interns and governmental bureaucrats to Ottawa, Nunavut,7 and Manitoba in December 2003; and 3) a week of meetings and a conference on indigenous economic development in Moscow (December 2004). All of these events involved two aspects that make them relevant to my research: 1) an element of traveling across borders and cross-cultural encounter between persons and 2) an orientation towards the description and transfer of specific Canadian knowledge

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7 Nunavut is a newly created northern Canadian territory (est. 1999) that is meant to be both a public government and a homeland for the Inuit who live there.
and practices either through formal lectures and presentations, as at the seminars, or through vision and observation, as during the study tour. In each of these locations, as a speaker of both Russian and English, I was often called upon to facilitate discussion between participants and engaged in frequent informal conversations with participants from both Canada and Russia.

Overall, my interpretation of events utilizes discourse analysis with its attention to the boundaries of what is and may be said about particular topics and, importantly, what cannot be said at all. In taking a discursive approach to analysis, my primary concern is with what was said by various actors throughout the project. It is not my goal to conjecture as to what individuals ‘really’ thought. Through discourse analysis, the way in which people communicate can be studied and the routine or customary dimensions of speaking about particular topics, which are rarely reflected upon or questioned in daily interaction, can be denaturalized (Mills, 1997).

Foucauldian discourse analysis calls for attention to the institutional nature of particular discourses and how discourses are embedded in particular social and physical contexts, practices, technologies, and techniques. This involves a great deal of attention to detail. For example, Foucault argues that in order to understand any statement we must ‘grasp the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence’ (1989: 30). As I assert in greater depth in chapter three, Foucault’s strong definition of discourse, with its emphasis on institutions, techniques of power, and the process of subjectification, does not apply as well to the more sporadic and less-institutionalized encounters of actors engaging in political endeavors in the Arctic. However, Foucault’s attention to context, detail, and the constant maintenance of discourse through action and utterance by those within particular discourses does point to the necessary addition of performance analysis to my research.

My investigation of the cross-cultural events engineered through the INRIPP project calls for an understanding and analysis of these events as a type of performance. Many of my observations of the process of knowledge transfer and, in particular, peoples’ reactions to this activity were of how individuals said things, not only what was said, and how their statements and reactions were linked to and evoked other responses and non-verbal actions. Thinking about performance involves
acknowledging the fact that most human acts, verbal and non-verbal, have an element of being orientated towards a spectator and that this performative nature of activity is played out in different ways in different settings (Tuan 1990). Including the notion of performance into my analysis sheds light upon why Russian reactions to Canadian ideas varied according to location (i.e. personal interviews versus public seminars). These different locations implied different spectators and thus different reactions or performances became feasible or desirable. Furthermore, performance analysis serves to decouple the naïve assumption that verbal statements can be equated with thoughts, intentions, or action. Statements may be made in certain ‘theaters’ of interaction that do not necessarily correspond with or result in change in other such theaters. To demonstrate the importance of seeing the performance of development, by which I mean witnessing the unfolding of interpersonal exchange, I outline a brief ethnographic moment that also serves to illustrate some of the themes of Canadian-Russian interaction that run throughout subsequent chapters.

At an INRIPP conference in Moscow in December 2004, the question of how to draw Russian indigenous peoples into the mainstream market economy of the Russian Federation was discussed by Canadian and Russian participants. I attended this conference as a researcher working on a PhD dissertation and as a note taker and report-writer affiliated with the Canadian organizations involved in the project. An ICC delegate, an Inuk\(^8\) from northern Canada, opened the conference with these remarks:

> We’re not here to preach, or teach you something, just to share our experience. And it is certainly up to you how to apply them to your Russian realities. We are certainly aware of the fact that the circumstances around Russian indigenous peoples here are very different, and we don’t pretend to have all the solutions. In Canada we have many problems left to be solved...

Despite this rather humble and self-effacing introduction, midway through the morning, a high-ranking member of a prestigious federal council, hailing originally from the Sakha Republic in the Far East, gave these unsolicited and seemingly

\(^8\) This is the singular form of Inuit.
spontaneous remarks during a question and answer period following a Canadian presentation:

We are familiar with the Canadian North and we know what is going on there. But we have big differences from them...although we are at both sides of the North Pole, in similar climatic environments, we have different approaches to life and it is difficult to find common ground...there are aspects that could be shared, as we are both part of the Arctic Council, such as conservation of the environment ... there was a time when we knew as part of the Soviet Union how to deal with economic problems in the North, but now Canadians and Russians have to share our experiences because we have the same situation at the top of the globe.

These two short speeches represent characteristic examples of the Canadian approach to the exchange of knowledge through development and the Russian response to this effort that I witnessed throughout my one-year involvement with the project's various activities in Canada and Russia. The Canadian offers models and experience, but leaves the responsibility of applying this knowledge to the Russian participants. The Russian responds by acknowledging that a shared region and the processes of globalization are bringing Canadians and Russians closer together as northerners, while arguing for recognition of Russia's unique circumstances.

The element missing from this purely textual rendering of the Russian participant's speech is the level of frustration and offense that was evident in the delivery of his remarks. I was taken aback by his anger as I had found the Canadians involved in INRIPP to be systematically civil and unassuming in their approach to Russian participants. My surprise deepened when this particular Russian flagged me down at lunch following his morning intervention - if he was so frustrated with Canadian interventions in Russia, why was he still at the conference? What was still on offer to him? Along with the surprise, a twinge of anxiety surfaced that the anonymous back-of-the-room American PhD student/note taker (myself) might become the next target of frustration.
Luckily, his only request was that I interpret for him and a member of the Canadian delegation, who was an influential indigenous politician and a major player in the emerging oil industry of the Northwest Territories (NWT) in Canada, as they chatted over lunch. It turns out that these two men knew each other already, as architects and builders from the NWT had designed buildings for the capital of the resource rich Far Eastern Sakha republic. The Russian wanted further information on the progress of mining and oil development in the NWT. He demonstrated fairly detailed knowledge about the NWT in his questions, to the point where I wondered if his goal was to demonstrate his knowledge of Canada rather than to learn more from this particular conversational exchange. His continued presence at the seminar was a non-verbal action that forced me to interpret his anger in a different light – angry, but still there. This moment speaks to the importance of multi-sited research (i.e. his demeanor at the seminar was very different from that at lunch) and to the immediate juxtaposition of familiarity, curiosity, resentment, and need that repeated itself throughout the project.

It is through participating in these seminars, like the one described above, and study tours of the Canadian North that I came to know the people with whom I would speak over the next year on revisits. I returned to Khanty-Mansiysk in October 2004 to conduct semi-structured follow-up interviews with the majority of Russian participants who had attended the KMAO co-management seminar and also interviewed several Russians with whom I had traveled in the Canadian North on the study tour. As INRIPP meetings and seminars involved a seemingly set constellation of actors, I was also able to conduct further follow-up interviews with many Russians, who had traveled to the Canadian North at some point during the duration of the project and resided in different parts of Siberia, the Far North, and the Far East, and several more Canadian project consultants and officials at the December 2004 meetings in Moscow. As I knew many of these people, and also consider several of them friends, many follow-up interviews were more like continued conversations through which a layered picture of their experiences and impressions emerged. Although or, perhaps, because the Russian interviewees knew me through my participation in the project, few seemed to feel the need to be overly polite in their responses or intimidated or pressured by my presence. From my previous

9 See Robinson (1998) for a discussion of the benefits of continuing conversations and repeat interviewing.
participation in the project’s activities, it was clear that I was relatively peripheral to
the project (someone who was just ‘helping out’ with notes and logistics and working
on a dissertation). The Canadian interviewees were also quite open to my questions,
particularly as we came to know one another better throughout my year’s involvement
in the project.

At the beginning of each interview, I presented my research interest (expressed to
interviewees as if and how the Canadian ideas of co-management and economic
development could be adopted in Russia) and then would ask whether or not they
would be willing to be identified in my dissertation.10 I often began with a few
straightforward factual and evaluation-oriented questions to give us an easy start and
to help refresh the interviewee’s recollections about the seminars. With Russian
interviewees, I usually opened with questions about specific INRIPP events, such as
when did you first hear of this idea of co-management/economic development and
what did you like best/worst about the seminar. Interviews with Canadians tended to
begin with more straightforward factual questions about the establishment of the
project and how INRIPP fits into Canadian foreign policy goals, which contributed
greatly to my understanding of how and why the project was proposed and funded.
Both to confirm my understandings with the participants and, during interviews with
Russian participants, to clear up misunderstandings resulting from the fact that
Russian is my second language, I would sometimes check with the interviewee,
restating what I had heard and ask them to confirm (i.e. ‘it seems to me you are
saying…’). This approach acknowledges interviewees as knowledgeable agents (Ley
1988) and gives interviewees an opportunity to critique my own theories as they
develop throughout the interview and fieldwork session (Mancini-Billson 1991).

Quotations are used in this text and are drawn from my interview notes and immediate
post-interview write-ups. They cannot be seen as verbatim transcripts of
interviewees’ comments, as I did not use a recording device. During my previous
research experiences, recording interviewees’ comments seemed to stifle open
exchange. I select certain quotations for several reasons: 1) if they are generally

10 The majority of interviewees were willing to have their names used. However, to prevent my
analysis from seeming personal, rather than structural, and to avoid overburdening the text with too
many names and positions, I have made quotations anonymous and listed interviewees in appendix
one.
illustrative of attitudes possessed by other interviewees who shared certain characteristics with the interviewee being quoted (i.e. all from same location, indigenous, bureaucrat); 2) if the quotation illustrates clearly the personal opinion of a key/influential player in the project; and 3) if the quotation was taken under circumstances when I was able to produce reliable notes (i.e. more direct quotations are used from one on one interviews or from seminars at which I was the appointed note-taker than from chats during coffee break).

I also refer to documents produced by the project to provide further context and rigor to my research. These multiple methods (interviews, participant observation, textual analysis) provide a means of repeatedly witnessing different kinds of moments and types of reflection on the ideas of co-management and economic development (Baxter and Eyles 1997; Robinson 1998). Through these multiple moments and methods, the influence of context on participants’ remarks is evident. For example, Russian perceptions of Canadian-style co-management expressed in private interviews differed vastly from the idea’s reception at a more public seminar. The expression of individual sentiments at the seminars and meetings was fairly limited by the large number of participants and the constraints of time. It was, however, an excellent setting in which to witness what the bounds of discourse were when many actors with different interests were brought together to discuss a single idea (i.e. which comments were picked up upon and discussed and which were ignored). I conducted over thirty personal interviews with INRIPP participants in which interviewees were welcome to speak as long as desired (usually about 45 minutes, but anywhere from 20 minutes to a marathon five hours) and put together the information they found most relevant to my open ended questions. Written materials, such as the newsletters and reports produced by the program’s organizers, can be read as both history (documenting attitudes and concerns that were prominent at the time they are written) and rhetoric (representing what, ideally, the project should be, particularly when courting various funding bodies and government agencies).
1.4 Literature Review

In addition to choosing a methodological orientation to interpret my field research experiences, I conducted an extensive literature review to locate theories and concepts that could contribute to and situate my research. In this brief literature review, I outline the theories of globalization and networks to which I initially turned and which seemed to be logical bodies of literature to rely on in order to understand the cross-cultural and inter-state nature of INRIPP events. However, while the literature on globalization and networks describes and theorizes the backdrop against which the INRIPP project took place, it does not provide the necessary tools for analyzing how subsequent interactions occurred and how information and ideas traveled between the engaged parties in settings marked by power relationships.

It seems to me that a characteristic of globalization and, to a lesser extent, network literature is that scholars felt that they were dealing with entirely new phenomena requiring new vocabulary. I argue that this emphasis on newness has resulted in theories that work only at the level of metaphor and thought experiment. These thought experiments are sustained by oversimplifications of the ways in which persons engage with one another in cross-cultural (and presumably globalized) encounters and of how knowledge moves in a world where boundaries are increasingly porous. In many ways, this problem reflects issues in the thinking of modern sociologists who overemphasized the changes between pre-modern and modern industrial societies in an attempt to describe what they perceived to be fundamentally new and novel forms of social order. While this delineation between pre-modern and modern illustrated important structural changes, it did so at the cost of simplifying both types of societies (Yack 1993). Along these lines, geographer Doreen Massey (in Morley 2000: 192) has criticized some scholars of globalization for inventing a static, completely localized past to contrast with a dramatically new and radically fluctuating present.

In this literature review, I take issue with these theories' lack of attention to the role of specific motivations and power relationships in shaping how and why knowledge and persons circulate. As my interest is in how and why knowledge is presented, accepted,
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and/or rejected in cross-cultural meetings, rather than the conditions under which such an interaction becomes possible in the first place, my analytical approach draws much more from the critiques of globalization and network theory than from the substance of these theories themselves. These critiques have pointed to the need to concretely trace, rather than just posit, movement in a more globalized era; to pay attention to the agency and actions of individuals as they navigate their changing landscapes; and to develop analyses of the circulation of knowledge that account for different types of knowledge and how these might be transformed through travel.

1.4.1 Globalization

A globalized world is certainly a backdrop to the interchanges that took place throughout INRIPP. Without the infrastructure of jet flights, Internet connections, and consciousness of the world as an interdependent whole the project is unlikely to have been conceived. Furthermore, many project participants saw globalization as one of the key factors that legitimized and necessitated the Canada-Russia project in the first place. For example, one upper-level bureaucrat from a northern Russian district commented in an interview with me that globalization justifies the careful consideration of the Canadian approach to co-management of natural resources: ‘We are all involved in the processes of globalization and you just can’t get away from that – we need and are part of common markets.’

Essentially, globalization can be defined as the acceleration and intensification of economic, social, and political processes that extend across the globe and bring geographically and often socially distant actors into contact. Academic and popular works, in attempting to illustrate globalization, often point to the volume of international flights, the rates of financial transfers, the density of electronic connections, and the oft-cited images of people in some sort of traditional garb going to McDonalds or drinking a coke. In these images the entanglement and interconnection of the ‘global’ and the ‘local’ is prominent. This entanglement is theorized to mean that action in one sphere must have consequences in the other (Inda and Rosaldo 2001).
Anthony Giddens (1990) and David Harvey (1995) forward a description of the globalized world as one in which the basic experiences of being, namely the experiences of time and space, are fundamentally changed. They see this transformation as an intensification and extension of the social changes attributed to the modern industrial era. In such theorizations, space and time are no longer major constraints on the organization of human activity and social action and relations are increasingly divorced from local settings. Therefore, Giddens understands globalization as ‘the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa’ (1990: 64). Another important aspect of globalization, in addition to the compression and amplification of non-local interactions, is the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole, allowing us to do global thinking and to consider the whole world as an actual and important site of social life (Robertson 1992).  

Much of globalization research has focused upon describing the globalized movement of goods, ideas, and persons metaphorically. Globalization as a kind of substance stretched over or flowing throughout the globe is evident in most conceptualizations. For example, in attempting to address the frequently debated question of how ‘old’ globalization is, Keohane and Nye (2000: 7) argue that the more relevant question is not when globalism came into existence but rather how ‘thick or thin it is at any given time.’ Tsing (2001: 462) argues that ‘circulation,’ of money, people, cultures, information, television programs and international programs to name a few, is the primary explanatory concept for describing how ideas and institutions spread over space and gain influence in new locales. Appadurai (1996) conceptualizes space and talks about the movement of ideas as fluids over particular global terrains of ethnicity, ideas, and finance and describes these terrains as ‘scapes’ or networks of machines, technologies, texts, institutions, and actors. Urry (2000: 38) argues that these metaphors of fluidity are ways of emphasizing globalization’s ‘heterogeneous, uneven and unpredictable mobilities.’ He goes on to summarize the global fluids literature

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11 This ‘depth of consciousness of the world as a single place’ is a prominent characteristic amongst individuals engaged in transnational networks, but the extent to which ‘globality’ plays a role in the everyday lives of the majority of the populace remains an understudied question (Stone 2002: 125).
and pulls out these key characteristics: such fluids have no clear point of arrival or departure, but rather move and are channeled along particular route ways; they move at certain directions and speeds often without purpose; and they can diffuse power and exercise power.

I take issue with conceptualizing the global movement of goods and knowledge as flows for two reasons. Firstly, I find that the concept obscures key questions about agency and motivation (i.e. who is behind these flows that diffuse and exercise power). Secondly, I argue that theories about ‘flow’ gloss over of the question of the origins\(^\text{12}\) and destination points of flows and how what is contained in a particular ‘flow’ may change through travel. Hannerz (2001), perhaps more than other writers on globalization, attempts to grapple with what actually happens in these flows, rather than just developing increasingly elaborate metaphors for description. He argues that there are two potential scenarios resulting from transnational cultural flows: saturation and maturation. Saturation leads to the assimilation of local cultures into a homogenous global culture, while maturation allows for imported ideas to be reworked and included into life in a fundamentally local way. Other scholars working on the question of globalization have called for more attention to how knowledge changes over space, arguing that the movement and differential consumption of ideas, institutions, and goods create an unprecedented level of diversity and the creation of new forms of knowledge, rather than lead to the homogenization of cultures (Dobosz and Jankowicz 2002; Miller 1995).

Writers on globalization themselves have pointed to the difficulties of linking the dominant ways of thinking and writing about globalization to empirical analysis.\(^\text{13}\) Inda and Rosaldo (2001: 12), for example, argue that globalization literature frequently lacks an attentiveness to the concrete workings of human agency and the

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\(^{12}\) Clark and Geppert (2002), in their article on the transfer of business management knowledge between Western firms and their post-Soviet counterparts, point to the need to study the process of knowledge transfer more thoroughly in the countries of origin as well.

\(^{13}\) Researchers studying transnational social movements (see Rucht (1999) and Kaldor (2003) for further information on these movements), which are closely related to the process of globalization, also point to the need to develop a systematic understanding of how practices and ideas are diffused and under what circumstances (Castells 1996; Della Porta and Kriesi 1999; Tarrow 1998). Snow and Benford (1999), for example, assert that researchers need to do more than identify coalitions as they emerge and argue that actors choosing to collaborate transnationally are not simply ‘discovering’ shared interests, but rather engaging actively in constructivist projects to frame their issues in a way that facilitates collaboration with certain other groups.
practices of everyday life in a globalized world and call for theories of globalization that can acknowledge that ‘globalized culture is never simply deterritorialized. It is always reterritorialized.’ Likewise, Hannerz (2001: 42) asserts that ‘the sense that people make of transnational cultural flow...[what] the meaning of transnational flow is...in the eye of the beholder...[is something] we generally know little about.’ Tsing (2001: 474-475) argues that globalization should be understood through the tracing of actual movement to gain insight into the complexity of globalization and to overcome the dichotomy between a powerful globalization juggernaut and a localized, powerless, ‘other.’ Sklair (1991) works to understand global processes more concretely by focusing on what people actually do and forwards the idea of ‘transnational practices’ as a means of drawing attention to observable phenomena in certain institutional settings. The difficulty of describing and analyzing, using globalization theories, the actual experience of people in a globalized world may lie in Ingold’s (2000) astute observation that although the image of the globe (i.e. Spaceship Earth) is quite familiar to us, we cannot sense or experience the globe directly and therefore there is no real ‘global’ experience with which to connect and ground theory.

I also find the definition of knowledge used in theorizations about the movement of ideas in a globalized world to be quite anemic – much closer to the idea of information than to the complicated acts of knowing or becoming knowledgeable that I explore in chapters four and five. For example, Manuel Castells, in volume 1 of his three-volume work on globalization, uses the following definition of knowledge: ‘a set of organized statements of facts or ideas, presenting a reasoned judgment or an experimental result, which is transmitted to others through some communication medium in some systematic form’ (Bell in Castells 1996: 17). This definition leaves little room for recognizing how knowledge is entangled with practice (ways of doing and being) and that learning can take place in situations where knowledge is not communicated as organized ‘sets of statements,’ but rather picked up through observation and inference or acquired in settings marked by power relationships. In this dissertation, knowledge is understood, according to Turnbull’s assertion, as not

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14 Although I think this is an important step towards including practice into globalization literature, Sklair’s treatment of and reference to practices as ‘building blocks’ serves to reify practice and overlooks the improvisational and often power charged settings in which practices are legitimized and acquired by new actors.
‘governed by logic and method, [rather] modernity’s drive for order conceals [knowledge’s] messy, contingent, unplanned and arational character’ (2000:1). By extension, learning is seen as processual and inherently precarious and in keeping with Latour’s assertion that: ‘knowledge cannot be defined without understanding what gaining knowledge means. In other words, ‘knowledge’ is not something that could be described by itself or by opposition to “ignorance” or “belief,” but only by considering a whole cycle of accumulation...’ (Latour 1987: 220). In subsequent chapters, the precariousness of the process of comprehending and accepting information and knowledge cross-culturally is made evident.

Furthermore, literature on the movement of information and knowledge in a more global society rarely distinguishes between different types of knowledge and ideas, such as differences between tacit, practice-based knowledge and explicit information. Stone (2002: 126) notes that not all knowledge is up for global circulation in the information age. She argues that certain types of codified and written knowledge are more amenable to circulation than ‘traditional, grassroots or practitioner knowledge’ which remain rooted in ‘communal understandings or local practices.’ Clark and Geppert (2002) point out that a common assumption in efforts to transfer knowledge and ways of doing things from one location to another is that if a discourse, or way of talking about a particular issue or process, is learned by a target audience that practices automatically follow. By contrast, researchers, especially those looking at the transfer of Western-style business management to post-socialist countries, have noted that while some technical concepts have proven to be reasonably easy to transfer, culturally embedded practices (such as leadership style and internalized ethical behavior) remain problematic (Dobosz and Jankowicz 2002; Lang and Steger 2002). This question of types of knowledge and their relative abilities to travel through different modes of communication are further discussed in chapter five.

Riles (2000) points to a philosophical underpinning of globalization literature that limits its applicability to empirical research. Globalization is often viewed as a homogenizing force that creates like institutions and practices all over the world, at the expense of the local. She writes that this belief has led to globalization being studied through: ‘[the] armchair approach to global institutional knowledge...[which] derives precisely...[from] the comfort or fear that all is already
known to the theorist, that the knowledge practices at stake in networking activities are those he or she encounters through everyday life...’ (Riles 2000: 3-4, emphasis original). Furthermore, globalization literature, particularly that produced for popular consumption, is often written by those who perceive globalization as a destructive force that destroys community and local life. As a result they focus on global interactions that are the careless encounters of strangers, rather than meetings between friends, the movement of a destructive brand of capitalism, rather than the movement of ideas, and the anonymous bombardment of Internet sites, rather than the exchange of informative email letters between new colleagues with something to share. While I would not argue with the veracity of this literature criticizing economic globalization, it is only part of the picture and is not useful to the empirical analysis of movement of ideas in a globalized world.

1.4.2 Networks

The shared characteristic of all the literature mentioned above is reliance upon the language of the ‘network.’ Networks are seen as central to organizing for international action in that they unite and simultaneously create network members who share a common discourse and goals. The concept of the network allows theorists to move beyond the hierarchical vertical structure of a formal organization or institution. Sociologist of science Bruno Latour has endeavored to highlight the material nature of networks as well, arguing that to understand the endurance of networks one must also understand the built environment and material links that can create lasting connections over time and across geographical and social distances. Locally concentrated resource centers are connected to one another, transforming the ‘scattered resources into a net that may seem to extend everywhere’ (Latour 1987: 180). Castells (1996) argues that networking has become essential, as resources are difficult to come by in the impoverished spaces outside of networks.

Although the network is useful for describing and conceptualizing forms of connectivity between persons, organizations, and objects, the difficulty with network theory lies in conceptualizing the workings of power, particularly in conceptualizing
who is central and who is peripheral and how actors and organizations are enrolled in a network and to what end.\textsuperscript{15} Other researchers have also called for further attention to the unequal distribution of resources and power \textit{within} the network, rather than just comparing the clout of different networks in relationship to one another, and for a more critical stance towards the assumption that shared networks automatically equal shared aspirations and interests (Riles 2000; Stone 2002). In many ways, the network has been celebrated for overcoming hierarchical conceptualizations of power inherent to organizational and institutional theory, but the idea of the network could be equally criticized for masking such power relationships when they actually do exist. Hanse, Salskov-Iversen and Bislev (2002: 108) point to the shortcomings of the network as an analytical device, writing that ‘the “network” concept addresses connections, but does not speak about their substance and dynamics.’

Riles (2000: 169-169) puts it another way, artfully drawing upon the image of the network as a web of actors:

> We can now recognize that the Network, also, evidenced an incompleteness of a kind. A careful scrutiny of ‘communication line’ for example might prompt a number of questions: what kind of ‘communication’ is signified by the lines in this case? Do these acts of communication take place all at once or over time? Who exactly communicates with whom, why, how and from where?

Latour forwards a valuable method and insight by arguing that the fundamental question for research in networks should be an exploration of how networks make it possible to act at a distance on unfamiliar places, events, and persons and that the study of networks should be carried out by ‘following people striving to make their claims \textit{more} credible than others’ (1987: 202). Despite the important contributions of theorists such as Latour, I still find the network to be too one-dimensional and argue that by working with a careful definition of community greater attention to and improved analysis of the varied and social nature of moving knowledge across borders can be achieved.

\textsuperscript{15} A notable exception to this shortcoming is the work of Bruno Latour whose theorizations, particularly in terms of these questions of enrollment, are used in later chapters.
1.5 Building an Arctic Community of Knowledge

Throughout this dissertation, I argue that community was both presupposed and produced during INRIPP through the exchange of knowledge and persons between Canada and Russia. I forward the idea of community in place of assertions about the construction and role of identity in cross-cultural endeavors. 'Identity' within the literature on globalization, networks, transnationalism, and region building is often seen to be both a product of increased contact and as a kind of social 'glue' that serves to facilitate the flow of ideas and information. I find, however, that there are two key problems in thinking about identity as the product of these types of interaction. First, in my field research, references to 'sameness' or a shared identity occurred infrequently and, when they did occur, were rarely successful in bridging gaps of opinion, practice, and aspiration. Identity did not serve as a kind of glue nor as a bridging mechanism – simply put, talking about shared identity did not facilitate a transfer of knowledge (this is further explicated in chapter three). Secondly, although identity is frequently referred to in theoretical literature, it is notoriously difficult to pin down in empirical research. I choose, rather than searching for an elusive shared identity, to focus on how the project was an effort in community building in which differently positioned project participants accepted or rejected community membership by adopting or refusing certain ways of knowing, speaking, and acting.

I argue that the use of the concept of community allows me to envision those involved in the project as strategic actors and to trace the workings of power in the interactions between them. The idea of community has a history of complicated and often contradictory usage in the social sciences and in everyday understandings, particularly in the frequent conflation of community with the idea of a 'commune' or communalism. In communes, an individual's identity is often sacrificed to fit in with the identity of the whole. Therefore, thinkers looking to create room for difference, such as feminist theorists and liberal political philosophers advocating for individual rights, have conceptualized communities as sites of oppression of the individual and that individual’s difference. However, there are scholars who oppose the abandonment of the idea of community, arguing that, given the social nature of language and knowledge, individuals must be and are rooted in communities.
Furthermore, attention to the presence of community and communal ways of being in, acting on, and speaking about the world facilitates an understanding of why some of the Canadian models and ideas were so difficult to transfer. Recognizing the importance of community to both learning and practice necessitates an awareness of the different types of knowledge that persons can possess, such as explicit knowledge that can be displayed more readily to outsiders or tacit knowledge and ethical principles that do not lend themselves to quick explication to foreign audiences due to their deep roots in particular communities, times, and places.

1.6 Summary of Chapters

In chapter two, I demonstrate why Canada would be motivated to produce such a community and provide a summary of the Canadian approach to Arctic politics and development. I describe how the Canadians have worked to represent the Arctic as a community of interdependence and outline the Canadian state’s role and goals in Arctic politics. I also explore in greater detail the role of DIAND and ICC-Canada within this framework. Subsequently, I provide a brief history of the project itself and explore the influence of the discourse of sustainable development on project design and the people involved in the project. I then sketch out how the Canadians performed development and promoted these ideas in Russia, particularly looking at the emphasis on dialogue, and Canadian INRIPP workers’ conceptions of Russia and Russians. I ground Canadian perceptions of difference with a brief comparative history of population/state relations and oil development in Canada and Russia and illustrate ways in which the notion of history rested uneasily throughout the project. Finally, I forward a few hypotheses as to what the desired outcomes of the INRIPP project were and argue that production of a community of knowledge and practice can be construed to be one of them.

In chapter 3, I augment my argument for the use of community as an analytical lens by pointing out the shortcomings in the literature on Arctic region building, a clearly relevant literature in light of the region-building impetus behind the INRIPP project.
belief in a shared region, would necessitate and lead to a shared identity. In my experience, this is simply not the case. People had knowledge of one another and knowledge of how to act towards one another, in addition to the belief in the Arctic as a shared space, but did not possess a shared identity. I demonstrate this through documenting the failure of a shared Canadian and Russian indigenous identity, which was used in rhetoric but not actually experienced by participants, to facilitate the transfer of ideas and models. Finally, I further develop my argument for community as a useful and appropriate alternative conceptual lens in order to lay the foundation for tracing the emergence of communal ways of speaking and knowing in chapter four.

Chapter four entails a case study of how the concept of co-management of natural resources was presented by Canadians and received by Russians in the oil-rich central Siberian Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug. I closely examine the idea of co-management itself and its history in Canada and outline Russian reactions to the idea. In particular, I use this case study to describe how Canadians attempted to move knowledge through positing a relationship of teachers and students and examine the ways in which power and influence were exercised and resisted in the process of learning. Ways in which transfer of knowledge presupposes the inherent superiority of the country of origin and Russian participants’ response to this assumption, namely by resisting certain discursive practices, are highlighted.

In chapter 5, I present differing attitudes towards economic development in Canada and Russia and illustrate the limitations of models as communicative devices. Drawing upon my observations of and interviews during a week of meetings on the question of integrating indigenous peoples’ activities into the market economy, I illustrate how and why members of the Canadian delegation felt it necessary to abandon discussions of models and switch to a conversation about principles that entailed the use of stories and narratives. In this chapter, the process of knowledge exchange is further investigated through an analysis of the types of knowledge needed to describe particular institutions and processes to an outside audience and an examination of if and how these different categories of knowledge lend themselves to travel and cross-cultural communication. This involves acknowledging the role of
community in the production of knowledge and practices in the country of origin, in this case Canada.

Ultimately, the goal of this dissertation is to present a clear picture of the forces at work and strategies employed in the process of moving knowledge across boundaries and to suggest ways in which such efforts can be improved. For this purpose, I have found that alternative methodologies, analytic approaches, and theories to those found in the literature on globalization and networks are necessary. Consequently, I have chosen to examine how community – in the form of a structural feature of social life through which ways of speaking, knowing, and doing can be acquired – plays a central role the circulation and consideration of knowledge. In the concluding chapter, I suggest that communication within such emerging communities can be improved through de-emphasizing strategies of similarity and closure and placing higher priority on questions and narrative. This approach would render the moral and tacit contents of any given model more explicit and, consequently, more debatable.
Chapter 2: A Canadian Approach to Northern International Development

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline Canada’s role and goals in Arctic international politics, as well as the aspirations of the organizations involved in INRIPP, to elucidate key motivations behind the project. Subsequently, I describe the dominant discourses underpinning INRIPP’s design, namely the discourses of sustainability and ‘grassroots development,’ and show how Canadians and Russians involved in the project understood these vocabularies of progress. These understandings are linked to a brief comparative history of the Russian and Canadian states in order to hypothesize as to why Canadians and Russians hold different conceptions about how and where development should take place. I then present ways in which the Canadians involved in the project thought development and the movement of knowledge should be ‘done,’ namely through dialogue, and highlight Canadian INRIPP participants’ perceptions of the differences between Canada and Russia. I focus upon one particular element of Canadian perceptions of Russia, namely that Russia is somehow located in the past, to raise the question of where history, both Canadian and Russian, was situated in this attempt to move knowledge from one location to another. Understanding these perceptions of difference provides background for analyses of the presentation and reception of co-management boards and economic development corporations in chapters four and five, respectively.

2.2 Canada and the ‘Northern Dimension’

Canada has played an active and central role in Arctic region building, beginning with Canadian-Soviet scientific exchanges in the 1960s and intensifying after the collapse
Despite the fact that only about 100,000 people actually live in the Canadian North, the North looms large in Canadian domestic politics due to the prominent role that ‘northerness’ plays in Canadian national discourse (Grace 2002), the fact that forty percent of Canada’s land mass lies in the Far North, and the political activism of indigenous peoples. Indeed much of the attention that the Arctic draws in Canada can be attributed to this relatively sparse northern indigenous population, as the Canadian government works to legitimate state control over indigenous northerners’ homelands and to entrench Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic in general and shipping passages and natural resources in particular. Young (1992) argues that Canada’s interest in being an Arctic power can be traced back to the Cold War animosities between the United States and the Soviet Union. As a result of this diplomatic chill, neither of the Arctic superpowers was in a position to propose collaborative international projects without evoking the opposition of the other. Consequently, less internationally powerful Arctic states, like Canada, have taken the lead in region building and international efforts in the Arctic.

Canadians played a prominent role in defining the Arctic as a region and outlining the concerns that should be central to Arctic discourse in the negotiations leading up to and following the establishment of the Arctic Council (Keskitalo 2004; Tennberg 2000). The eight-country Arctic Council was established 1996 and involves state representatives and indigenous representatives from Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Canada, the United States, and Greenland (Denmark). Indigenous leaders, representing various Arctic indigenous peoples, are involved in the Arctic Council as permanent participants and take part in all Arctic Council debates, but are not allowed to vote. Canadian politicians, civil servants, and indigenous leaders were instrumental in establishing two key areas of focus for the Arctic Council: sustainable development and, somewhat later, issues relating to indigenous peoples (Keskitalo 2004; Tennberg 2000). Keskitalo (2004) attributes the relative dominance of Canadian visions of and strategies for the Arctic to the place of importance that the North holds in Canadian domestic politics, which has engendered a research and policy focus on the Arctic.

16 See Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade website, www.dfa-it-maeci.gc.ca/circumpolar/sec02?sfp_timeline-en.asp (accessed March 30, 2005), for a succinct overview of events and policies that have led to an increased involvement in the Arctic.
One interviewee from within the Government of Canada stated that intense Canadian involvement in the creation of the Arctic Council precipitated the development of the ‘The Northern Dimension of Canada’s Foreign Policy (NDFP),’ which was released by Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy on June 8, 2000 (DFAIT 2000). The goals of this policy are to ensure the human security and well-being of northerners and all Canadians, to encourage sustainable development in the Arctic, to establish and maintain Canadian sovereignty in the North, and to promote the development of the Circumpolar region and the rule of law within it (DFAIT 2000: 2).

Priority areas for action include promoting the Arctic Council, establishing distance learning networks between Arctic educational institutions, developing areas through which assistance can be delivered to the Russian North, pursuing opportunities for multilateral efforts at the Arctic regional level and through the European Union, and opening avenues for sustainable economic development and trade in the Circumpolar North. Interviewees from within the Government of Canada often referred to this document as the key policy influencing Canadian international activities in the North, including efforts in the Russian North like INRIPP. Consequently, the relevant aspects of the document, as it relates to Arctic region building and cooperation with Russia, are summarized here.

Raising the profile of the Arctic as a politically meaningful geographical region is clearly an NDFP policy goal, as a means of establishing a ‘framework to promote the extension of Canadian interests and values’ in the North (DFAIT 2000: 1). The policy states that ‘to realize the full potential of the North, northern Canadians and the circumpolar community need to recognize and act on the basis of being a natural community – bound not only by geography but also linked by common experiences and often values as well’ (DFAIT 2000: 9). Region and community building are described as imperative because the Arctic, with its extensive resource wealth and political heterogeneity, is seen to be a potential zone of conflict. In the policy, it is argued that Canada has special skills that can be applied to the task of extracting value from and building community and influence in the North, such as technical and scientific expertise, experience with innovative governance and power-sharing in
northern communities, and a ‘wealth of experience in co-operating with Russia on Arctic affairs’ (DFAIT 2000: 10).

The motivations behind the act of becoming experts on dealing with Russia in the Arctic are especially relevant to understanding the foundations of INRIPP. What value is to be extracted from having this ‘wealth of experience’? What influence comes from knowing the Russian North better than other countries? In general, the policy asserts two reasons for working with Russia on Arctic issues: 1) that a focus on Russia is necessary to Arctic stability because much of the Arctic’s landmass and population (80% of the total population) is in the Russian North and 2) economic benefits may flow from this collaboration as the Russian North is rich in resources and current resource extraction from this area represents 20% of the GDP of the Russian state (DFAIT 2000: 10).

Problems in the Russian Arctic considered stability issues include environmental problems, such as environmental damage from mining, smelting and nuclear reactors, and the situation of indigenous peoples suffering from a collapse of Soviet subsidy programs. Secondly, the policy statement highlights potential trade and economic benefits stemming from Canada-Russia interaction and states that Canada is uniquely positioned to work with Russia.

The Arctic identity that Canada shares with Russia provides a special basis for co-operation focusing on the North...Because of the environmental similarities, Canada has always had a commercial interest in Russia. With our experience and expertise in tapping natural resources in the Arctic, we have a comparative advantage in Russia, creating excellent opportunities for Canadian investments. Similarly, in the environmental sector, Canadian technology and management techniques are second to none (DFAIT 2000: 15).

Thus, Canada’s security and prosperity are linked to the Russian North and Canadians, as a whole, have the skills to extract wealth from northern Russia. As one interviewee from inside the Canadian civil service stated, ‘we engage internationally when our international work somehow forwards our domestic priorities.’ In light of
the emphasis on increasing the prosperity of northerners and Canadians as a whole, another Canadian’s statement that ‘there are many economic opportunities in the North and the Arctic is a way of capitalizing on a shared geography to expand partnerships that could result in trade’ can be seen as fitting squarely within national policy.

2.3 Arctic Aspirations of Canadian Organizations Involved in INRIPP

Young (1992) notes that certain Canadian governmental departments have much to gain from encouraging the active role of Canada in the Arctic. In light of this observation, the particular goals of the organizations and departments that played a role in the INRIPP project are outlined here. The governmental organizations involved, namely the Circumpolar Liaison Directorate (CLD) of DIAND and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), had goals quite clearly in line with national policy and their efforts can be interpreted as acting upon their departmental mandates in an increasingly important area of Canadian foreign policy, while the ICC’s motivations were slightly more layered.

The CLD is a division within DIAND\textsuperscript{17} and was the lead governmental organization in INRIPP. The CLD is responsible for promoting the international dimensions of DIAND’s northern activities, including multilateral arrangements dealing with transboundary environmental and indigenous issues, through the Arctic Council and involvement in the European Union. They also focus on bilateral relationships, primarily with Russia. Canada’s involvement with the Soviet Union on northern issues began in the late 1960s through scientific exchange and in 1984 DIAND signed intergovernmental agreements with the Soviet Union on Arctic scientific cooperation. A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), titled ‘Concerning Cooperation on Aboriginal and Northern Development,’ was signed in 1997 and updated on February 29, 2000 by DIAND on the Canadian Side and the State Committee on Northern...

\textsuperscript{17} DIAND, also known as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), is the Canadian federal ministry responsible for meeting Canada’s constitutional obligations to the indigenous peoples of Canada (First Nations and Inuit). DIAND is also the federal department responsible for the Northern territories (Yukon, NWT, and Nunavut), which are more financially and politically dependent upon the Canadian federal government than the provinces.
Affairs of the Russian Federation (Goskomsever) on the Russian side. In this MOU, the bases for cooperation are identified. Canada and Russia are both described as 'Arctic states...facing a wide range of common interests and issues peculiar to the Arctic and the North,' such as northern sustainable development, environmental protection of the North, and the desire to ensure the well-being of aboriginal peoples of the Arctic. In the MOU, both governments state their commitment to sharing information and practices relating to northern governance, fostering trade and commercial linkages, building northern and aboriginal entrepreneurship, and sharing Canadian experience in mediating relationships between government, industry, and aboriginal peoples. Through such cooperative activities, the CLD gains knowledge about the Russian northern regions and on the political climate of Russia in general.

INRIPP received funding from CIDA under the Canadian government’s technical assistance program, which was designed to support a transition to democracy and market economy in the former Soviet Union. Overall, CIDA’s Russia program focused on supporting democratic development and economic liberalization through trade and investment and through governmental and private sector partnerships and endeavors. In one policy document, the resource richness of the Russian Far North (60% of Russia’s mineral output; 92% of Russia’s gas reserves, 75% of its oil, 60% of its coal, 50% of its forest and fish stocks) is emphasized even more than in the northern policy discussed above. This policy states that CIDA has an interest in promoting sustainable development in the Arctic and Canadian commercial interests in the North, particularly in light of new oil exploration opportunities and potential use of the Northern Sea Route. In this document, it becomes clear that Canadian efforts in the Russian North are primarily based in Canadian national interests, from increased circumpolar security to trade and commercial opportunities in natural resources and telecommunications in Russia.

19 When referring to governmental texts or statements, I retain the use of 'aboriginal' as a descriptive word for the original inhabitants of North America. However, I would argue that the preferred term, at least in reference to Canadian native peoples, is indigenous and otherwise use this term throughout.
ICC-Canada facilitated the indigenous component of the INRIPP project. Several motivations for their officials' involvement in international development efforts became apparent through interviews and text analysis, ranging from senses of obligation to financial benefit. The ICC was founded in 1977 to represent Inuit in the United States (Alaska), Canada (NWT, Nunavut), Greenland, and Russia (Chukotka) and has since grown into a large organization representing 150,000 Inuit at the international level. ICC's principle aims are: 'strengthen unity among Inuit of the circumpolar region; promote Inuit rights and interests on an international level, develop and encourage long-term policies that safeguard the Arctic environment; and seek full and active partnership in the political, economic, and social development of circumpolar regions.'

As one ICC interviewee put it, ICC supported the idea of INRIPP because the organization is based upon a sense of relatedness and mutual obligation between all Inuit and the founding principle of the organization is to 'unite Inuit of the world.' ICC delegates from other parts of the world began traveling to the Soviet Union and Chukotka in the mid-1980s, trying to get the Inuit of Chukotka involved in the ICC. It was through this effort that ICC officials first learned about the difficult living conditions facing the Inuit of Chukotka in the waning years of the Soviet Union and following its collapse in 1991. The organization's officials felt they had an obligation to respond as, in the words of this interviewee, 'part of a family extending across borders,' to the dire humanitarian situation in Chukotka, which arose due to the collapse of northern state subsidies and transportation infrastructure and the introduction of a new and unstable market economy. Another interviewee, who became deeply involved in founding the Arctic Council and INRIPP stated, 'it was obvious to me that there was a need for Inuit and other indigenous peoples to represent themselves adequately at the local, national, or international level...these trips had an impact on all of us...I really wanted to do something to help make a change.'

21 The status of ICC as a non-governmental organization can be debated, as ICC also represents Inuit and regional governments as well. One ICC informant told me he preferred to think of the ICC as an indigenous governmental organization, or IGO.
Furthermore, ICC leaders see their efforts in international development as part of their identification with other indigenous peoples worldwide. ICC leader Sheila Watt-Cloutier makes this clear in her foreword to an ICC publication on international development:

Indigenous peoples worldwide have a common struggle and a common message: we need to, and can, support one another. We have learned certain lessons that we must share and from which we can progress. In having traveled a good portion of the globe and having met with many Indigenous groups, I know – I sense and feel – our commonality, our desire to be more equal partners in development and to again become masters of our own destiny...(Watt-Cloutier 2001: np).

Therefore, the development work in Russia can be seen as supported by both a desire to assist Inuit and other Russian indigenous peoples.

Secondly, ICC-Canada became involved in Russia to strengthen the position of indigenous peoples in the Arctic Council. ICC-Canada leaders worked quite hard to ensure that indigenous people would be involved in the Arctic Council as permanent participants. A Canadian interviewee instrumental in promoting the Arctic Council stated that ICC wanted to reinforce the position of the permanent participants on the Arctic Council by bringing Russian indigenous peoples into the picture. However, ‘there was no established organizations with which to build contact. As a result, institution building was critical and an organization representing Russian indigenous peoples at the domestic level was necessary.’

Finally, INRIPP was a way of strengthening the position of ICC internationally and a means of gaining funds for internal capacity building and improvement. An ICC employee told me in an interview that it became clear throughout the 1980s, particularly through ICC’s involvement in the Working Group on Indigenous Populations at the United Nations, that ICC had experience of relevance to other indigenous organizations and that this experience could be a potential source for generating revenue. She explained that ‘other peoples, Arctic and all over, started
asking us for our expertise and we realized that here is an expertise that is applicable and adaptable, a service we can provide. 'A consultant with a long history of working on ICC development projects further envisioned these projects as paving the way for joint financial ventures in the future. He argued that this is one of the key reasons that Inuit leaders support such projects. An ICC leader informed me that the project was useful to ICC in a directly practical way, as the funds from CIDA for the project went through ICC, which provided finances for further staffing and internal capacity building.

The multiple and overlapping motivations of these organizations point to how development is also a means through which economic opportunities and political influence can be increased, not solely an activity rooted in an altruistic desire to help people. In fact, the knowledge and models offered through INRIPP are more than just something to be shared – knowledge is a commodity to be offered for immediate profit or potential future gain. In this light it becomes clearer why development projects involved in moving knowledge and models over borders may continue despite the lack of evidence demonstrating the feasibility or success of such efforts. Other benefits, political and economic, remain essential incentives as well.

2.4 History and Structure of INRIPP

INRIPP ran in two phases: INRIPP I (1996-2000) and INRIPP II (2000-2005). INRIPP began when two key players in Canadian Arctic politics, Mary Simon and Walter Slipchenko, began thinking of ways in which they could deliver assistance to the Inuit of Chukotka. Simon, then representing the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, and Slipchenko, founder of the Circumpolar Affairs Division of DIAND (which later became the CLD) and then executive director of the Canadian Arctic Council Secretariat, decided to approach CIDA for funding projects in Chukotka.

Development officials at CIDA, however, encouraged them to consider a project that would deliver aid to a broader Russian indigenous audience. Simon and Slipchenko had already been approached by the indigenous Russian leader Yeremei Aipin, who asked for technical assistance for the indigenous movement in Russia. At that time, as
a Canadian project worker later put it, 'the aboriginal movement in Russia was fragmented, and it wasn’t united at the federal level, there was nothing. [The Russian aboriginal association] was essentially carried in Aipin’s bag – just a few documents.’ Increasingly aware of the disorganized and poorly funded state of the Russian indigenous political movement, Simon and Slipchenko determined that a capacity building project, focusing on supporting a national indigenous organization as well as regional affiliates, would be a way of reaching many Russian indigenous peoples, albeit indirectly, and of filling a readily apparent need. Furthermore, as post-Soviet Russia no longer had the funds to participate significantly in Arctic scientific and cooperative activities set up under earlier state-to-state bilateral agreements, a development project was seen as the way in which to continue to engage with Russia on Arctic issues.

Subsequently, a delegation of Canadian bureaucrats and indigenous leaders traveled to several regions of Russia to conduct an exploratory tour and to consult with indigenous organizations in Russia. In their 1997 report, the Canadian delegation noted significant differences between Canada and Russia and delivered recommendations as to how a technical assistance project should be structured. The members of the delegation pointed to pressing issues, such as lack of legislation relating to land rights for indigenous people, lack of understanding of the market economy, poorly funded and organized indigenous associations, lack of governmental policy or vision concerning the North, and a complex and murky financial and political relationship between the federal center and the regions. As a result of their two-week diplomatic visits to Siberia and the Russian Far East, the Canadian delegation recommended that Canada deliver financial support to regional associations, including a training program and study tours of the Canadian North for Russian indigenous leaders and northern bureaucrats. The delegation recommended that training courses should work to clarify the differences that they had noted between Canadian and Russian understandings of self-government, land use, and government accountability to indigenous peoples.23

23 I received this unpublished report, titled ‘Summary of Debriefing Held on July 16, 1997,’ from Walter Slipchenko in February 2005. In this report, the delegation further noted major differences between Canada and Russia in terms of the positioning of indigenous people in political discourse. They felt that the rights-based agenda that strongly characterizes state-indigenous relationships in Canada was absent in Russia and also noted that indigeneity in Russia is not as clear-cut as in Canada,
These observations led to the first phase of INRIPP, which focused on delivering practical assistance to regional organizations, facilitating the establishment of a central office for RAIPON in Moscow and supporting their participation on the Arctic Council, and organizing training programs for indigenous representatives and bureaucrats. Subsequently, ICC-Canada and the CLD sought funds for a second phase of the project to be carried out over the next five years. They received a budget of five million dollars in July 2000. At a roundtable in 1998, when project workers and representatives of ICC and CLD were considering whether or not a second phase would be necessary, it became clear, in the words of one project coordinator, that Russian participants:

were looking for concrete tangible models to help them with community development, looking for examples and practical learning. So the second phase had to focus on this...and we traveled to Khanty-Mansiysk and Yamal-Nenets to conduct needs assessments, to find out about priority needs and how to focus this assistance.

Another project worker commented that economic development was chosen as the focus of the second phase of the project because 'it became clear that indigenous people were going to be increasingly marginalized during the transition to a market economy...and we needed to focus on how to give indigenous peoples the skills they needed to create benefits for entire communities.' The resulting project, INRIPP II, consisted of three interrelated components (indigenous to indigenous, governmental, and co-management) meant to promote economic development and to ensure the direct participation of indigenous peoples in economic development and decision-making processes at local, regional, and national levels.

The ‘Indigenous to Indigenous Component’ of INRIPP II focused primarily on the establishment of RITC in Moscow. RITC relied upon Canadian and Russian

where indigenous are the ‘first people’ and the majority in the North. In Russia, by contrast, there are many other minorities or nationalities claiming a unique relationship to the state and indigenous people are often the minority within their districts.

24 Office and communications equipment was distributed to thirty regional offices of RAIPON (representing about 200,000 indigenous constituents) during INRIPP I.
consultants to deliver training programs to Russian indigenous delegates in small business development, community mobilization, project development, and fund raising. It is clear from interviews and project literature that the rationale behind the indigenous to indigenous component in the INRIPP project was the belief that indigenous people share something in common and this commonality helps them learn from one another. For example, one project worker commented that the indigenous to indigenous component was helpful in communicating new ideas because:

indigenous interns gain an appreciation of similarities through cultural exchange. The message is the people are the same, the struggles are the same, and there are just specific adaptations. The idea is that indigenous people are one and, therefore, their experiences are more relevant to one another.

The extent to which program participants identified with one another on the basis of indigeneity is further explored in chapter three.

The ‘Government to Government Component’ was designed to be consistent with the Arctic Council agenda for sustainable development, the NDFP, and the Russian Federal Program ‘Economic and Social Development of the Indigenous Peoples of the North to 2010.’ At the governmental level, the CLD worked with Goskomsever with an eye towards creating a nurturing environment for indigenous small businesses and co-management. They focused their efforts upon four activities: 1) a small business development internship program, including study tours of the Canadian North, 2) establishment of a community economic development corporation in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (district), drawing upon the Canadian northern experience of community development corporations (specifically Makivik in Nunavik (northern Quebec) and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, NWT), 3) Round-table Conference/Trade Exhibition showcasing indigenous and northern marketable products, and 4) adapting Canadian northern technical expertise on the processing of wildlife meat to the Siberian context through onsite demonstrations in the Siberian regions of Evenkia and Taimyr and a study tour of northern Canadian wild-meat processing for four indigenous representatives.
The dissolution of Goskomsever in 2000 caused CLD to develop a relationship with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade at the Russian federal level and to add a regional focus, especially on Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug [District] (KMAO) and Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (YNAO). CLD officials involved in the project had struggled to work with Goskomsever, due to constantly changing federal structures, the committee’s lack of money and power, and the low rank of indigenous peoples on the federal agenda. In light of the fact that they were dealing with a federal center that, in the words of one DIAND interviewee, ‘wasn’t very committed as [indigenous peoples] are not a burning issue at the federal level,’ they decided to bypass the federal level by working more directly with regional governments.

CLD staff would have liked to work more with two other Siberian regions, Taimyr and Evenkia, but, as one CLD staff member told me, it ‘was difficult to establish cooperation because governance is quite weak and the leadership, overwhelmingly oligarchic, is divorced from the people...and there is a tendency to buy off local and indigenous elites...Their real interest is in oil, not governance.’ Another CLD representative described these areas as ‘basically one-company provinces...and we lost touch with them due to leadership changes.’ By contrast, YNAO and KMAO seemed open to partnership and interested in international cooperation. Both regions share the characteristic of being resource-rich and, as one CLD representative observed, ‘were eager to get close to foreign partners socially, not just economically through trade.’
The third component of the project focused upon the introduction of the concept of co-management of natural resources to the Russian regions, drawing upon the experience of Canadian co-management boards in the Canadian North. Following the completion of the training seminars, such as the 2002 seminar in Moscow and the 2003 seminar in Khanty-Mansiysk, INRIPP coordinators intended to implement a pilot project in co-management in a selected region. However, the rough reception of
the idea of co-management by Russian participants at seminars representatives caused project coordinators to cancel the pilot project and posit the 'need to evaluate the authenticity of Russian interest in co-management'—a rejection that is considered further in chapter four.

2.5 Contested Discourses of Sustainable and Grassroots Development

The language of sustainable development ran throughout all of the components of the project described above. In this section, I illustrate how Canadian speakers presented sustainable development to Russian trainees during the course of the project, in particular drawing upon my experience traveling with Russian interns on a study tour of the Canadian North. Subsequently, I explicate part of the INRIPP structure and approach, namely its focus on regions, by examining how sustainable development discourses entail a shift in geographical focus and scale, from the state to regional and local levels, and explore how beliefs about the 'grassroots' and the 'local' shaped INRIPP. I link these understandings of the 'local' to a brief history of federalism and political power in Canada and Russia. Finally, I outline some arguments about development and power, which are further elucidated in chapters four and five.

The term sustainable development has become 'common currency worldwide,' beginning with its introduction by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and reinforced and supplemented by the World Commission on Environmental Development (the Brundtland Commission) (Young 1992: 215). In fact, the concepts of ecology and sustainable development have become a hegemonic and normative master frame for talking about and acting upon the human-environment relationship in political debate throughout the world (Harper 2001; Lewellen 1995). DIAND has adopted the basic conception of sustainable development from the Brundtland Commission's report:

[Sustainable development] is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs...sustainable development is a process of change in which exploitation
of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations.\(^\text{25}\)

Despite these eminently citable definitions, the actual practice of sustainable development, namely how one ‘does’ sustainable development, remains a contested issue.

Tennberg, in her discursive analysis of Arctic environmental debate, points to different perceptions of the environment as a major barrier to reaching consensus on sustainable development. She argues that Russians tend to see environmental concerns in the Arctic as resulting from discrete development projects in the fragile Arctic. To them, the general trend of development need not be changed, but rather these specific issues should be addressed through ever-improving technological solutions and increased scientific knowledge and data about particular locations and activities. Canadians, on the other hand, advocate for an understanding of the Arctic region as a dynamic and diverse ecosystem and call for increased attention to broader issues, such as transboundary pollutants (Tennberg 2000: 85).\(^\text{26}\) The definition and practice of sustainable development clearly relies upon scientific and policy-making traditions, as well as beliefs and vision about nature, that differ from state to state and within states and make reaching consensus a challenging task.

Of all the project events in which I participated, the term ‘sustainable development’ came up most frequently on a study tour of the Canadian North, which was designed to familiarize 10 Russian delegates (5 indigenous, 5 non-indigenous) with the Canadian approach to northern economic and community development. The interns first encountered the idea of sustainable development in Canada at a workshop run by DIAND bureaucrats. The bureaucrats listed a variety of potentially sustainable industries, including mining, forestry, oil and gas, fisheries, commercial and industrial parks, hydroelectric power, and agriculture. From this exhaustive list of essentially


\(^{26}\) See also chapter four in Keskitalo (2004) for a detailed discussion on sustainable development debate in the Arctic Council.
all economic activity taking place in the Canadian North, it was difficult to gain a notion of what type of industry was not sustainable.

However, in Nunavut, an Arctic territory established in 1999 that is meant to be both a public government within the Canadian polity and a homeland for the 30,000 indigenous Inuit who live there, interns were presented with a definition of sustainable development that demonstrated some of the relationships that such development would imply. The clearest definition was offered by the Nunavut Department of Sustainable Development and came from a public statement on development on their departmental website:

[Sustainable Development] means that we recognize that the development of the economy is dependent on the land and the continuing good health of the natural environment that has sustained our peoples for thousands of years. Sustainable development also means development that includes all our people, that draws on the talents and on the collective wisdom that we have inherited from our ancestors. 27

In this definition, the notion of sustainable development involves relationships between people and the land, between people, and between people and their heritage. It is clear here that a vision of sustainability includes an emphasis on the use of Inuit knowledge and practices in monitoring the relationship between people and the environment and in finding a balance between development and preservation.

The word ‘grassroots’ was frequently linked to how and where sustainable development was meant to be achieved. At a study tour meeting in Rankin Inlet, a 2,200-person town on the shores of Hudson Bay in Nunavut, the Russian interns were told that development should cater to and be inspired by ‘grassroots desires’ and involvement. As one economic development officer in Rankin Inlet commented, ‘the community should make decisions about what should be done with the money…it should be grassroots development.’ This emphasis on ‘grassroots development’ was evident at almost all stops on the study tour and was also prominent in the vocabulary

of Canadian project workers in Russia. I believe that this emphasis on grassroots is linked to the rhetoric of sustainable development, as intimate knowledge of place would be necessary to determine what is sustainable and what is not.

This linkage between sustainability and a rhetoric of the 'local' was reinforced by the shift away from the 'Washington consensus' over the past 15-20 years. The 'Washington Consensus' approach to development advocated market liberalization and Western-style democracy as the key tools for development in any location (Edwards 2001: 2). The underlying assumption of this approach was that development could be achieved through universally applicable processes that should work everywhere.

One response to this new approach in development has been a focus on the regional or local levels or on marginalized people at the 'grassroots level,' such as the impoverished, minorities, and indigenous peoples. Adams and Hulme (2001: 12) note that a discourse of community and local participation in management and conservation efforts was integral to the shift from ' 'top down', "technocratic", "blueprint" approaches to development...[to] an alternative agenda...[in which] development goals could only be achieved by "bottom up planning", "decentralization", "process approaches", "participation" and "community organization".' They argue that the notion of 'community participation' has become a dominant discourse in contemporary development.

Many of the Canadians involved in the project expressed commitment to the notion that the success of their project depended upon their ability to reach everyday people and to provide them with information and opportunities. The local level is seen as a somehow 'true' location where real change can be realized. One CLD official commented that they went to the regions 'out of a desire to test models and because we felt that to really encourage democracy and civil society you have to work at the local level.' Another project worker saw the 'community level' as the only location 'where change is actually possible.' In fact, when asked about future development work in one on one interviews, almost all Canadians involved in the project

28 However, as I argue in chapter five, I find that the idea of universally applicable concepts and institutions still characterized the INRIPP approach and that Canadian project workers relied upon the concept of a model as an important ideological and communicative device. In my experience, it is clear that the shift from the Washington consensus, with its emphasis on universal tenets, did not involve abandoning the prescriptive language of universally applicable models, but rather involves offering those models at a more local level as something that can be adapted to suit new settings.
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commented that they wanted to establish concrete pilot projects at the community level in regions with resource wealth and supportive administrations.

Russian perceptions of the locations and scales in which change is possible differ substantially. As is discussed in chapters four and five, Russian project participants overwhelmingly envisioned the federal center as the location in which change must be initiated. In seminars, it became increasingly obvious to me that Russians, while not resentful of the idea of grassroots work, simply did not share Canadian beliefs about the power and possibility of the 'local.' For example, at the co-management seminar in Khanty-Mansiysk, after two days of listening to Canadians emphasizing local and indigenous participation in resource management decisions, a bureaucrat responsible for indigenous affairs responded to a criticism that his department was not devolving enough power to the local level. He stated, 'it is irrelevant to us if development comes from the top down or the bottom up as long as there is progress.'

These varying approaches to the 'local' can be linked to the different histories of federalism in Canada and Russia. Although continuities between the Soviet Union and present-day Russia can be problematic to draw, the present Russian federation of districts, regions, and republics encompasses two competing principles inherited from the Soviet era. Lenin and early Soviet politicians supported the idea of self-government and autonomy for the many national minorities within the newly drawn borders of the Soviet Union while, at the same time, establishing a strong tradition of centralism, or what McAuley (1992: 2) calls 'a huge centralized state machine,' with key decisions and policies coming from Moscow. Blakkisrud and Hønneland argue that 'when the two principles came into conflict, [centralism] always prevailed...in reality, the Soviet Union represented a pro-forma ethno-federal structure covering up a reality of extreme centralisation' (2001:4). By contrast, Canada has a well-developed and stable federal structure in practice as well as in law, in which the federal center retains jurisdiction over clearly defined areas while other authorities are devolved to provinces, territories, municipalities, and communities (Brownsey and Howlett 2001). Given that that the renamed governmental institutions of present-day Russia bear 'the unmistakable stamp of the Soviet epoch' (Kotkin 2001: 165) and that the relationship between regions and the federal center remains highly changeable (Blakkisrud and Hønneland 2001), it becomes more apparent why Russians found it
difficult, if not impossible, to relate to the optimistic Canadian rhetoric of the ‘local’ as the site of potential successful change.

Despite this disconnect between beliefs about where change was possible, Russian interns were brought to the Canadian North to examine for themselves what was at the ‘grassroots’ level of indigenous economic development in Canada. An emphasis on travel ran throughout the INRIPP project and about 140 Russians were brought to the North during phases one and two of the project. Through the study tours, the Canadians were inviting the Russians to get to know them and to gain knowledge about the northern regions, albeit in a relatively controlled and highly programmed way (i.e. there was very tight schedule and we did not visit sites, such as homeless or women’s shelters, that attest to ongoing social suffering in indigenous communities in the Canadian North).

Some Russians, however, seemed to resent Canadians gaining similar knowledge about the Russian regions at a local level. Two Russian indigenous interviewees couched their doubts about Canadians working at the regional level by emphasizing that they felt a more proper forum for international relations was the Arctic Council. For example, the highly placed bureaucrat from the Sakha Republic, whose words of criticism were cited in the introductory chapter, found hope for international collaboration, if only the Canadians would abandon their quest for the ‘grassroots’ level and demonstrate more of the respect for the diverse traditions of the Arctic. After listing the obstacles towards successful local and regional partnership, he stated:

But there are aspects that could be shared. Both Canada and Russia are members of the Arctic Council, which deals with the problems of natural resource conservation and the problems of indigenous people...through the Council we could tackle some large problems.

In the context of this speech, it was clear that Canadian participation, in the form of sharing funds and information at the international level with Russians as equals, was welcomed, but development action at and the transfer of aid to the regional and local levels as part of a relationship of non-equals was not.
It is necessary to understand the implicit relationship of inequality underlying the act of development in order to grasp one of the reasons why the target audience may reject foreign ideas in a development effort. Bourdieu argues that all exchanges must be considered in the light that 'giving is also a way of possessing: it is a way of binding another while shrouding the bond in a gesture of generosity' (Bourdieu, 1993: 24). In INRIPP, project workers often emphasized that they wanted the Russians to experience a sense of partnership - a word that implies equality and mutual endeavor. They often left the program flexible so that, as one interview put it, 'we could make sure the regions felt ownership over the program.' This is in contrast, however, to other structural and discursive features of the program. For example, Russians visiting the North were called 'interns,' while Canadians were called 'experts.' Furthermore, Russian institutions and governance practices were never discussed extensively at any INRIPP events and, in this way, it became clear that it was Canadian institutions that were meant to be replicated as a result of this 'partnership.' Arguably, Russians may have resisted Canadian ideas in order to reject their role as the needy party, bound by the Canadians' gestures of generosity.

I noted several instances when the Russian interns on the study tour felt burdened or ashamed of their status as the target audience of development efforts. Most interns understood that there were problems, such as poverty and alcoholism, afflicting their communities and the indigenous peoples or governments they represented. However, this 'neediness' was constantly highlighted through comparison, both implicit and explicit, with the Canadian North and indigenous peoples there. Although they were, without exception, openly curious and welcoming of the advice of Canadian experts, they frequently qualified their need for Canadian expertise as a time-limited one. They created a picture in which they, and their communities or regions, were not perpetually needy, but suffering from difficulties extending from Soviet time, in particular the damage done to traditional indigenous economies by state organized and enforced economic policies and by the collapse of communism in the early 1990s. They searched for moments in which to mention positives aspects of their communities, such as indigenous national holidays, folklore, and traditions, which have been relatively well preserved under the Soviet Union. Some chose to point to apparent Canadian failings, with one interview observing that some shared problems, such as alcoholism and unemployment, were lower in one Russian region (YNAO)
than in the NWT of Canada. Although the emphasis, as is elucidated next, was primarily upon sharing, partnership, and engaging in dialogue, the notion of Russians as the needy partners in this endeavor persisted.

2.6 Dialogue and the Canadian Performance of Development

Canadians hoped dialogue would serve to transfer some of their fundamental ideas about how relationships between the state, indigenous peoples, the environment, and the market economy should be organized. In this section, I describe how the Canadians framed their information and remarks through the notions of sharing and dialogue. This description provides the background for understanding how the specific models examined in later chapters – co-management of natural resources and economic development corporations – were communicated. In the subsequent section, I outline some of the Canadians’ shared perceptions about the nature of the barriers that they believed prevented Russians from understanding them and engaging in ‘constructive dialogue’.

Despite the Canadian delegates’ varying professional and personal backgrounds, all engaged in a remarkably similar performance of development – appearing humble, yet knowledgeable. A statement by a DIAND representative, at the seminar on co-management in Khanty-Mansiysk, elucidates this approach:

It is important for Canada to look comparatively at shared questions and issues. Both of us are looking at sustainable development and competing uses of land. What is unique here is that you’re looking at indigenous participation in the mainstream economy while supporting more traditional ways of life.

This stance was obviously designed to put the Russians at ease and to reduce the possibility that the Canadians be perceived as ‘preaching’ to or ‘lecturing’ their hosts by stating that both sides had something to learn.
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The Canadians involved with the project also often made statements to emphasize their humility, such as ‘we didn’t get it all right all the time...we continue to strive to make the system work.’ At the seminar on co-management in Khanty-Mansiysk, the Canadian delegation arranged to show a film about a standoff between a Metis group in Alberta and oil companies that resulted in loss of an economic development opportunity, out of a desire to show that ‘Canada doesn’t have all the answers.’ The Canadians thought that showing signs of weakness would demonstrate their sincerity and honesty and encourage the Russians to examine their own shortcomings. The Canadians, conceivably, thought that by acknowledging flaws in their own systems Russians would feel welcome to engage in such critical thinking and appraisal of Russian governance as well.

In many ways, however, the Canadians humble approach seemed to undermine their legitimacy in the eyes of the Russian audience. For example, one oil representative took the Canadian film, ‘Patch of Trouble,’ to be an affirmation of the already existing Russian system and commented that the kind of ‘scandalous disorder that we saw in Canada will never happen in Russia.’ The oil representative took advantage of Canadians’ humility to invert the teacher/student relationship inherent to this development project, stating that ‘we should invite the [people in the film] to Russia and teach them about effective co-management.’

Another key feature of the approach to development in the project was an emphasis on the need for ‘open dialogue and sharing of best practices.’ In most statements, it was clear that the Canadians felt that the transfer of models and experience could be achieved through dialogue. For example, an ICC-Canada representative who participated in almost all INRIPP events made a statement that he often reiterated throughout the projects’ various seminars: ‘let’s learn from each other...don’t be afraid to ask questions...be open with your questions because we may learn from this experience as well.’ On a similar note, he later stated ‘we’re not saying you should take our experiences, just take a look and use best practices. The more we talk amongst each other the better off we’ll be in the long run.’ Dialogue was seen as a way in which Canadian experiences could be outlined and described, but not prescribed.
Dialogue was also seen as a valuable product in and of itself. Despite frustrations, the members of the Canadian delegation frequently commented amongst themselves that ‘we’re getting good dialogue.’ In a particularly tense moment during a role-play on the final day of a conference on co-management, one member of the Canadian delegation stated that a tirade from an oil representative ‘wasn’t a dialogue, but an attack.’ This loss of dialogue was seen as the lowest point of the conference by the Canadian delegation. The Russian facilitator of the role-play, however, saw that moment as productive. He replied, ‘we can’t have dialogue without clarity of positions first.’

This moment invited me to look at the different ways that Canadians and Russians perceived dialogue throughout the project. Canadians frequently referred to the fact that ‘we’re having a dialogue’ as a way of indicating progress at any given seminar or meeting – if dialogue occurred, the event had been worthwhile. This dialogue ethic stems from the understanding in Western societies that dialogue is a non-hierarchical mode of communication through which consensus can be achieved and mutual solidarity developed. Dialogue is supposed to be able to hold individual differences in productive tension, resulting in new ways of thinking, mutual understanding, impersonal friendship, and the development of common ground (Roberts 1996).

Several Russian interviewees seemed to concur with the Canadian belief in the value of dialogue. One indigenous interviewee in Khanty-Mansiysk told me that the co-management seminar was a good exercise in problematic locations where there are overlapping interests between oil companies and indigenous peoples, because ‘such a dialogue can help you understand what kind of interests are at work and if people, such as the oil representatives, actually have bad intentions or if they are just misinformed.’ In his opinion, ongoing dialogue was needed in order to bring about a change in the ‘mentalities of oil companies’ – a change that was necessary to facilitate a more productive discussion that he also called a ‘dialogue.’ He commented:

The aboriginal positions are more or less ready; we just need to have willing partners for dialogue. You saw [the oil companies’ representatives] at the seminar, how do you have a conversation with them? They just produce confusing media or indecipherable documents. We need normal documents
and normal people to have a conversation with. The oil representatives are not
guilty or at fault, but they need to learn how to have a normal conversation
with aboriginal peoples.

The contrast he calls forth in his comparison of the ‘dialogue’ at the seminar and what
he would really like to have with the oil companies implies that he is referring more to
the English equivalent of ‘negotiation,’ which implies conversation leading to
concrete results rather than something that is valuable in and of itself as a process.

Not all Russians perceived dialogue with the visiting Canadians to be positive, or
even possible. An oil representative who had attended the seminar on co-
management in Khanty-Mansiysk later argued, in a follow-up interview, that, while
dialogue was desirable, the Canadians could not possibly achieve it because they
came with the attitude that they themselves and their ideas were superior. He stated
that the Canadians:

thought that they were better, that their system was better than what we have
in Russia. It was really more of a monologue than a dialogue and a dialogue
was what was actually needed. They assumed that co-management was the
best system. They should have thought more about the specifics of the okrug
and questioned whether or not co-management was the best system for
everyone everywhere.

This participant believed that the lack of equality and respect that he sensed between
the Canadians and the Russians foreclosed the possibility of real dialogue.

Other Russian interviewees interpreted this emphasis on speech and dialogue to be
negative or simply a performance that obscured real debate. Several participants, in
knowing comments such as ‘we know what these seminars are about’ or ‘well, it was
just a seminar,’ highlighted the performative nature of the seminars and the
Soviet/Russian tradition of meetings as spectacle. One Khanty activist and folklorist
expressed concern to me in a follow-up interview that the visiting Canadians at the
seminar in Khanty-Mansiysk believed that they had just taken part in an open and free
dialogue. He commented that the Canadian experts could not possibly really
understand the situation in Khanty-Mansiysk, mainly because the Canadians were in a relationship that was controlled by the KMAO government, which was intent on giving a good show. He likened the seminar’s careful veneer to a Soviet practice of setting up three or four ‘show’ reindeer camps to demonstrate how successful the Soviet system was. On a similar note, another Khanty activist saw the seminar as just another governmental performance for a visiting delegation – a moment that obscured further the challenges facing Khanty and Mansi in the territory. She stated, ‘KMAO showed a good face, but in reality no one worries about what actually happens.’ Thus the fact that Canadians expected dialogue to be polite and non-argumentative and the regional government’s leading role at the seminar led to a situation in which several indigenous activists felt that the real issues and their points of view had been silenced.

2.7 Visions of the Other: Canadian Perceptions of Russia and Russians

Members of Canadian delegations frequently reminded one another of the need to ‘try and understand that Russians have a different view of the world.’ In this section, I outline how the Canadians involved in the project envisioned barriers to transmitting their knowledge on co-management and economic development that were perceived as stemming from this ‘Russian view of the world.’ The Canadians, on the whole, did not talk about these impediments as if they were something that the Russians could perceive as well. Rather, due to their status as outsiders and much like the social scientist, the Canadian project workers felt they could discern characteristic aspects of Russians and Russian life due to their external positioning. The Canadians also frequently tried to consider Russian experience in terms of their own, something that is highlighted throughout this section. The Canadian perceptions of barriers to understanding fall into three broad categories: 1) fear of change, 2) the ‘Soviet/Russian’ mind, and 3) present-day Russia as the Canadian past. I pursue this last issue of time and temporality slightly further to examine how the divergent histories of both the Canadian and Russian states were dealt with in INRIPP encounters.
Canadian project consultants often referred to the complexity of the political situation in Russia and linked this to fear of innovation. One consultant commented that ‘I don’t know enough about Russian legal frameworks or culture to know what’s involved,’ but posited fear as an important obstacle. Many project workers believed that fear was a barrier to learning and tended to see the rejection of their ideas as a result of fear. One DIAND official working on the project pointed out the precariousness of the situation of indigenous people and another explained that new ideas probably would not be adopted because ‘indigenous peoples are terrified of losing what little they have.’ A senior consultant, with many years experience working in Russia, stated that it was important to understand the role of fear:

I was struck early on about how most of us thought it was just a matter of telling people what they needed to know...I realized that the [Russians] were coming from a profoundly different place...[the] reasons why ideas didn’t stick were emotional blocks – change is bad because the potential downside of change is horrific. We thought we should just speak louder rather than changing the message. Some Canadians have learned from our mistakes, but there are also a lot of people involved who haven’t.

Most consultants envisioned Russia as a chaotic place and attributed the fear of change to this chaotic and transitional environment.

Another obstacle was seen to be barriers in dealing with people of a different mindset – the ‘Soviet/Russian mind.’ One Canadian interviewee, with extensive experience in the FSU, stated that it is ‘difficult for us to understand how screwed up [life under Communism] was, the game was to get ahead however you could.’ She believed that this has created a culture that does not respect rules, as most rules before had been nonsensical and only sporadically enforced. This observation corresponds with Kotkin’s commentary on the relative weakness of law in controlling and directing present-day Russian society as an extension of a tradition of rule violation under the Soviet Union. He argues that rule violation was so extensive that ‘if every transgression were to have been punished, almost all of Soviet officialdom would have had to been executed or jailed’ (2001: 28). Other statements about the Russian/Soviet mind included ‘Russians don’t plan for the future,’ making the
planning aspects of co-management difficult to grasp, and that ‘Russians aren’t focusing on sustainable development or thinking about the next generation.’ These observations were explained by the experience of Soviet citizens under communism, when planning was impossible and unnecessary under the hegemonic Soviet state.

Another frequent observation on the Russian and Soviet mind was that Russians were unable to pick apart the Canadian experience to ‘take what works’ and were not interested in thinking through the moral or ethical foundations of various approaches to development. One consultant commented that critical thinking and creativity was of low value in the Soviet educational system and workplace and, as a result, ‘Russian bureaucrats have difficulty unpacking concepts, like co-management, and picking and choosing the parts that appeal to them.’ An Inuit participant was shocked by Russian’s cool reception of the co-management idea and attributed this to an inability to think: ‘The Russians have been brainwashed! They think co-management can’t be done without legislation.’ Another felt that Russians were not interested in pursuing change in order to address moral or ethical issues, such as adopting co-management to empower indigenous peoples, and thus believed that his task was to, ‘to show [the Russians] how [co-management] could put food on the table.’ This position is supported by the relative success of cooperation around technical issues. One experienced developer pointed out that in past development projects ‘we were more or less on the same page as the Russians when dealing with technical issues...we didn’t go in talking about democracy.’ Although Canadians presented the difficulty of discussion moral or ethical issues as something unique to the Russian mind, I argue, in chapter five, that barriers to communication also lay in fundamental features of contemporary communicative processes, within which it is difficult to achieve the levels of narrative and argumentation needed to talk about moral and ethical issues.

These critiques about mindsets were often related to a critique of Russian indigenous peoples relative failure to unite and achieve greater financial and political power as a collective. At the co-management seminar in Khanty-Mansiysk, it became clear that indigenous Khanty and Mansi family groups herding on land compromised by oil exploration individually accepted relatively small settlements. This is in contrast to the history of indigenous political movements in Canada, which often encompassed many thousands of people and engaged in collective bargaining with the Canadian
state. The Canadians thought that this family by family approach, rather than uniting and demanding a large permanent fund from oil companies, indicated that indigenous peoples in Russia were not interested in protecting the environment or planning for future generations. One DIAND consultant said:

I haven’t heard anything that says to me that aboriginal peoples here are looking for something beyond money...they are bought out by the oil companies...there is no discussion of entrepreneurship. It’s important to note that the families don’t want unite. They each want to deal directly with the oil companies to get more.

In contrast to this belief of ‘not wanting unity,’ another project participant commented that oil companies prevented political unity by ‘negotiating with one family only, so it is hard for them organize and speak as a collective and that makes it difficult to explain how to organize a common cause, like we have in Canada.’ The inability to unite at the regional level in Russia was perceived as a major obstacle, particularly by Canadian indigenous members of the various delegations. One participant, an Inuk from Nunavik (northern Quebec), commented that it was only through an Inuit and Cree alliance in northern Quebec that they had managed to negotiate their land claim – the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. To him, it is natural for indigenous people to seek out partnerships and he attributes the inability of Russian indigenous peoples to unite to government intervention. He believed that the ‘Russian governments are practicing a really old practice – divide and conquer.’

In addition to thinking about concrete differences between Canada and Russia, development workers frequently conceptualized Russia in terms of temporal or evolutionary analogies. A perceived barrier to the Canadian message was that it was simply too ‘early for the messages of co-management and economic development,’ as the Russian state and society were at a different point in ‘evolution’ than the Canadian state. For example, one consultant stated that ‘what’s going on here is like Canada twenty years ago or even in the 1960s.’ Operating under the assumption that Russia is Canada ‘in the past,’ some in the Canadian delegation made statements along the lines that the Russian system ‘could change faster because there are role models, like Canada.’ One Inuit representative commented upon the number of times that Russian
seminar participants in Khanty-Mansiysk strayed from the agenda, for example talking about inter-family squabbles rather than the idea of co-management. He believed that this showed they were just at ‘the beginning phases,’ which begs the question – beginning of what? A later comment by this same participant stated, ‘I want to give them a land claim.’ With this it becomes clear that he believed that Russian indigenous peoples were at the beginning of a process of evolution that would echo the political mobilization of the Inuit, which began in the 1950s and 1960s, led to the settlement of indigenous land claims in the 1980s and 1990s, and continues in political negotiations today. One consultant, while briefing two Canadian Inuit representatives over dinner, asserted that Inuit experience is particularly valuable to the indigenous peoples in Russia because, ‘not only do these people not have your level of experience, they also don’t have the history of the experience that you draw upon,’ meaning the history of the Inuit political movement in Canada. No discussion followed about what kind of ‘history of experience’ Russian indigenous peoples might have as the necessary history of experience was, ostensibly, to come from the visiting Inuit delegation.

These statements indicate the extent to which history, both Canadian and Russian, rested uneasily during INRIPP. On the whole, Canadians chose to ignore or displace the Russian past and present by likening them to Canada’s history of political evolution. By rendering the Russian past and present negligible by positing them as somehow known via their similarity to the Canadian past, Canadians circumvented crucial questions about the characteristics, roots, and enduring nature of Russian institutions and of Russian notions about land, citizenship, property, development, the environment, and indigeneity. In displacing the Russian/Soviet past and the circumstances of the Russian present and replacing it with the idea of present day Russia as equivalent to 1960s Canada, Canadians could imagine that political relationships, such as the relationship between government, oil companies and indigenous peoples, were undecided or in transition when, in reality, such relationships have long since been settled.

The implication of temporal categories is not unique, by any means, to development efforts. Fabian (1983), exploring the construction of ‘Others’ as subjects of anthropological inquiry, notes how anthropologists use time as a way of distancing
themselves from the subject of their study by positioning the peoples and communities with which they work as somehow in the past. This act of distancing is, he argues, a ‘denial of coevalness. By that I mean a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse’ (Fabian 1983: 31, emphasis original). Fabian argues that the act of ‘temporal othering’ relates to wider issues of politics, particularly the rise of capitalism and colonial expansion.

The expansive, aggressive and oppressive societies which we collectively and inaccurately call the West...required Time to accommodate the schemes of a one-way history: progress, development, modernity (and their negative mirror images: stagnation, underdevelopment, tradition). In short, geopolitics has its ideological foundations in chronopolitics (Fabian 1983: 144).

By distancing themselves temporally from the subject to be changed, in this case Russia, and positioning themselves as somehow further in the ‘future,’ development workers assigned to themselves the wisdom and ability to predict and prescribe change.

However, the Russian present is not the Canadian past. Canada and Russia are undoubtedly coeval. For example, the pursuit of oil began at approximately the same time, throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, in the northern areas of both Canada and Russia. This begs the question of why Russians should be considered newcomers to the politics of oil and gas extraction. Furthermore, as is shown in chapter three, the question of indigenous peoples is not a new one for Russia either. Rather, this issue has been long since addressed and legislated, however unsatisfactorily. This is an assumption that an INRIPP project leader also noted in commenting that the first phase of the project, which focused on building up the nascent indigenous movement and filling an organizational and financial void, had been more straightforward than the second phase of INRIPP, in which Canadians were dealing with entrenched interests and institutions in Russia. While I would argue that the Soviet and Russian solutions to the question of indigenous peoples rights to land and to the benefits of oil and gas exploration (explored further in chapter four) leave much to be desired, to envision these issues as unresolved or ‘up for grabs’ is naive.
The Canadian project workers, however, cannot be faulted for considering Russia to be a transitional environment as this assumption characterizes Western governmental, NGO, and, to some extent, academic discourse about the former Soviet Union. Kotkin describes the ‘transition’ from Soviet to democratic politics in this way:

Russia popularly elected and revamped its legislature, and popularly elected its president...But the country did not manage to cut back on the number, or transform the behaviour, of the hordes of executive branch officials it inherited...nor did it manage completely to overhaul the Soviet-era legal machinery, the Procuracy and the KGB and sufficiently bolster the very weak Soviet-era judiciary. Democracy came to Russia atop the debris of the Soviet Union’s expressly anti-liberal state, the institutional twin of the industrial planned economy (Kotkin 2001: 142-143).

If those involved in INRIPP acknowledged the task actually at hand, they would have been facing convincing the Russians that Russia’s present institutions needed to be changed, rather than just proposing new institutions for what Canadians imaginatively envisioned to be a political and institutional void. Ways in which such an enriched cross-cultural debate could be initiated are explored in the concluding chapter.

Another glossing of history is important to note. In many ways, the Canadians’ presentations of their northern governance institutions were representations that heavily idealized both the Canadian past and the Canadian present. In this way, the Canadian recent and colonial past could be reframed and rewritten in order to make it more palatable and admirable to an outside audience. For example, as is discussed in chapter four, co-management of natural resources was presented as being predicated on trusting relationships. In the absence of discussion of the acrimonious and sometimes violent political struggles between indigenous peoples and the Canadian state both in and out of the Canadian court system that preceded the establishment of such institutions, one can only assume that fair and participatory development is

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Kotkin lists the aspects of liberalism absent in Russia today to be a ‘legal order geared towards the defence of private property and the civic rights of those recognized as citizens’ and the rule of law in general (2001: 143-144).
simply the Canadian way of doing business. To take another example mentioned above, the study tour of northern Canada focused on economic development and included visits to small businesses, economic development corporations, and cultural sites. However, what the tour excluded were multiple sites, which I encountered during my fieldwork in Nunavut, that would attest to ongoing economic and social problems in indigenous communities in the Canadian North, stemming from a colonial relationship with Euro-Canadians and the Canadian state that succeeded them. These locations could include: overcrowded women’s shelters, community drives to collect clothes and toys to be distributed to the remote communities mostly left behind by present-day economic development, and meetings of concerned citizens desperately trying to address the reality that Nunavut’s suicide rate is four times the national average. Although I have no doubts that the Canadians involved in INRIPP were offering their co-management and economic development models benignly and with good intentions, it is important to note that these idealized representations displaced and obscured the Canadian past and present as well.

2.8 Conclusion

Adler and Haas (1992: 370, emphasis original), writing about international epistemic communities, argue that ‘we regard learning as a process that has to do more with politics than with science, turning the study of political process into a question about who learns what, when, to whose benefit, and why.’ In this chapter, I addressed the question posed by Adler and Haas by describing the general motivations of Canadian organizations and the Canadian state in supporting the transfer of knowledge and experience via the project. In particular, I explored how and why the Canadian government and other organizations strive for political and economic influence and opportunities in the Arctic, which serves to frame the argument about the concomitant processes of community and region building that forms the substance of chapter three. Subsequently, the more general principle consistently guiding Canadian project participants’ notions of how their efforts should be carried out – sustainable development at the grassroots level – was presented. Working at the grassroots level and placing emphasis on dialogue and sharing were seen as methods through which the inequality of power that is at the foundation of Western development efforts (i.e.
development efforts go north to south, or in this case west to east) could be minimized and the sharing of knowledge achieved.

However, the emphasis on dialogue and on working at the grassroots clearly was not enough to challenge Russian perceptions that they were being ‘lectured’ and seen as the needy partners in an unequal partnership. Canadian interpretations of the sometimes negative Russian response to Canadian perceptions of barriers to communication and dialogue were discussed. The ways in which Canadians involved in INRIPP frequently considered Russia in terms of their own experience in Canada can be interpreted as more than simply a tool for understanding a foreign environment. It also points to the need to displace the Russian past and ignore the Russian present in order to prescribe a highly idealized Canadian future towards which Russians were meant to work.
Chapter 3: The Production of Community in the Arctic

Indigenous peoples in Canada and Russia are different. They are part of different systems and their ways of thought are different too. With us, it is about the preservation of our roots [she seems to hold something in her hands] and it is very important for us to live a traditional way of life and to speak in our own language. Our concerns are about something spiritual and are more important than economics to us. In Canada they have a capitalist state and have developed in their own way, and now indigenous peoples do so much under their own strength...It's most important for us to have traditional land use, but the generation growing up now might be more interested in business and might choose new directions.  

Khanty bureaucrat and study tour intern

The Khanty bureaucrat cited here had traveled to Canada and participated in INRIPP seminars. Her emphasis on the differences between Canadian and Russian indigenous people is notable in light of project coordinators' beliefs that Arctic indigenous people are somehow the 'same' and therefore should be able to share information. Similarity, manifested as a shared identity flowing from shared discourse, is also a feature of much of the academic writing on cross-cultural collaborations, in which shared identity and discourse are posited to be the glue that holds precarious transnational endeavors together. This assumption is evident in the academic literature on Arctic region building in which it is argued that an identity of sorts results from region building efforts. INRIPP was part of these region-building efforts and, throughout my fieldwork, I found that Canadian and Russian project participants frequently referred to their belief in the significance of the Arctic region. However, I witnessed no evidence or assertions about a shared 'Arctic identity.' To further challenge the notion that a shared identity sustains and results from cross-cultural knowledge exchange and action, I trace how a potentially shared indigenous identity was invoked throughout the project. I then point out the ways in which this assumption of and quest towards sameness, while sometimes serving as a form of

30 The assertion that Canadian indigenous peoples are not interested in maintaining their unique way of life and culture would surprise many Canadian indigenous leaders and scholars, who place great importance on language, culture, and subsistence land use. However, this impression was widespread amongst Russian indigenous and non-indigenous persons with whom I spoke.
recognition and perhaps a basis for trust, did not facilitate knowledge exchange. This discussion of indigenous identity is grounded in a short overview of the history of indigenous-state relations and the emergence of indigenous movements at the international level, in Russia, and in Canada.

Despite the lack of a clearly shared regional or indigenous identity, participants did engage strategically in interactions, such as knowledge exchange, dialogue, and argument, that were predicated on having knowledge of one another’s vocabularies and practices. Participants recognized themselves to be in a certain normative and relational context, in which all had roles as speakers, knowers, and actors to be accepted or resisted. I argue that these contexts and relationships can be understood best as a type of community and, in the final section of this chapter, I explain why community is a useful conceptual and analytical tool. I assert that community, rather than identity, is the product of the interactions facilitated by region building and, more broadly, globalization. In this chapter, I hope to clear the conceptual space needed to conceive of actors in cross-cultural encounters as strategic agents, who are capable of consciously acquiescing to or resisting the claims, ideas, vocabularies, and practices of others.

3.1. Identity in Arctic Region Building Literature

In this section, I investigate why identity is seen as the product of region-building efforts and outline how scholars looking at Arctic region building deal with the question of identity. I first briefly describe the region-building approach to studying regions, which is constructivist and relies upon discourse analysis, and then highlight broader problems with the use of identity in the social sciences in general. Finally, I identify two interrelated reasons behind the problematic usage of identity in Arctic region building literature: 1) ideological baggage from region building’s theoretical roots in nation building and 2) a far too strongly assumed link between identity and discourse.

Regions are defined as territorially based subsystems of the international system with different degrees of integration that share political projects and can encompass
anything from an area within a particular state to intra-state coalitions. International relations theorists working on regions posit that regional activity increased due to the end of the Cold War, which made room for more multi-polar political structures, and due to globalization, which brought about both the necessity and desire to pursue regional partnerships (Hettne 2000; Wæever 1997). Hettne notes that these post-Cold War regions are unique in that they represent a regionalism that goes beyond the more traditional and limited free trade regimes and security alliances. Present-day region-builders often have the ‘political ambition of establishing regional coherence and identity’ (Hettne 2000: xvi), aiming to create an ‘area where the population has specific awareness of us inside the region, as opposed to them outside’ (Honneland 1998: 79). Theorists also emphasize the idea that the region be ‘naturally believable’ and appear to ‘belong together historically, geographically, culturally and economically’ (Haukkala 1999: 24; Hettne 2000).

This emphasis on ‘naturalness,’ cultural similarity, and shared history clearly points to the related rhetoric of nationalism, in which groups strive for autonomy over a national homeland fueled by belief in their unity and uniqueness and in their shared history, blood, and destiny. Scholarly studies of nationalism once reflected the nationalist’s belief in the inevitability and eternality of nations and little thought was directed towards how, why, and when nations actually came into being. More recently, however, studies of nationalism have focused on the ways in which nations are constructed by political elites pursuing particular political agendas and drawing national boundaries in order to anchor their beliefs in the landscape (Anderson 1991; Connor 1994; Gellner 1993; James 1996; Smith 1999).

Nation building serves as a theoretical foundation for Neumann’s (1994) influential article, which is as a point of departure for most studies in region building today. In this brief article, Neumann offers a corrective to the realist approach to studying regions, which posited that regions result from cultural criteria, for example shared language, or from ‘natural geopolitical or strategic landmarks such as mountain ranges, rivers and stretches of water’ (Neumann 1994: 56). In both of these approaches the existence of the region itself is taken for granted. Neumann argues for a methodology that explores the genesis of regions, exposes their historically contingent nature, and pays attention to ‘how a region is constantly being defined and
redefined by its members in a permanent discourse with each member attempting to identify itself at the core of the region…” (1994: 53).

Neumann employs discourse analysis to examine how, when, and why certain cultural-geographical groupings come to be considered regions and ‘imagined communities’ in the now proverbial words of Benedict Anderson (1991). Discourse, in international relations and in Neumann’s analysis, involves looking at the ‘politically constitutive and politically motivated clash of definitions’ through which ‘regions are defined...[and] talked and written into existence’ (Neumann 1994: 59). Neumann posits that identity of some indeterminate sort flows from this exercise in region building, writing ‘the existence of regions is preceded by the existence of region-builders, political actors who, as part of some political project, imagine a certain spatial and chronological identity for a region, and disseminate this imagined identity to others...’

Identity is often seen to be both the product of sustained cross-cultural efforts and the glue that keeps these partnerships stable. Identity is at once something possessed by individual persons in a ‘deep psychological sense (i.e. male and female identity, class, race) or can involve self-ascription as belonging to a group with others who similarly identify and are committed to similar values, practices and meanings’ (Young 1997: 33). In the latter category, identity is seen as something processual and relational that is constructed via group politics and institutions. Individuals can possess multiple identities that have both personal and collective dimensions (Castells 1997; Handler 1994; Lecours 2000; Sarup 1996). In many ways, however, identity has become a comfortable fallback in an age of deconstruction when many other terms such as ‘cultures’ or ‘traditional’ have become suspect, despite the ‘fact that the epistemological presuppositions that [identity] carries are similar, if not identical, to those that have made the other terms suspect’ (Handler 1994: 27). Although Neumann is clearly referring to a regional spatial identity (the region being readily identifiable by those within and outside the region) rather than an individually held identity, this idea of ‘regional identity’ has been problematically translated into Arctic region building research in three ways.
First, academics have, in some cases, taken at face value the region builders’ claims about identity. The idea of a regional ‘identity’ is not a construct of academics alone – it is a claim made by political elites engaged in region-building efforts. Writing about the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, which encompasses counties in the European North, Hønneland (1998: 82) observes that presently the ‘existence of a natural region is more or less equated with the existence of an identity region.’ He proceeds to trace the way in which the ‘historical transnational identity outlined in the “Barents rhetoric” has never existed’ and is, rather, an assertion by authorities working to promote their regional efforts (Hønneland 1998: 88). I argue that the assertions of regional political elite about identity can be linked to politicians’ and bureaucrats’ experiences within nation-states, in which a shared identity is the marker of a strong and believable geopolitical unit and thus something to be pursued in making a new region convincing as well.

Secondly, theoretical problems emerge from the equation of region building with nation building. Although Neumann points out that the comparison between nation and region building can only be taken so far, I find that relying upon nation building literature to analyze regions results in an oversimplification of the idea of ‘identity’ and an overestimation of the significance of regions in the day-to-day lives of people who happen to live within regional boundaries. This oversimplification and overestimation of the relationship between identity, regions, and regional populations emerges clearly in Keskitalo’s (2004) introduction.

Keskitalo’s work, on the whole is a carefully documented and well-argued exploration of how and why certain discourses about the Arctic became dominant in international Arctic forums. However, a distinct theoretical weakness emerges around the question of identity. While I do agree with Keskitalo’s assertion about ways in which discourses discipline language, I take issue with the notion that regional discourses produce identity. Keskitalo argues that region building is like nationalism in that it:

has a homogenizing effect and makes the created identity a yardstick. It assumes the identities created through discourse to be identical with the actual – and individually differing – experiences and situations within the designated area...people in the areas in question are thereby affected by the fact that
region/nation building not only provides for but demands their self-description and relation to others by reference to created identity...(Keskitalo 2004: 8).

The assertion that a region-building effort demands self-description of persons living within a particular region overestimates both the significance of regions, particularly Arctic regionalism, in daily life and the amount of effort normally put into building a sense of identification with a region. Nation building projects are extremely ambitious attempts to construct a sense of identity and belonging through national institutions, national songs, national histories, national media, and national modes of education that are enforced upon and enacted amongst all citizens on a daily basis (Anderson 1991; Morley 2000). By contrast, region building normally only creates a sense of identity for the bureaucrats and civil servants who take part in the meetings and exchanges (Young in Keskitalo 2004: 49), or by persons who take advantage of the increased levels of interaction across borders that can occur as a result of regional politics.31

The third issue with identity in the region building literature also stems from the conflation of region building with nation building. This conflation precludes thinking about potential differences in the strength and reach of national versus regional discourses, obscuring the fact that not all discourses are equally strong and not all will produce an individually held identity. Although the concept of discourse has a long history and multiple definitions, much of social science and constructivist international relations research today uses a Foucauldian idea of discourse and the literature on region building most certainly does. A discourse in the Foucauldian sense of the word can be understood as a framing mechanism that both relies upon and produces power by delineating what can be said and done and, perhaps most importantly, who can legitimately speak and do and in what circumstances (Ball 1990, Rabinow 1991; Sarup 1996).

31 Hønneland (1998), while contesting the notion that identity results from region building, notes a type of familiarity stemming from region-building efforts in the Barents area. He describes the existence of a group of young ambitious Russians who learned Nordic languages and gained experiences in Western business practices through regional programs. This group, Hønneland argues, demonstrates 'a sense of belonging in a new multi-cultural European North' (1998: 88).
Foucault used discourse as a method for understanding how different techniques of knowledge and power created not only new institutions of the hospital, the school, and the prison, but also new ‘modern subjects’ – citizens, inmates, students, and deviants. Subjects are created through ‘dividing practices,’ such as:

the isolation of lepers during the Middle Ages; the confinement of the poor, the insane, and vagabonds in the great catch-all Hôpital Général in Paris in 1656; the new classifications of disease and the associated practices of clinical medicine in early-nineteenth century France; the rise of modern psychiatry and its entry into the hospitals, prisons and clinics throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and finally the medicalization, stigmatization, and normalization of sexual deviance in modern Europe (Rabinow 1991: 8).

In this way, discourse is related to identity as the person categorized gains an identity as a subject – as a leper, a sexual deviant, mentally ill, poor and so on. However, in many ways, Foucault’s understanding of discourse precluded discussion of the individual and individual agency, as he was attempting to move away from the conception of autonomous Cartesian subjects and explore, rather, ‘the processes which he considered to be important in the constitution of our very notion of subjectivity’ (Mills 1997: 34).

Despite the popularity of Foucauldian discourse analysis as a methodological tool, critiques of discourse have emerged. Wimmer (2002: 25), in his study of nationalism, argues that discourse analysis is widely overused concept and presupposes an over-socialized world of individuals. He argues that, consequently, we too often envision individuals as controlled by discourse and that it has become common in the social sciences to think of discourse, emanating from some unknown center of power, as the primary actor in social life. Wimmer concedes that discursive theories contribute to understandings of social life, but argues that:

these discourses do not have the quasi-magical power that many postmodern theories attribute to them. Rather, cultural practices depend in a clearly definable way on the intentions of strategically competent actors and on their position in the frameworks of social structure (Wimmer 2002: 40).
Wimmer’s approach to discourse opens the theoretical space needed to conceive of self-aware and strategic actors, who can take part in certain discourses, either to serve their purposes or as an effect of power, but are also capable of producing alternative discursive practices and competently and consciously shifting between discourses. In my own field research, the participants demonstrated an ability to choose to acquiesce to certain ‘discourses’ about the environment, indigenous peoples, and sustainable development in cross-cultural meetings and an ability to choose not to act upon those discourses perceived to be incompatible or undesirable at the local level. While I acknowledge, of course, that discourses do exist and work to discipline behavior and language, I argue for more attention to the sometimes fragmentary, incomplete, and voluntary nature of some discourses, particularly at the regional level.

This understanding of some discourses as limited boundary objects from which one can move in and out serves as a corrective to the overly deterministic understanding of discourse that is assigned to the Arctic Council and the problematic link between identity and discourse in Tennberg’s (2000) work on Arctic region building. Tennberg argues that two types of identity were produced during the process of negotiating for and in the Arctic Council: the Arctic’s identity as a meaningful region and an identity held by individual actors. Although it is difficult to tease out when Tennberg is talking about regional identity, the identity of international ‘actors’ (i.e. states), or the identity of individual actors, such as high level civil servants or persons living within the region, it is clear that identity is what is meant to result from the region-building process:

[At] the end of the 1980s [there] was a change in the collective identity of the Arctic and the future of the region. Existing identity commitments broke down... The experience with the [Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy] shows that the process so far has been one of continual identity building for the actors and the region itself as a community. Actors acquire identities – relatively stable, role-specific understanding about self – by participating in the production of collective meanings... The commitment to, and the salience of, particular identities vary but each identity is an inherently social definition of the actor grounded in the theories which actors collectively hold about
themselves and one another...Rethinking those identities paved the way for new identities and practices of interaction...The Arctic was reframed for the purpose of rebuilding the identities of the actors. The Arctic had to be given a new identity (2000: 75).

However, this new identity is simply assumed. The lack of evidence for identity is not surprising as identity is difficult to actually pin down in interactions and texts. Therefore, one must suppose that this shared identity flows from the development of the shared discourses that are carefully documented throughout Tennberg’s book.

Tennberg sees discourse as constitutive and constructive of reality, contributing to how the world is to be understood. She argues that the discourses at the Arctic Council can be linked to the following statement of Foucault’s about discourse as describing: ‘the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself...and which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions’ (Foucault in Tennberg 2000: 100). From these statements it is obvious that Tennberg is aligning herself with a quite strong definition of discourse and that discourse is a powerful thing – it constitutes actors’ vision of the world, if they are subject to it.32

My concern here is about the actual experience of ‘being subject.’ Is being included into the Arctic region or even participating on the Arctic Council comparable to being a prisoner, a patient, a student, or even a citizen of a particular nation or state to name a few of the subjects of Foucault’s discursive analysis? Can this socializing concept of discourse be applied to a body, the Arctic Council, which in Tennberg’s own words (2000: 113) ‘hardly exists as an [bureaucratic] organization’? I cannot help but wonder if experienced diplomats and civil servants participate in Arctic regional politics in certain ways because they are acting strategically and find it to be beneficial or expedient to go along with particular modes of environmental and

32 Keskitalo (2004) also assigns a quite strong definition to discourse, arguing that discourse constitutes a sense of reality and becomes deeply internalized in individual persons (see p. 167). The strong definition of discourse in Tennberg (2000) and Keskitalo (2004) may stem from the fact that their analysis is primarily textual with texts taken to represent ‘the way social reality and practice is linguistically constructed’ (Keskitalo 2004: 21). This closes off the space in which to envision how texts, geared towards a political forum, may not directly correlate to either thought or action outside of the particular forum to which the texts were directed.
regional rhetoric, rather than because their worlds and sense of reality are deeply structured and constrained by Arctic discourse or an Arctic identity.

Although I contest that identity is the social product of Arctic region building, the question of what results socially through increasing interactions across borders remains an important one. In the final section of this chapter, I return to this line of argumentation and present community as the central social product of region building. First, however, I further investigate the potential role and capabilities of identity in cross-cultural encounters oriented towards the transfer of knowledge by tracing how INRIPP participants identified with the Arctic as a region and how identity, namely indigenous identity, was referenced and debated throughout the project.

3.2 Identifying with the Arctic

The INRIPP project fits squarely into Canada’s region-building efforts and was clearly premised on the idea that Arctic countries and indigenous people have something to learn from one another due to commonalities and commensurability between the Canadian and Russian Norths. The Arctic as a region was important in legitimizing the project – as one project consultant put it, ‘because we share a region it is more natural for us to have a Canada-Russia project.’ My observations of the interactions taking place through the project, however, do not corroborate the assertion, central to much of the region building literature described above, that region building results in a sense of shared identity. In this section I outline statements and attitudes that show how program participants were willing to identify with the Arctic region as a basis for partnership to a certain extent, but did not derive an identity from these interactions.

Talking about the Arctic as a region entailed more than just emphasis on similarities. A Canadian diplomat based in Russia encouraged delegates to think about differences within the Arctic in his opening remarks to an INRIPP seminar in Moscow:

I’m struck by great differences between our Norths. Here are a few: size of population (tens of thousands in Canada, in Russia it is millions of people);
legal distinction between aboriginal and non-aboriginal in Canada, a
distinction that is not made in Russia which begs the question of what
aboriginal means in Russia; in Canada the North-South encounter is a century
old, in Russia it is many centuries old...

Despite being called upon to see differences, the idea of the Arctic as a region seemed
well accepted by both Canadians and Russians.

Physical similarity between landscapes was one basis for highlighting common
cconcerns and, in some cases, a sense of relatedness. A Canadian diplomat opening
the seminar in Khanty-Mansiysk talked about similar climate and physical features of
Canada and Siberia and used this as a basis to point to shared concerns about
development and pollution in the Arctic. A high-level bureaucrat in KMAO, at a
large meeting with a visiting Canadian delegation, noted physical similarities between
KMAO and the Canadian Mackenzie Delta (an area he had visited), even naming
shared species of fish. This administrator went on to note that one indigenous
member of the delegation looked just like ‘one of our aboriginals’ and commented
that ‘we are alike despite the borders that separate us.’ A representative of an
indigenous organization in Nunavut mentioned past links of travel over the Arctic
landscape, calling upon a sense of relatedness as the basis for cooperation and
communication: ‘We’re long distant relatives because we walked over from Russia
long ago…Siberia and its activities are similar to us.’

However, Russians, both those opposed to and in favor of the ideas of co-
management and economic development as presented by Canadians, endeavored to
depict to Canadian delegations the ways in which life in Russia differs from that in
Canada. A representative from a major Siberian oil company, responding to a
question by a Canadian delegate about why contracts between oil companies and
indigenous groups had to be renegotiated each year, explained with strained patience:

33 This comment rings badly in English and it is not a coincidence that the interpreter changed this
Russian statement to ‘looks like a member of our family.’ I have noted that in Russia it is much more
common to comment upon what people look like and to speculate as to their ethnicity than in North
American or English society. The paternalistic note in this statement – the idea of ‘our aboriginals’ –
is, in my experience, also characteristic of Russian bureaucratic speech.
The conditions of our state change every year, that's why we need agreements every year because the conditions of our livelihood change all the time. Canada is a stable country and Russia is unstable – this is why we can't do co-management.

Other Russian participants certainly saw the Arctic as a legitimate premise for Russia-Canada interaction and potential partnership, even as they highlighted important differences in legislation, history, and politics. However, the willingness to identify with the Arctic was challenged when this rather preliminary sense of geographical identification was asked to do much more – to justify the transfer of ideas from one part of the Arctic to another. At these moments, difference, rather than similarity, became the crucial topic of debate.

3.3 The Contested Politics of Indigeneity

As a sense of shared identity in relationship to the Arctic region was not demonstrated by project participants, the function of an indigenous identity, which was explicitly discussed and relied upon as bridge across which models and knowledge could be moved, is further examined in this section. The project workers clearly expected that there would be a higher level of trust engendered by involving indigenous people directly in the development of other indigenous people that could help transfer foreign knowledge. In the words of one project worker, 'any message had more impact if Russian indigenous peoples heard it from someone who they considered their brother or sister.' Another project consultant put it this way: 'the aboriginal to aboriginal

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34 These differences are examined in detail in chapters four and five.
35 This chapter is based on my observations at fieldwork locations that consisted primarily of large seminars and interviews in regional capitals. A report from a former project coordinator and noted Siberian scholar suggests that the enactment of a shared identity can vary according to scale and location. Anderson, in a 2002 report, noted that the level of desire to pursue a shared indigenous identity varied according to the Russian participants' experience with foreigners. In urban centers, where meetings were attended primarily by teachers, bureaucrats, and leaders of community organizations, the Canadian delegation was questioned mainly about the details of running economic development corporations. However, at a meeting in a small village with Evenki herders and hunters, who were meeting with Canadian indigenous persons for the first time, questions focused largely on commonalities of dress, climate, and religion, rather than upon the intricacies of running a corporation. Anderson writes that the 'result of these conversations was that the two people were "the same," that they had the same "spirits" that they lived on the land in the same way' (pg. 34). This report, titled 'Field Report: The Marketing of Wild Meat in the New Evenkiia,' is available online at http://abdn.ac.uk/anthropology/wildproduce.doc (accessed February 15, 2005).
component means automatic trust, a bond which leapfrogs the trust building all the rest of us have to do...[this bond exists] because aboriginals have similar experiences.’ INRIPP coordinators believed that this trust would support the progress of the project and encourage Russians to adopt the developers’ new and foreign ideas.

In this section, I first present a brief history of the idea of indigenous at the international level and at the state-levels in Russia and Canada. Secondly, I provide examples from my field research that point to the contested meaning of ‘indigenous’ and describe how Russian indigenous peoples drew distinctions between themselves and the Canadian indigenous persons that they encountered. Indigenous identity sometimes did serve as a mode of greeting and provided a sense of recognition and trust amongst indigenous participants in INRIPP events. However, like the sense of identification with the Arctic region, indigenous identity was stretched beyond its relevance when it was used by Canadian delegations as a justification for the transfer of their knowledge to and the application of their models in the Russian North.

3.3.1 International Indigenous Politics

The Canadian delegation’s assumption about the solidarity of indigenous peoples is understandable in light of the high-profile indigenous international movement. The Arctic Peoples Conference in Copenhagen (1973) is deemed to be the beginning of ‘modern indigenous internationalism’ (Jull 1999). Indigenous peoples found that they had much in common at the international level and could:

talk as equals about their good and bad experiences in dealing with land and sea rights, reindeer and caribou management, alcohol, inappropriate schooling, language loss, official policies of assimilation and paternalism or their lack of influence in decision-making. When they tried to talk about such matters at home with non-indigenous officials who made decisions about their lives they often received condescension, derision, or silence (Jull 1999: 13).
Since then other forums for international indigenous activism and negotiating indigenous identity and politics have emerged; most notably the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, which was established in 1982.

Through indigenous international action, the concept of ‘indigenous’ and ‘indigeneity’ has gained political currency, to the extent to which groups previously regarded as minorities or national groups, such as the Palestinians and the Basques, now seek to be identified as indigenous and use indigeneity as a springboard for their political claims to autonomy (Nuttall 1998; Maaka and Fleras 2000; Muehlebach 2003). In the words of Murray Li (2000: 151), indigenous identity is a position, rather than an unchanging characteristic, that ‘draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes, and repertoires of meaning, and emerges through particular patterns of engagement and struggle.’

Maaka and Fleras (2000: 91) provide a definition of ‘indigeneity’ as:

the politicized awareness of original occupancy as the grounds for reward and relationships. As discourse, indigeneity refers to indigenous peoples as ‘first nations’ whose customary rights to self-determination over jurisdictions relating to land, identity and political voice have never been extinguished...

Positing themselves as ‘nations within,’ indigenous peoples stress quite clearly that colonial institutions are no longer acceptable and assert the right to appropriate and culture-sustaining political institutions and practices. Some indigenous scholars, however, argue that the conceptualization of ‘nations within’ places the colonial state as the central reference point rather than indigenous peoples themselves. Alfred (1995) and Simpson (2000) have argued for understanding indigenous peoples as simply nations and acknowledging their nationhood as a historical truth, rather than seeing it as a response to the colonial state. Indigenous political leaders have also drawn strongly upon an eco-political framework and involved themselves in ecological and sustainable development debates (Kearney 1995; Muehlebach 2003; Nuttall 1998).
Exchange of knowledge has been a key factor in creating and sustaining an indigenous political movement (Jull 1999; Smith, Burke, and Ward 2000) and this emphasis on communication motivated, in part, ICC participation in INRIPP. Many Russian indigenous leaders have commented upon the importance of foreign indigenous organizations as templates for RAIPON. Pavel Sulyandziga, now vice-president of RAIPON, recalls meeting an ICC-Canada leader in the early days of perestroika and receiving the message that ‘indigenous people should unite since, no matter under what system – communist or capitalist – they lived, they faced the same challenges and the same oppression’ (2002: 49). Another Russian indigenous leader, Mikhail Todyshev, commented on the importance of participating in the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in creating a sense of indigenous solidarity and providing the opportunity to seek out examples of problem-solving by indigenous peoples in other countries (Todyshev 2002).

Muehlebach (2003) argues that, despite the emphasis on unity and universality in indigenous politics, concepts, such as ‘indigenous’ and ‘self-determination,’ remain hotly contested within the indigenous movement. She argues that the indeterminacies of the concepts used at the international level, such as ‘peoples’ and ‘indigenous,’ allow for the articulation of local injustice in a universal language that leaves space for the varied local experiences of peoplehood and indigeneity. Dombrowski (2002: 1063) also illustrates, in a case study of resource use debates in Alaska, that divisions between indigenous groups can be seen as arguments over indigeneity itself, particularly when a broader discourse of ‘indigeneity’ comes into the conflict with the lived experience of ‘livelihood, family, and other relations far more central to people’s daily lives.’ Dombrowski’s assertion is supported by Russian INRIPP participants’ mixed feelings about the Canadian co-management and economic development, both of which cut to the heart of indigenous peoples’ local relationships to the land and the state. Dombrowksi further argues that identifying as tribal or indigenous emerges in certain situations when indigenous persons engage in particular struggles. Thus being ‘indigenous,’ in addition to Inuit, Dene, or Sami to name a few,
is a strategic choice made when engaging in certain kinds of political activity, particularly at the national and international levels.36

3.3.2 Indigeneity in the Former Soviet Union

The former Soviet Union (FSU) was often described as a ‘prison house of nations.’ However, since the collapse of communism and the rapid emergence of national politics, scholars of Soviet policy have come to see the ways in which the Soviet project was actually an eighty-year period of sub-state nation building (Kaiser 1994; Suny 1993; Zaslavsky 1993). Early Soviet politicians’ interpretation of Marxist Leninist ideology led them to believe that nationalism was the result of oppression and would disappear as citizens came to embrace the class struggle and Soviet identity (Connor 1992a). This interpretation freed the Bolsheviks to promote federalism and nationalism in order to gain the sympathy and support of non-Russian peoples as they fought to gain control of the country and build a Soviet State (Connor 1992b). However, by the 1930s and the introduction of an internal passport system, nationality became a relatively fixed characteristic of an individual. Nationality was no longer seen as a transient political phenomenon but rather as a scientific matter of race that stemmed from the theories of 19th century anthropology that became the foundation of Soviet ethnographic practice (Khazanov 1995).

Although the Soviet state devolved only low levels of actual autonomy and power to ethnic republics, it provided all the symbolic institutions and frameworks from which national identity could be created or preserved. These institutions were run primarily by various national political elites that were the product of the processes of education, patronage, and promotion designed to fill regional and local Soviet institutions with people of the ‘right’ nationality who could bridge the transition from different cultural

36 Although I treat ‘indigenous’ as a category that is constructed in response to and through colonial political relationships to the state, I am not asserting that the lived experience of difference entailed in being Inuit, Even, Dene and so on is a construct or a strategy of resistance against the state. See Irlbacher-Fox (2004) for an excellent ethnography of how Dene difference does not represent resistance, but rather another way of life. See Brody (2000) for a nuanced discussion of the differences between indigenous and non-indigenous societies, which he describes as a division between hunters and farmers. See Vitebsky (2005) for an ethnography of Even reindeer herding in the Sakha Republic in Northeastern Siberia, in which an understanding of the continuity of Even ways, particularly in terms of reindeer herding and spiritual beliefs, is combined with a balanced picture of the ways in which Even are affected by political organizations at the village, republic, and national level.
traditions to the Soviet future. This process was called *korenizatsiya* or indigenization (Suny 1993; Zaslavsky 1993). The process of *korenizatsiya* was abandoned in the mid-1930s, when overly independent national elites were purged by Stalin’s regime, but was revived in 1953 after Stalin’s death (Kaiser 1994). Many of these ethnic elites became less loyal to the Soviet regime when it ceased to offer benefits and led the post-perestroika move towards ethno-politics and greater regional independence (Balzer, Petro, and Robertson 2001; Kaiser 1994; Roeder 1992).

In the Soviet period, the indigenous peoples of the North, formerly known as *inorodtsy* (aliens) under the tsarist empire, were renamed the ‘small-numbered peoples of the North,’ a political category in which low population of a people (no more than 50,000) was considered a defining feature. Although these peoples were not considered nations, the small-numbered peoples of the Russian North also underwent processes of *korenizatsiya* and folklorization during the Soviet period, with the process of building an indigenous intelligentsia beginning in the 1930s (Krupnik 1993; Slezkine 1994; Vakhtin 1994). This intelligentsia, like the ethnic elite, was meant to bridge the gap between indigenous and Soviet cultures and help to create a ‘new culture: national in form and socialist in its essence’ (Haruchi 2002: 86). Simultaneously, there were focused and often brutal efforts to resettle nomadic indigenous groups, primarily reindeer herding peoples, into villages and to transform nomadism as a way of life into nomadism as a form of Sovietized collective production (Pika 1999; Vitebsky 2005). Today there is a substantial distance between indigenous persons continuing to live in villages and engage in a traditional, albeit radically reorganized, activities and the indigenous political elite (Kohler and Wessendorf 2002). Being ‘truly indigenous’ is seen to be the domain of those who live life on the land, a feature that emerged quite clearly during my fieldwork and is discussed further below.

The end of the Soviet Union witnessed the increased political activity of this indigenous political elite (Haruchi 2002: 86). With the introduction of perestroika and an accompanying reduction in censorship, the issues facing indigenous Arctic Soviet peoples came to be discussed publicly (Slezkine 1994). In 1989, a three-day congress of 250 indigenous representatives met to debate and to select representatives
for an all-Union congress of native peoples of the North.\(^\text{37}\) This was a product of Gorbachev’s perestroika and also a response to increasing international pressure (Kaplin 2002; Murashko 2002). This congress evolved into RAIPON and eventually, in tandem with INRIPP support, came to include thirty-four regional and local associations.\(^\text{38}\) Indigenous activists have organized civil actions and court appeals and have lobbied to add legislation protecting indigenous rights to the Russian Federation’s body of law. Thus far three basic federal laws have been adopted,\(^\text{39}\) although specialists argue that the effect of these laws has been negligible because mechanisms for implementation remain to be developed (Murashko 2002).

Blakkisrud and Overland (2005) argue that the definition of indigeneity in Russian Federation is rather idiosyncratic, as international notions of indigenousness have been added to Russian and Soviet ones. The international definition of indigenousness, which emphasizes prior occupancy and sustained difference of a given people subsumed in colonial boundaries, describes more accurately the situation of native peoples in the New World in which colonial expansion was clearly evident in the trans-oceanic arrival of the representatives of European empire states. In the Russian North and in Siberia, the beginnings and process of colonization were less clearly demarcated and, while sometimes violent, were comparatively slow and sporadic.

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\(^{37}\) See Pika (1999) for a picture of the situation of indigenous peoples towards the end and immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

\(^{38}\) Some of these organizations represent one ethnic group, while others represent all indigenous peoples within a given region.

\(^{39}\) These laws are: 1) On the Guarantees of the Rights of the Small Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation (O garantiah prav korennykh malochislennykh narodov Rossiiskoi Federatsii) of 30 April 1999, which extends rights to indigenous people who practice traditional ways of life, number less than 50,000, live on ancestral territories, and consider themselves to be an ethnic community; 2) On the General Principles of the Organization of the Collective Enterprises of Small Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East (Ob obshikh printisipakh organizatsii obshchin korennykh malochislennykh narodov Severa, Sibiri i Dal’nego Vostoka Rossiiskoi Federatsii) of 20 July 2000; and 3) On the Territories of Traditional Nature Use (O territoriah tradisionnogo prirodopol’zovaniia korennykh malochislennykh narodov Severa, Sibiri i Dal’nego Vostoka Rossiiskoi Federatsii) of 7 May 2001.
3.3.3 Indigeneity in Canada

In Canada, the relationship between colonial settlers, from the first Western 'explorers' of the New World to the bureaucrats of the Canadian state, and indigenous peoples has been largely negotiated and managed through treaties. These treaties include the first agreements established between Westerners and the representatives of the many various nations of Canada and the land claim agreements that continue to be negotiated today. These land claim agreements most often extinguish so-called 'aboriginal rights,' an undefined and unexplored right based on the fact of these peoples' occupancy of the land encountered by Westerners as the 'New World,' in exchange for enumerated and limited rights to land and resources for indigenous peoples. This process is meant to resolve the Canadian state's problematic sovereignty claims over land now contained within its borders and to pave the way for development, especially in the resource rich North (Mitchell 1996). The emergence of indigenous politics in Canada varied over time and space, largely in response to the length and nature of the contact between native peoples and outsiders. For the sake of brevity and given that the project primarily involved Inuit, I focus on the emergence of an Inuit politics of 'indigeneity,' by which I mean a politics based on original occupancy and directed towards coping with Canada as a colonial state.

Although the history of contact between the Canadian Inuit and European outsiders is a long and complex one that varied regionally across the Canadian Arctic, the most significant and extensive type of 'contact' was the extension of Canadian state institutions and capitalism into the Arctic in the latter half of the twentieth century (Mitchell 1996; Poelzer 1995). In this period, discussion of the "Eskimo problem," namely what bureaucrats saw to be an unstable economy, poor health, and reliance on government benefits amongst the Inuit population, became part of public debate and grew alongside the government's desire to develop the resources of the North (Marcus 1995). These decades witnessed increased attempts to assert sovereignty over the Canadian North, including the relocation of Inuit into the High Arctic, state settlement of the nomadic Inuit into villages, and the introduction of residential schools. These changes led to some of the first indications of Inuit political organization designed to

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40 See chapter five of RCAP (1996) for an overview of first contact between indigenous peoples in the New World and westerners and of the ways in which the treaties were understood by both parties.
cope with the state and the increasing interference of outsiders, such as settlement councils (Brody 2000; Damas 2002; Honigmann and Honigmann 1965; Marcus 1995; Vallee 1967). In the 1970s, cultural associations flourished and younger Inuit, with experience in government schools and familiarity with settlement life, increasingly began to take on leadership positions (Damas 2002).

In 1971, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) – the first Inuit organization to represent Inuit of the NWT, Labrador, and Northern Quebec – was established. ITC’s founder, Tagak Curley, emphasized the need for unity in addressing the problems facing the widely geographically dispersed Inuit communities, stating that ‘we must all become one group: the Inuit.’

This movement towards unity was part of an attempt to deal with the trauma of rapid change, manifested in high rates of suicide, poverty and violence, and to regain a measure of control for Inuit over their own lives. It was during the land claims process, which ran intermittently from the early 1970s to 1993, that Inuit first engaged with state on a politics of indigeneity.

Inuit throughout the Canadian Arctic have now signed land claims agreements with the Canadian government. Being Inuit is seen as a type of inheritance, something that can be more richly understood and enjoyed by speaking Inuktitut and knowing the land, but also includes, for example, government bureaucrats of Inuit descent who may do neither. Inuit in Nunavut who wish to be acknowledged under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement must enroll as beneficiaries. In order to enroll, the applicant must be a Canadian citizen, an Inuk ‘as determined in accordance with Inuit customs and usages,’ identify as an Inuk, and be associated with either a community in the Nunavut Settlement Area or the Nunavut Settlement Area. Furthermore, the applicant must be in a position to cede their ‘aboriginal rights.’ As an interviewee at Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), the Inuit organization responsible for enrollment, informed me, this ability to cede is extremely important and is clearly based in terms of descent – if you are not an Inuk by blood you have no aboriginal

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42 The agreements are as follows: James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement for the Inuit of Arctic Quebec in 1979, the Inuvialuit Regional Settlement Act of 1984 in the western Arctic, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement in 1993 for the central and eastern Arctic, and Labrador in 2005.
43 Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. ‘Enrollment Manual for the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.’ Author’s document, received in Rankin Inlet (December 2003).
rights to cede and therefore cannot join the claim. This was their solution to including the criteria of descent without requiring the genealogy documentation required for proving membership in many other land claims. In this way indigeneity is formalized, albeit in a subtle way, on the criteria of race and ancestry.

In the Nunavut land claim described above, the Canadian state was recognizing the Inuit of Nunavut as a collective defined by race with aboriginal rights flowing from the historical fact of that collective’s occupancy of land now included within Canadian state borders. Their indigeneity is something possessed genealogically and an immutable historical fact of prior occupancy. By contrast, the Russian legal definition of indigenousness in, for example, the law on the ‘Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation’ enacted on 30th April 1999 includes an emphasis on the preservation of the original ways of life of their ancestors as a key marker of indigeneity. Therefore, to be indigenous, one must keep traditional ways. I find that these legalistic distinctions are the foundation of the most prominent difference between Canadian and Russian beliefs about indigenousness that emerged during my fieldwork – a debate over if and how indigenous peoples should participate in the mainstream society and economy.

3.3.4 Choosing to Align and Choosing to Distance: Debating the Relevance of Indigenous Identity at INRIPP Events

Both Canadian and Russian indigenous peoples have maintained their own ways of being and knowing in the face of active assimilationist policies of the industrial states in which they are now encompassed. They also have united under the identity of ‘indigenous’ for political action at the international level. However, when it comes to transferring ideas that affect locally grounded ways of being and knowing, positing a shared ‘indigenous’ identity was not enough to prove the worthiness and applicability of foreign knowledge and experience. The ideas that were being discussed throughout INRIPP and that are analyzed in the following chapters, co-management and economic development, deal with relationships between people and between people and the land that cut to the local and even individual level. In this section, I challenge the assumption that indigenous persons, due to a shared identity, should
have an easier time communicating amongst one another. I show how this assumption of similarity can gloss over important differences between peoples and individuals and how Russian indigenous peoples, in the face of Canadian Inuit and their ideas, actually felt compelled to describe their sense of profound difference in terms of how they understand their political, cultural, and geographic landscapes. The contested nature of indigeneity that emerged through discussion amongst Canadians and Russians and in my interviews indicates that indigeneity as a unity discourse may make good international politics, but does not serve as an unproblematic mechanism for knowledge transfer on a level closer to home.

An ICC-Canada delegate, in his opening remarks to an audience in Khanty-Mansiysk, stated an assumed commonality referred to by most Inuit who took part in the project – the notion that indigenous peoples face similar challenges and have similar desires for life. He commented:

I’m happy to be here and see how you took on our experience...Issues here are similar to the Northwest Territories...We seem to share similar difficulties and we can learn from one another because we all know that even after development people still need to rely on the land.

In this statement, the speaker brought out what he believed to be shared desire of all indigenous people: the simultaneous pursuit of economic development and of closeness to the land.

Some Russian interviewees also saw commonalities linking Canadian Inuit and various Russian indigenous peoples. A Khanty working for the government in KMAO, who had traveled to the Canadian North on a study tour, noted that indigenous people face similar problems: ‘indigenous people in both countries are struggling with the same question: how to protect their culture and maintain their connection to nature.’ A Nentsy bureaucrat from YNAO noted that indigenous people share a need and ‘desire for rational resource use because both Canadian and Russian indigenous peoples love their land.’ Another participant from YNAO observed:
Of course we share a lot...we live in Arctic conditions and we live in the same way in that our ways of life grew from a close relationship with nature and the living world. We understand more about nature than others and we protect it more thoroughly...but there can be many approaches.

In an interview with an intern from Southern Siberia, with whom I traveled to Canada, other similarities emerged.

Although our approaches might differ, the spirit of life and the desire to live a shared way of life is a shared characteristic of indigenous peoples. Obshini\textsuperscript{44} in Canada and Russia are different from each other, but good in their own ways...None of us are working towards gaining super profits, or becoming rich. We share a desire to live communally and not just for ourselves and it would be quite difficult in the North to do otherwise. This is a contrast from, say Sweden, where your house is your fortress against the world.

In this comment, it is evident that the idea of the North is important to a sense of commonality and the difference between indigenous ways of life and western ways of life (exemplified here by Sweden) is a unifying factor.

This same intern, however, on the study tour of the Canadian North, found it difficult to apply lessons from Nunavut for a variety of reasons. She described the situation in northern Canada as more like the districts in the Russian south, such as Tuva and Buryatia that have large and homogenous minority populations. She argued that the

\textsuperscript{44} Obshini (pl., obshina is the singular form) are a feature of northern Russian indigenous life. Obshini are small subsistence enterprises/collectives, sometimes nomadic, that are often based around an extended family. The term obshina presented a translation problem throughout the project. It was initially translated as ‘community,’ which, in the Canadian context, refers to settlements or villages - not a particular organizational form geared towards subsistence and economic production. For example, community development was initially translated as razvitiya obshini, which implied that Canadians were advocating for the further development of small-scale communal enterprises, like fur processing or arts and crafts collectives, rather than a diverse suite of market oriented enterprises geared towards supporting remote settlements. The term obshina replaced the terms, sovkhoz or kolkhoz, that described the collective work organizations imposed upon indigenous and rural people during the Soviet period. Later in the project, interpreters began translating community as poselenie or naselyonnikh punkтов, which better imply settlements or villages, and community development as razvitiya naselyonnikh punkтов. I retain obshina/obshini in its original form throughout the dissertation as we do not have an equivalent term for such small-scale, sometimes state-funded, cooperative and often family owned and operated collectives geared towards both subsistence land use and economic production.
The demographic dominance of Inuit in the Canadian North allows them to exert real influence, unlike in the Russian North where the ‘groups are scattered and also mixed up with Russians.’ An ethnic Russian bureaucratic intern on the trip also commented on demographics. She noted that KMAO was:

advanced in dealing with aboriginal issues, but our way is different from Nunavut because in Nunavut the aboriginal people are the majority. It is not like this in KMAO. Indigenous peoples, at the okrug level, are just one nation among others (Tatars, Russians, Ukrainians and so on) so all of our energy on aboriginal development is focused on the village level instead.

This focus on the village level is not due to demographics alone and speaks to another issue that Russian participants struggled to represent to Canadians – that they considered indigenous, or at least the meaningful experience of being indigenous, to be a matter of livelihood and activity rather than race.

This definition of indigenous and the rights and benefits that flow from it do not apply equally to persons of indigenous descent living in non-traditional settings. One bureaucrat from Khanty-Mansiysk explained that if ‘indigenous peoples are in cities and are educated and developed so that they are just like other people, they no longer require special rights beyond free education and certain discounts.’ She went on to refer to a Khanty colleague of hers living in the capital who was ‘just like other people,’ and argued that government efforts in aboriginal affairs are directed towards assisting those who represent a ‘distinctive way of life and have a distinctive culture and language.’ Indigenous, in her definition, is being a hunter or herder or living traditionally in a non-urban setting and actively working to preserve the distinctiveness (samobitnost’) that indigenous lifestyles represent.

Given the ethnic Russian background of the above speaker, one might be tempted to discount her opinion on the basis that it is not an indigenous definition of indigeneity or as a stereotypical or discriminatory remark. However, many Russian indigenous participants evinced the same dedication to putting livelihood at the heart of indigeneity. One interviewee from eastern Siberia equated technology with the loss of traditional life and stated that ‘indigenous peoples of Canada have snow-scooters,
nice houses, and live in national reserves. They don’t really lead a traditional way of
life if compared with some of our communities.’ An acquaintance from YNAO, who
took part in all seminars and had traveled to the Canadian North on a study tour,
commented that Canadian indigenous people have:

lost their culture somewhat, but in Russia we still have it. In YNAO, 2,000-
3,000 people still nomadize and we have our own ideas about development
and we are not starting from zero – we are dealing with different interests from
the Canadians. As a result, some of these ideas are confusing and we are now
taking the time to do an analysis and to think things through...

Another interviewee from YNAO, a Nentsy man working for the okrug bureaucracy,
noted that he respected the journey that First Nations in Canada have been on and
envied:

the important changes in legislation, including that First Nations are owners of
land and have strengthened their rights through ownership…but, my task is to
work to preserve the traditional way of life, something we have truly done in
Yamal. When I visited the Deh Cho in Canada, I felt they had lost something
already, and many of them had forgotten the language of their ancestors...All
of our activities are directed towards the preservation of culture and the
distinctiveness of our people.

One indigenous activist, who runs her own indigenous organization, put it this way:
‘Business is essential, but it is also necessary that people continue to practice
traditional activities – all my people has left is fishing. But if indigenous people live
in a city for three generations, their children won’t understand anything about being
aboriginal.’ Most Russian interviewees echoed these remarks and saw Canadian-style
economic development as a necessary activity, but one that should be approached
with caution given that they understood it to be a dangerous vehicle for cultural
assimilation and believed that Canadian indigenous peoples had already suffered
much loss of culture and distinctiveness due to such development.
Another key difference between Canadian Inuit and Russian indigenous people that was rarely brought up at seminars, although nearly always mentioned in interviews with Russian participants, was the difference between being a hunter and being a herder as a way of life. Amongst the Inuit, hunting and gathering are the traditional modes of subsistence and an important foundation of culture. Throughout Russia, many indigenous peoples are heavily involved in reindeer herding and herding is seen to be the basis of subsistence, economy, and culture. An indigenous bureaucrat from YNAO, who had been born in the tundra and represented reindeer herders on national and international councils, commented:

A big difference between us is that we live with reindeer whereas the Inuit hunt them. They see reindeer/caribou as a hunting object, whereas we co-exist with them, if we lose our reindeer we lose our culture. We always have the best interest of the herd in mind...For this reason, it is easier for us to understand indigenous peoples from the Scandinavian countries because they have reindeer herding as well.

Another bureaucrat from YNAO reiterated this difference, stating that, 'the primary difference is that in Russia herding is the basis of life and that herds have to move and this requires a nomadic population. The life of the herder requires travel, whereas Canadian indigenous people live in villages...’ Another described this difference between hunters and herders as a ‘different psychology...coming from the differences between dealing with wild and domestic reindeer and hunters and herders...In Canada, indigenous peoples have a market psychology and we haven’t developed that yet.’

A regional bureaucrat involved in questions of land management in Khanty-Mansiysk saw this difference as the primary reason why co-management and economic development would not work in the okrug and the main factor in creating disparities in how indigenous people perceive oil development. He argued:

I am certain if Canadian aboriginals were doing agriculture, or some form of herding that required constant participation in that activity and direct access to
land there wouldn’t be such an easy consensus on co-management. They would have to find a different mechanism.

Herding, as opposed to hunting, was argued to be a unique form of activity requiring nomadism, different relationships between people and between indigenous people and the state, and unique relationships to land.\(^45\)

Although their intentions can be doubted, oil company representatives and government bureaucrats presented their role as pastoral in helping indigenous people to stay on the land where they belonged and where they could be ‘truly indigenous.’ One oil company representative commented that the Canadian experience was not applicable because:

indigenous people are not alike in both places – their goals are different and they are on totally different paths. Aboriginals in Canada have gone far into technology and into civilized circumstances. In Russia, aboriginals are closer to nature and live off the land, whereas in Canada they live off development and other sources of funding. In Russia, there is just one support for indigenous people – the land.

Russian bureaucrats considered the Canadian approach to development, namely involving indigenous peoples into the process of mining and oil and gas exploration, to be irresponsible. A highly placed interviewee in the KMAO bureaucracy made this clear in our interview.

In contrast to Canada, we do not want the aboriginals to get huge financial settlements because big money would interrupt a traditional way of life and aboriginals would just sit in big houses in big cities. I saw this in

\(^{45}\) There are reasons to be skeptical of the argument that the nature of herding precludes the possibility of co-management or engagement in the mainstream economy that was forwarded by regional bureaucrats from YNAO and KMAO and by the indigenous herders and leaders chosen by regional bureaucrats to participate in INRIPP events. Herding was presented as a quite rigid full-time job that made it impossible for those ‘truly indigenous’ persons working on the land to be involved in time-consuming business endeavors or management boards. However, in Vitebsky (2005) there are several examples of how herders participated in village politics and could assign their reindeer and their responsibilities to other members in their family or herding brigade.
Yellowknife, where lots of aboriginals were drunk in the morning. Our job is not to make people rich, but to preserve the *etnos*. He described indigenous peoples in cities as ‘city trash’ and ‘bums’ while extolling the virtues of life on the land.

Canadian indigenous visitors considered Russian understandings of indigenous life to be stereotypical and paternalistic, particularly the stark choice between either completely preserving traditional ways of life or total assimilation. One Inuit project participant told me that his biggest concern was the ‘stereotyping of indigenous peoples, that they are presented with a choice of either nomadism or nothing, not being indigenous anymore.’ In response to a question at a seminar on co-management in Khanty Mansiysk as to whether or not Canadian Inuit feel that they are losing their culture through development, this interviewee responded:

The attitude towards traditional economy in Canada recognizes the right for aboriginal people to improve their livelihood through development and to maintain a right to culture. There is a fine balance on how to maintain culture while minimizing the impacts of development. We can have jobs to go to and thrive culturally; it isn’t a choice between culture and development.

All the Canadians frequently stated that in Canada indigenous people are expected to and want to participate in the mainstream economy if that participation contributes to their people’s self-determination and realization of rights. A Dene political leader from the NWT in Canada presented this type of thinking at the conference on economic development in Moscow.

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46 *Etnos* was a word frequently used by both indigenous and non-indigenous Russian project participants to describe any single indigenous people and, as it has no direct English equivalent and I did not press participants on their exact meaning of the word, I have retained the use of *etnos* in quotations throughout. This ethnographical categorization stems from a Soviet tradition of ethnography in which ethnicity was seen as innate, primordial, and biological. *Etnoses* were commonly defined to possess a stable identity, territory, culture, language, as well as a sense of being a collective (Tishkov 1997). This definition, at present, is being reconsidered and the 1994 definition of *etnos* moved away from the primordialism of Soviet ethnography to argue that *etnoses* are historically, rather than biologically, created (Etnos 1994).
I know that there are big differences between us in people, land, and law. But we are all indigenous people, we have the desire to be self-sufficient and self-determining. Take our examples, I know you can’t just apply them, but you can take the idea. Aboriginal people are proud people in Canada, as I’m sure you are, and we don’t want to depend on anyone. If you deal with oil and gas industry, you can become self-sufficient on the oil and gas industry and you no longer have to rely on government and follow their program lines.

In Russia, on the other hand, as one Canadian consultant saw it, ‘indigenous people are expected to stay on the land, like a museum.’

So, what resulted from the indigenous-indigenous component given all of these dissimilarities? Much of the INRIPP project is predicated on the idea that indigenous people are the best candidates to help other indigenous people. Therefore, during interviews, I attempted to draw out how Russian indigenous participants perceived the presence and participation of Canadian indigenous peoples at INRIPP events. One governmental representative replied that she was quite impressed with the Inuit representatives’ inner strength and motivation. Another indigenous bureaucrat, in answering the question of whether or not it was helpful to have Canadian Inuit at the conference in KMAO on co-management, responded rather obliquely with another example:

We had a group of Canadian indigenous people here a few months ago for artists’ and writers’ festival and they stayed for two weeks. They learned all about the problems with language and traditional lifestyle and really identified with our problems. We had time to take them to the villages and they were impressed and moved by the similarities between life here and in their communities in Canada…One man commented that everything between us is the same, language is the only thing that really separates us.

Although this interviewee underscored similarities between Canadian and Russian indigenous peoples, the key element here is time – the fact that this other delegation was in KMAO for two weeks, as opposed to the three days of the INRIPP delegation to KMAO. This sense of identification between Canadian and Russian indigenous
persons was something that emerged through sustained interaction, rather than a crystallized shared identity that could simply be called upon to evoke a sense of solidarity and trust. Another indigenous participant, from a Khanty village in the okrug commented that it ‘was useful to have Canadian Inuit at the seminar, but we really do not have much contact with them now and haven’t heard from them in a while, so their experiences have just gone into the dustbin with all the other ideas.’ In the absence of sustained efforts and interaction, calling upon indigenous identity did little to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and models.

The indigenous identity invoked, most often by Canadians, in INRIPP events had its purposes and limitations. Indigenous identity can be seen as a form of greeting and a basis upon which partnerships and fruitful discussions can be established. However, when this indigenous identity was asked to do much more work – to serve as the primary reason for considering and potentially adopting Canadian experience and models – a discussion of specific differences became more relevant and seemed more essential to Russians participating in the project than a focus on similarity. Furthermore, the relative brevity of the encounters of Canadian and Russian indigenous persons at INRIPP events served as a barrier to transferring Canadian ideas to Russia. Identity, in this case, was a shortcut through the sustained interaction and well-reasoned argumentation that may have facilitated the transfer of Canadian knowledge.

3.4 The Product of Region Building: Community

Despite the lack of a shared Arctic identity, Russians were developing their understandings, and often critiques, of Canadians and Canadian models. The ways in which Russian indigenous and non-indigenous participants were able to illustrate adeptly their sense of difference from Canadians indicates that significant knowledge and interconnectedness already existed between them – Russian participants knew what differences to bring out for discussion. Through various region-building projects in general and the INRIPP project in specific, Russians became engaged with the Canadians in such a way that they could understand which roles were being assigned
to them, what kinds of assumptions were being made, and could accept or contest these roles and assumptions. I argue, and develop this argument over the remaining chapters, that this increased awareness and closeness indicates that the social product of region-building activities is a type of community, rather than identity. To conclude this chapter, I outline a brief history of the idea of community and present my argument for the use of community in my own research.

Community can be conceived of as a social awareness and closeness that results from interaction and transaction between persons. Such a notion of community accounts for similarity and alignment, while allowing for difference and unequal power relationships. By positing a heterogeneous community as the social medium through which knowledge and ideas can be moved across social and geographical boundaries, I am trying to discard the notion that homogeneity, such as a shared identity, is required in order to find common ground cross-culturally. Through this Arctic community, people gain enough knowledge of one another to engage in testimony, argument, dialogue, and debate; power can be exerted and resisted; and legitimacy contested and achieved.

Community has had a problematic position in the social sciences, largely due to its place in debates about the nature of modern life (Amit 2002). Theorists of modernity often argued that modern, urban industrial society essentially meant the end of community (Cohen 1985, Yack 1993). Furthermore, community has also often been characterized as a site of oppression and enforced homogeneity. This is largely due to the conflation of community with the philosophy of communitarianism, which sees

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47 This dichotomy began with Ferdinand Tönnies’ 19th century efforts to describe the changes in social relations resulting from the shift from a largely agrarian and rural society to an urban, capitalist one. He posited the ideas of ‘gemeinschaft’ and ‘gesselschaft,’ which can be roughly translated into English as community and society, respectively. Gemeinschaft is predicated on face-to-face contact, intimacy and personal knowledge of those with whom one interacts on a daily basis. Gesselschaft, by contrast, is associated with the individualizing forces of modern industrial life in which people relate to one another through structures and assigned roles, rather than knowledge of one another as individuals. Tönnies work formed the basis for other dichotomies dividing pre modern from modern life, most famously Durkheim’s theory of organic versus mechanical solidarity (Bender 1978; Cohen 1985; Yack 1993). This dichotomy has become spatialized into the urban/rural divide as well, although Tönnies was actually describing forms of interaction, rather than locations (Bender 1978). The notion of rural locations as the site of community was expanded upon by the Chicago school of urban sociologists in the 1920s and 1930s, who posited that the urban was the site of modern life while the rural was the location of community and somehow ‘premodern’ relationships of simplicity, egalitarianism, and conformity (Bender 1978; Cohen 1985). Through this conception, community became conflated with an idealized vision of rural harmony as well as with the past.
smaller face-to-face communities as an alternative to the atomistic individualism of a liberal capitalistic society. Political theorist Iris Marion Young (1990), for example, argues that: ‘the idea of community denies and represses social difference...[a] polity cannot be thought of as a unity in which all participants share a common experience and common values’ (1990: 227).

The modernity versus community paradigm and the belief in community as a site of oppression often prevent the acknowledgment of communities as they arise in contemporary interactions (Bender 1978; Lash 2002). Yack (1993), drawing upon an Aristotelian conception of community, argues for a more transactional definition of community that describes how community results amongst those who share something, such as form of activity, and engage in interaction based around this ‘something’ that is shared. In his definition, community is defined by the kinds of things that people come to share (rather than a shared identity) and heterogeneity amongst individual community members is a fundamental element of community, rather than an obstacle to it. In this understanding, community is simply a structural feature of everyday life that grows amongst groups of people who transact and interact.

Haber has further addressed the assumption of conformity in community, asserting that this argument assumes ‘that identification with others in the community can only work by erasing any differences between [them]’ (Haber 1994: 127). She argues for increased awareness of the role of community in public life, pointing to the inherently social and communal nature of thought, speech, and action and arguing that community is a fundamental and structural result of human interaction. Cohen (1985) forwards a description of community that also circumvents the notion of community as a site of homogeneity by pointing to the role of symbolism in community life. He contends that the ‘commonality, which is found in community, need not be uniformity. It does not clone behaviour or ideas. It is a commonality of forms (ways of behaving) whose content (meaning) may vary considerably among its members’ (Cohen 1985: 21). Wimmer, in his study of contemporary national and ethnic movements, proposes a similar argument about the role of symbolism in

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48 See Young (1990) for a concise overview of communitarian thought.
contemporary political communities. He points to the fundamentally open and unstable nature of symbolism as allowing for ‘multiple connections and interpretations [so] that there can be agreement from different interest positions on ambiguous meanings’ (Wimmer 2002: 31).

In this way, persons may agree to a symbolic representation, for example, the Arctic landscape as representing a significant unified region and a basis for international cooperation, but this symbolism remains open to multiple interpretations and meanings. I argue that community was produced as people increasingly transacted and interacted within the Arctic region and during INRIPP events. Within this community, ways of knowing and doing, which are inherently communal, were developed and contested. The persons engaged in these interactions and becoming part of this community proved capable of strategically navigating such an Arctic community, rather than being controlled by a discourse or identity that has been produced within it. Such a notion of community serves to open the conceptual space closed by more static conceptions of identity, making it possible to conceive of actors strategically and competently navigating the social and political world, agreeing to one thing and doing another, and changing their minds, practices, and vocabularies based on context (Bourdieu 1977, Wimmer 2002).

3.5 Conclusion

Arctic region building has brought diverse actors throughout the Arctic into increasing contact. This increased contact, interdependence, and transaction has not, however, produced a shared Arctic identity. Although INRIPP participants, many of whom were involved in a variety of Arctic regional endeavors, were willing to identify with the Arctic as a legitimate basis for cooperation, they did not demonstrate any sense of an Arctic identity. To further explore the role of identity in INRIPP interactions, despite the absence of an Arctic identity, I described how indigenous identity functioned as a form of greeting and an opening to further debate, but did not serve as a bridge across which Canadian models and knowledge could travel into Russia. In fact, when this identity was called upon to support such endeavors, the discussion of difference, rather than similarity, became prominent.
Despite Russians’ opposition to Canadian ideas and the fact that few Canadian models were concretely realized, both Russians and Canadians involved in the project repeatedly emphasized that they saw positive signs of progress in the project. This progress, they argued, was marked by the way they were beginning to ‘speak each other’s language’ and ‘have similar mentalities.’ In this light, it seems that establishing partners throughout the Arctic who could speak about and act in the Arctic in similar ways was an important goal of the development project as well. Drawing upon the Arctic as a geographical symbol to legitimate interaction, Canadians were promoting specific ways of speaking and knowing about the Arctic environment and Arctic indigenous peoples. A community was being produced by these region-building encounters that was navigated by strategically competent actors with particular interests and motivations and knowledge of one another, not by the random strangers most often postulated by globalization theories or by the discourse or identity automatons developed in region building theories. In the next chapter, I explore how Canadians worked to enroll Russians into a Canadian-dominated Arctic community by advocating certain ways of speaking about and, by extension, acting upon the Arctic environment and indigenous peoples and describe ways in which Russians partook of this community and resisted it.
Chapter 4: Talking about Canadian Co-Management in Central Siberia

In the past ten years there has been a renewal of this ancient Yugra land. The opening of vast deposits of oil and gas have not simply awakened these hushed taiga expanses from their age-old sleep, it broke into a well-ordered, century-old way of life. The whole world found out about our wonderful region. Cities were built, highways and railway lines were laid, one thousand kilometers of gas and oil pipelines were stretched across rivers and bogs, and a unique communications system was established. The ancient indigenous peoples – mansi and khanty – amicably took in hundreds of thousands of builders, drillers, and oilmen, for whom this harsh region became a homeland as well.

A.V. Filipenko, Governor of Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug (KMAO 2004, my translation)

“What do you want, old man? ’ I asked my father. ‘Can I help you?’

‘I don’t want anything,’ he says after a long silence. ‘Only my land. Give me my land back where I can graze my reindeer, hunt game, and catch fish. Give me my land where...the rivers and lakes have no oil slicks. I want land where my home, my sanctuary, and my graveyard can remain inviolable...Give me my own land, not someone else’s. Just a tiny patch of my own land.’

My elderly father whispers these words as he would a prayer each time he passes by the holy place: O Gods, deliver my land from oil! O Gods, put the land back into my hands!

Yeremei Aipin (1989), Khanty author and politician
4.1 Introduction: Arrival in Khanty-Mansiysk

My first arrival to Khanty-Mansiysk, the 55,000-person capital of Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug (KMAO), was characterized by darkness. I was traveling with a Canadian INRIPP delegation on their way to run a seminar on the Canadian model of co-management of natural resources. We had taken the night flight from Moscow, leaving the federal center 1,270 miles (2,050 kilometers) and two time zones behind.49 My early observations were somewhat muddled – a result of the late hour and the ten hour time difference between Khanty-Mansiysk and Iqaluit (Nunavut), where I had spent the previous five months researching and learning about the Canadian North.

When I returned a year later to conduct follow-up interviews with all those who participated in the conference on co-management, my impressions of the land were much more vivid. As the plane drew closer to a landscape unmarked by the notably familiar (i.e. the tiny cars, miniature houses, and swimming pools that establish our sense of size and distance when landing in most cities), I experienced a curious absence of scale. The brown, boggy topography of the Western Siberian plain was clearly marked by lines crisscrossing landscape and I tried, without much success, to discern if they were the okrug’s 18,023 km of roads or tributaries of the famous Ob’ and Irtysh rivers. I even considered that these patterns might be the paths made by reindeer guided over the land by the 470 indigenous families groups are presently engaged in herding (KMAO 2003; RITC 2004). I later learned the ways in which this seemingly undifferentiated and vast landscape changes throughout the okrug. Northern areas in the okrug are above the permafrost line and indigenous families in the more temperate south count agriculture amongst their traditional pursuits.50

The territory’s 1.5 million residents live predominantly in 16 different towns scattered across the territory. There are also 24 settlements, 173 villages, and nomad camps,

49 Unless otherwise cited, the statistical data in this section comes from a publication of the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug government (KMAO 2003).

50 The climate is highly continental with much temperature variability. Winter normally lasts from October-April, with an average January temperature between minus 18 to minus 24 degrees Celsius (0 to −11 degrees Fahrenheit) and July temperatures between 15.7 and 18.4 degrees Celsius (60-64 degrees Fahrenheit).
many of which are home to the Khanty and Mansi, who number about 29,000 people (2.2% of the total population) and are 75% of the rural population (Pushkarev and Goryachenko 1995). Becoming a minority in the district that bears their name has been a recent development for the Khanty and Mansi who live in KMAO. The total okrug population has increased by one million in the past thirty years in response to the rising demand for industrial labor, largely in the oil sector\(^\text{51}\) that employs one-third of the total population (KMAO 2003; Pushkarev and Goryachenko 1995). The okrug (district) is approximately the size of France and is bordered by Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug to the North, the Komi Republic to the West, Sverdlovsk, Tyumen’ and Tomsk Oblasts (regions) to the South and Krasnoyarsk Krai (region) to the East.

Departing after my second visit, interviews complete and on my way to Novosibirsk for further research, I flew west out of Khanty-Mansiysk towards Nizhnevartovsk. This time I saw the landscapes, so fiercely discussed in personal interviews, that give the okrug its nickname of ‘Kuwait on Ice.’ These KMAO oil fields produce 58% of Russia’s total crude oil and count for 5.8% of world production.\(^\text{52}\) It is these oil fields that resulted in the okrug’s net foreign trade balance of 17.5 million USD, 98% of which came from the export of crude oil to foreign partners primarily in Germany, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Poland, USA, Ukraine, France, and Switzerland. Around the oil fields, the sense of scale was more readily attainable – roads, the apparatus of oil extraction, trucks, and buildings were dispersed throughout the landscape and created a disjointed patchwork of seemingly untouched land and highly built sites. It is this characteristic of competing usages – between oil development by large Russian and multinational companies and the reindeer herding, fishing, and hunting carried out by the indigenous peoples of the okrug – that made KMAO seem like an ideal location in which to hold a seminar on the Canadian concept of co-management of natural resources.

The three-day seminar on co-management in November 2003 was an effort by the Canadian delegation of ten persons from various organizations, including two non-

\(^{51}\) Oil related jobs make up ¾ of the industrial employment in KMAO.

\(^{52}\) There are 413 extraction fields in KMAO – 365 oil fields, 15 oil and gas fields, 3 gas condensate fields, and 19 gas fields. The first gas field opened on September 21, 1953 near Beryozovo, in the western part of the okrug, and the first oil well in Siberia was drilled in KMAO in 1969.
indigenous and two indigenous (Inuit) co-management experts, to promote Canadian-style co-management to local and national indigenous leaders and trainees from all over the Russian North, heads of KMAO herding families favored by the regional government, regional Russian bureaucrats, and representatives of the oil companies active in KMAO. Co-management of natural resources is designed to cope with competing land uses and in Canada it has been used to resolve formally, if not truly reconcile, the claims of industry, government, and indigenous peoples. A rather idealized version of co-management that glossed over indigenous and academic critiques of the process was presented to the assembled Russians, even as Canadians worked to demonstrate their humility by pointing out potential conflicts and problems within co-management institutions. Despite this attempt by Canadians to appear humble and to make their claims about the process of co-management in a modest way, it became evident, both at the seminar and in follow-up interviews conducted one year later, that many Russian participants felt that they had been lectured by outsiders on how they should manage resources and conflict in their own territory.

Throughout the seminar, power was being exercised and resisted, both between Canadians and Russians and between different factions within the Russian audience itself. This was primarily evident in how seminar debate was controlled and in the Canadian promotion of and Russian resistance to speaking in certain ways about land, indigenous peoples, and development. For example, many Russians rejected the use of the word 'co-management,' arguing that either they already had similar practices that were simply called by another name or that the idea itself was incompatible with their situation and worldview. Recognizing that language signifies a way of knowing and acting in the world makes Russian resistance to certain Canadian phrases more intelligible. By rejecting a word, they were also rejecting an idea, the institutions and processes represented by that idea, and the power relationship implicit in this one-way exchange in which the Canadians were the bringers of ideas and phrases and the teachers to Russian 'students.'

This chapter's exploration of the exercise of power and influence serves as a continuation of the community building argument forwarded in the chapter three by examining the ways in which power relationships are implicit in the process of community creation. At the end of this chapter, I explore how the construction of
ways of speaking and knowing is an intensely communal activity and hypothesize that Russians rejected Canadian words, like co-management, in order to undermine the idea of an Arctic community led by Canadians. This shows the ways in which community is not just a benign result of coming into contact and gradually reaching agreement on key issues, but rather a longer process of enrolling new actors in which power plays a significant role.

The purpose of this chapter is to present a case study of an idea in motion by tracing how co-management was offered by the Canadians, the Russian response to this concept, and the ways of doing, knowing, and being that were both assumed and constructed throughout the processes of testimony and knowledge exchange. First, I introduce the seminar itself and the idea of co-management, investigating the motivations behind the choice of co-management as a focus of INRIPP. Subsequently, I examine how Canadians portrayed the co-management process. I then introduce the key Russian players in KMAO – the indigenous peoples, regional government, and oil companies – and their interrelationships to provide context for the ways in which co-management was understood and critiqued by Russian participants a year after the seminar when I returned to KMAO for follow-up interviews. Finally, I show the ways in which the INRIPP-facilitated encounters, in the context of Arctic region building, both build and presuppose a sense of 'community' by illustrating the development of and resistance to certain ways of knowing and speaking about the Arctic during the KMAO seminar. This argument demonstrates the ways in which the project’s emphasis on knowledge transfer fits cleanly into Canadian Arctic region-building goals – not necessarily by successfully transplanting an idea or institution, but rather by building a community of people who are capable of talking about and envisioning the Arctic and northern peoples in congruent ways. The chapter concludes with some observations on the exercise of power in such fleeting and deeply voluntary cross-cultural encounters and a brief commentary on the ways in which Russians also exercised power over the Canadians.
4.2 The Seminar

The co-management seminar took place in the headquarters of the regional government, which are situated on the impressive and slightly surreal central square of Khanty-Mansiysk where extensive building has taken place in the last thirty years with an apparent emphasis on splendor and unique architecture. The conference hall where the seminar was held was unlike anything I had encountered in the Canadian North – a huge room with microphones, headsets, and cameras at each of the approximately one hundred and fifty places and large permanent video screens that projected presentations and the faces of individual audience members if they chose to speak up during question and answer periods. A member of the delegation, an Inuk from Nunavut, was noticeably taken aback by this level of grandeur, particularly because the Canadians’ discussions often focused on the poverty and backwardness of Russia.

The seminar’s presentations and discussion were facilitated by the efforts of three Russian interpreters carrying out simultaneous Russian-English interpretation. Canadian presenters gave a variety of lectures, followed by question and answer sessions, and bureaucrats from KMAO and oil companies described their activities. The seminar culminated in a role play in which participants were asked to look at present agreements between indigenous land owners in Khanty-Mansiysk and oil companies and to explore ways in which such contracts could be improved. Much informal discussion and debate took place over lunches, at tea breaks, and at an evening reception.

Despite an emphasis on open discussion and dialogue coming from the Canadian side, the seminar was strictly controlled by the Russian co-chairs and by oil company representatives, albeit in different ways. The Russian organizers seemed to see the activity as more of a performance – a moment for showing themselves in the best possible light in order to attract future Canadian investment and projects. When indigenous participants from KMAO brought up specific concerns relating to their own experience in coping, for example, with the relationship between herding and oil
development, they were told ‘this is not the place to elaborate upon your family.’ A high-ranking bureaucrat in a KMAO department dealing with indigenous issues repeatedly cut off a particularly vocal indigenous woman, memorably at a point when she was stating vociferously that ‘the assertion of rights by aboriginals is seen as nationalism by the government and aboriginals are blamed for their own problems and blackmailed.’

Overall, the Russian co-chairs seemed reluctant to allow signs of misunderstanding to surface at the seminar. When a representative of an indigenous organization in Taimyr, who had also traveled to the Canadian North on study tour, commented that they needed ‘concrete examples of co-management,’ a representative of the regional bureaucracy did not allow the Canadian speaker to whom the question was addressed to answer and stated brusquely, ‘well, that is why we are having this conference!’ Official indigenous speakers, such as the representatives from RAIPON, were not so easily silenced and took the opportunity for a slight performance of public shaming of the KMAO government in front of international guests, making statements such as ‘all is not well in Khanty-Mansiysk’ and the ‘issues with obshini need to be brought out.’

Oil company representatives also showed an ability to silence indigenous commentary and complaints, through what I call the ‘endless capacity to acquiesce’ in combination with a remarkable ability to produce long and complicated documents in improbably short periods of time. During the seminar’s role-play, conducted on the third and final day of the seminar, a representative of one of the major KMAO oil companies managed to produce a very long agreement and, when indigenous representatives attempted to critique the document, could easily point to clauses where almost everything, from small business training to co-management, was already included. Another example came from the role-play as well when an indigenous delegate from Khanty-Mansiysk demanded that oil companies buy food, such as berries, from

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53 Interestingly, this is one of the few times that the idea of ‘rights’ was mentioned by Russian participants. In fact, I was told by one KMAO bureaucrat that they ‘had tried to stop talking about special rights and privileges because it leads to paternalism and corruption.’ At another point in the seminar, indigenous rights were characterized as undermining citizenship-based rights. When an oil company representative was told by the role play organizer that he was a good defender of his own company, the oil company representative stood up and declared, ‘I’m a defender of the rights of the citizens of this country,’ ostensibly their rights to oil revenues via the federal state.
indigenous peoples (despite the mumbled protests from other indigenous representatives that ‘berries are not development’). An oil company representative simply leaned forward and magnanimously replied, ‘we’ll take your berries.’ A Russian-speaking Canadian project worker said he had spoken to an oil company representative while on a break. The oil representative was ‘confused and was asking me, “Who do I need to pay? How much? Aboriginal people live in the tundra and that’s all.”’ The ability to acquiesce to almost any demand that could be forwarded, in this case a minor one to purchase food and berries from local indigenous families, succeeded in silencing an entire debate on indigenous entrepreneurship and indigenous training and involvement at oil sites throughout KMAO.

Russian interviewees expressed a broad range of views about seminars in general and this seminar in particular. Several interviewees mentioned overall confusion about the ideas being presented because they found it difficult to dialogue with unknown people about a new idea. Many people commented that it would have helped if a concrete example or issue of co-management could have been presented, as the seminar was perceived to be quite ‘abstract.’ One indigenous interviewee pointed to an oft-mentioned desire to realize a co-management project in practice, stating:

overall seminars are helpful and a good experience, but you need to learn new information bit by bit...Maybe we don’t need more seminars, in terms of quantity, but need them in another form that allows us to see more than just theory, more than just plans and lists...maybe we could choose a place that is closer to indigenous peoples and set up a model co-management scheme in a village.

Many KMAO interviewees mentioned that more time, more interaction with Canadians, as well as a pilot project in co-management may have facilitated the transfer of knowledge.

The main Russian complaint seemed to be rooted in a desire to move beyond talk and realize something more concrete – a real project with real financing. A high-ranking KMAO bureaucrat commented, ‘we need fewer seminars now because we all know each other now and our mentalities are identical. We need to do a practical project.
We could take some of the good ideas from Canada, like we have taken on the idea of a corporation for native peoples.' One Khanty activist who had attended the seminar commented:

I see no concrete results from seminars and exchanges because concrete projects have not been implemented. You can say good words for a long time, but if it is just an idea it will remain an idea. We need to work out the details in a concrete place.

Along the same lines, an indigenous participant from a village stated:

A concrete project would really help, or even just a computer because we lack regular communications connections. We would like to do a real project ourselves, drawing upon the knowledge and words of the seminar, but we need actual help, real attention, and something concrete in the okrug.

Both indigenous representatives and governmental officials seemed to want to continue the interaction because it was thought provoking and also quite prestigious to be involved in international efforts.

Some interviewees, who had also been participants at other Canadian run seminars, commented that seminars are generally useful to them. One participant, who had been to several training sessions throughout his four-year acquaintance with the project, observed that training was useful for the perspective it gave him on his own work in government and in an indigenous organization:

Some of the problems I was dealing with in KMAO became clearer and I had some new ideas about directions. Also, the training is useful for getting to know people from other regions, with whom we now have close relations, so we can learn about problems and solutions from other regions.

An indigenous artist, who had participated in the conference on co-management and had also been part of international carvers’ meetings, said that work always moved ‘quite quickly after such meetings because you are inspired and have had the chance
to share experiences. I now have friends in Yamal, Novosibirsk, and Moscow with whom I speak often.’ In their view, seminars are important as they facilitate networking and are opportunities to meet with other Russian regional leaders who are facing similar challenges – an act of community building within the Russian North itself.

4.3 The Promotion of Co-Management

Co-management has its proponents and its discontents in Canada, a divergence of opinion that is further discussed below. The Canadian delegation, however, presented co-management in an overwhelmingly positive light at the seminar in Khanty-Mansiysk. Co-management was touted to be an innovative, effective and fair approach to resolving development conflicts. INRIPP literature states that:

in Canada, many aboriginal peoples and governments are committed partners in co-managing lands and resources. Co-management is a way of bringing together local communities and government agencies to create and implement effective resource management and development programs, while respecting cultural and social differences...It responds...to local needs and interests while recognizing the responsibility of the government to safeguard national interests.54

Usher (1995) broadly defines co-management as an institutional arrangement through which governments, indigenous representatives, and other parties (such as mining or oil companies) enter into formal agreements delineating particular rights and obligations in regards to the management of resources in a specific area. The practice of co-management of natural resources began with little fanfare in the 1940s when a group of Dene and Inuit hunters from Aklavik and Fort Smith proposed to government wildlife managers that management responsibilities for hunting and trapping resources should be shared (AINA/IRC 1995). Co-management was also a

Author’s document, also distributed to Russian INRIPP participants by ICC.
reaction to the failure of more top-down land use planning exercises that were enforced without the support of local residents, such as DIAND’s land use planning efforts in the Mackenzie Delta in 1975 (Fenge and Rees 1987). Co-management was first acknowledged in legislation in the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and since then all land claims settlements have included a provision for some kind of co-management of natural resources arrangement (Berkes 1994; Natcher 2001; Rodon 1998). In practice, there are a variety of co-management arrangements active in Canada, but the general model consists of a single wildlife management board for an entire land claim settlement area with local authorities representing various communities (MacLachlan 1994).

The members of the Canadian delegation were clearly aligned with Canadian researchers who see co-management as a positive and important step forward. These scholars argue that co-management fosters a situation in which power and responsibility can be shared between Canadian federal and regional governments and indigenous peoples and their governments. Furthermore, they argue that the co-management process is one through which the legitimacy of both indigenous and state systems of management can be recognized and a ‘healthy synergy’ resulting from cultural and knowledge differences can be produced (Berkes 1994: 20; AINA/IRC 1995; Collings 1997; Natcher 2001; Rodon 1998).

Canadian presenters repeatedly asserted that co-management was more than a vehicle for indigenous peoples to gain money through compensation from development, but also a way to ‘get a seat at the table’ in order to protect indigenous interests and lands and become involved with the political and economic processes of their regions. During the seminar, the Inuit delegates worked to present a vision of indigenous life

55 Outside of the land claims based co-management arrangements other boards have been set up as crisis-induced agreements dealing with a specific species, such as the Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement (NWT) and the Southeast Baffin Beluga Agreement (NWT/Nunavut).

56 In these analyses, state managers are seen to be the party that manages a given resource for the benefit of all Canadians by gathering and interpreting scientific data. Indigenous participants are meant to bring, by contrast, indigenous or ‘Traditional Ecological Knowledge’ (TEK) to the co-management table. In the words of Firket Berkes (1999:8), TEK is ‘a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with the environment.’ Peters (2003), in a case study of co-management in Nunavik (Northern Quebec), points out that different knowledge systems are seen by co-management board members as a challenge to achieving understanding, but not as an insurmountable barrier to communication.
in which economic development, including oil and gas extraction and mining, and active participation in formal land management could go hand in hand with preservation of indigenous cultures if undertaken with balance, flexibility, and proper planning. They were hoping to present a contrast to the Russian understandings of indigenous life, which they thought were restrictive and offered an unfair choice between total assimilation and complete preservation of traditional ways. One speaker from the Inuvialuit Settlement Area asserted that commercial development could complement a traditional way of life, stating that traditional knowledge is not lost through development, but transformed into practical business knowledge. He implied that participating in the Canadian mainstream economy was a sign of equality and that being left out of the market economy is a patronizing and insulting form of second class citizenship: 'we’re not seen as people who should be left as we are, but that we should be involved in the Canadian economy...which we don’t classify as traditional economy, but see as commercial activity that complements our way of life.'

The Canadian speakers repeatedly emphasized that the success of co-management lay in consensus, rather than litigation and confrontation. In the seminar’s program, distributed to all participants, the fact that co-management relationship and institutions are actually grounded in Canadian law through the land claims and other court precedents was mentioned briefly. However, the delegation remained committed to downplaying the legislated and legal underpinnings of co-management, as they did not believe that Russian indigenous peoples or regional governments would be able to fix co-management in law. Rather, they repeatedly emphasized that co-management could equally be considered a practical tool, like contract negotiations, for resolving resource development conflicts even in the absence of a legal base. As one Canadian speaker put it, co-management ‘need not be a ball and chain – rather it can result in benefit to all parties and can take a lot of different forms and does not require a legal footing.’ The desire to mask the legal bases of co-management, as I argue below, is also related to a kind of ongoing Canadian self-memorialization and glossing of the bitter history and present day politics between indigenous peoples and the Canadian state that took place throughout the Canadian performance at the seminar.
Overall, co-management was presented as a very apolitical process, rooted in dialogue, partnership, trust, and ongoing consultations with the communities that board members represented. A representative from DIAND stated that ‘politicized decision making should be minimized’ altogether and argued that the process of neutrality and decision-making becomes easier ‘over the years as the co-management participants come to understand and practice the concepts of natural justice, conflict of interests, and the appearance of bias.’ Co-management was portrayed as a scientific and unbiased process in which contentious politics would be inappropriate.

The idea of neutrality was central to the Canadians’ claims about the need to depoliticize the process. One speaker commented that co-management is unbiased and capable of protecting the environment because: ‘When you are at the [co-management] table you don’t represent indigenous people, industry or government – rather you are there to discuss the issues of the day.’ Another stated that ‘once someone is on the management board they don’t represent someone, they deal with the issue...and for that you need communication and cooperation.’ This concept of neutrality is predicated upon the Canadian understanding of co-management as a dispassionate debate in which neutral board participants are obligated to resolve issues of competing land use for collectively owned or publicly owned territories that are viewed as whole ecosystems. One bureaucrat stated that in co-management arrangements it ‘doesn’t matter who owns the land’ because the purpose of co-management is to make decisions that treat parcels of land as ecosystems, rather than worrying about ownership. All of the examples given were of co-management arrangements in areas that were either state owned or indigenous owned or that were designed to cope with common resource issues, such as wildlife and fisheries in Nunavut. Russian participants had difficulty understanding the nature of these collective lands and the Canadians’ approach to them. During the Soviet period, land had been owned entirely by the federal state (which was seen more as a separate actor than a representation of the people as a collective) and, at present, indigenous lands are divided amongst individual families and persons. It had to be clarified that the
Mackenzie Valley (in the NWT) was treated as an ‘integrated resource system’ that is managed by one, not multiple, co-management boards.\textsuperscript{57}

The concept of neutrality was fortified by the notion of partnership, which implies working together toward shared goals and mutual benefit. One Inuit delegate from a co-management board in Nunavut emphasized that ‘successful co-management must rely upon the development of a partnership approach.’ Another speaker noted that this emphasis on partnership was part of an international trend:

International standards are increasingly dictating that there be greater balance between development, traditional practices and the environment...to do this the use of the term and the exercise of the practice of partnership is becoming in many countries common place...co-management is in essence such a relationship of the parties...

These types of partnerships imply that trust of other members of the co-management board and of the institutional frameworks supporting the management process either exists or can be developed over time (AINA/IRC 1995; Usher 1995). In the words of one Canadian co-management expert, ‘people have to learn to trust in the process of [co-management].’

The necessary trust and sense of partnership was to be generated through ongoing dialogue with relevant actors and consultation with indigenous communities – a process often referred to by the Canadian delegation that seemed difficult to convey to Russians in a clear and believable manner. Russian participants struggled with this concept of dialogue and consensus decision-making and repeatedly directed hypothetical questions to the Canadian speakers positing extreme situations in which agreement simply cannot be reached. Many Russians seemed incredulous that no member of the board, which they understood to contain representatives with differing interests, would have veto power or the right to end negotiations entirely. When this

\textsuperscript{57} Operating ecosystemically was presented as not only a scientific choice made according to the principles of ecology, but also a pragmatic choice through which proponents of co-management can achieve one of their primary goals – development. One Canadian speaker commented that a valley-wide board as a way to streamline procedures to both protect the environment and to foster the proper climate for ‘encouraging industry.’
question was put to a member of the Canadian delegation, his only response was that ‘it just doesn’t get to that stage [of gridlock] because everyone has to meet conditions.’ These conditions, which the delegate did not define, are most likely conditions that are established in legal documents, board charters, and mandates that gain their power from the legal structure and precedents of state-indigenous peoples relations in Canada.

However, perhaps the Russians’ incredulity was also due to Canadians’ highly idealized version of co-management. The Canadians presented a vision of the world in which development can be a ‘win-win’ situation for all involved and can take place without affecting subsistence land use or the land itself. One consultant encapsulated the stance that most Canadian speakers took: ‘development has its price and it can create conflict between stakeholders – but it need not. It need not diminish anyone’s lifestyle or profit margin.’ Russian participants, on the whole, did not believe in this vision. One oil company representative tried to point out what he considered to be the unavoidable paradox in development: ‘the impossibility to resolve the need to preserve the environment while engaging in oil development.’ The Canadian Inuit speaker to whom this point was directed felt unable to acknowledge that environmental change or degradation was, on some level, involved in extractive industry and instead stated that ‘we try to discuss everything prior to...sit down together and come up with a satisfactory mutual process.’ Implicit in this is that advanced planning and dialogue between partners can prevent negative impacts entirely. The act of consultation itself was presented as an unproblematic, secure, and effective conversation between indigenous communities and various levels of the Canadian government. In fact, the efficacy of consultation, such as holding community discussions on regional and federal policies or proposed development projects, remains highly debatable. Bielawski (2003) and Irlbacher-Fox (2004) argue that indigenous and local communities in the Canadian North are often unable to influence political outcomes through negotiations and consultation, while at the same time indigenous participation in such processes lends credence to the actions of government.

The Canadian delegations’ presentation of co-management as an unproblematic and apolitical process is at odds with the reality of co-management in the North. The
definition and practice of co-management remains contested and some scholars argue that co-management can be more accurately understood as a process of 'muddling through' rather than as a defined or institutionalized practice (Haugh 1994: 29; Rodon 1998). Key concepts and practices, such as traditional knowledge or what constitutes community involvement and consultation, remain confusing to both scientists and community people (AINA/IRC 1995). In contrast to the positive review given co-management above, some scholars see co-management as a tool through which legitimacy is lent, via indigenous participation, to a process that actually works against the interests and autonomy of indigenous peoples (Hoekema 1995; Nadasdy 1999).

Taking apart the word of co-management and focusing on the word ‘management’ itself, the ideological baggage of the idea becomes clearer. Shore and Wright (2000) argue that the language and terms of management and audit have been introduced to all aspects of life. This language encourages individuals to render themselves auditable and accountable and the process, an inherently political and transformative one in which certain types of narratives are validated over others, is masked by the scientifically rational, and deeply Western language of management. Along these lines Nadasdy (1999) argues that the task of integrating indigenous and scientific knowledge during the co-management process requires that the content of indigenous knowledge be transformed into narratives and types of data compatible with Western management. He elaborates:

The project of knowledge integration...takes for granted existing power relations between aboriginal people and the state by assuming that traditional knowledge is simply a new form of “data” to be incorporated into already existing management bureaucracies and acted upon by scientists and resource managers (Nadasdy 1999: 15).

Although co-management was presented primarily as a technical solution, Canadian project workers seemed to recognize the transformative nature of techniques of management to some extent and to see co-management as an ideological construct that could potentially restructure the relationship between indigenous peoples, the state, and industry. The focus of INRIPP II was primarily on economics, but, as one
project worker put it, they were aware that 'economics always has political spin-offs.' They clearly intuited that co-management was more than a practical mechanism designed to deal with resource development conflict, but also a political technology. This is exemplified by the name of the initial two-day co-management workshop in Moscow (2002): 'Co-Management and Good Governance.'

However, the co-management process, which has is roots in political and ethical debate, was still predominantly presented as a purely technical one. I argue that this approach was taken for two reasons. Firstly, the Canadians did not want to talk about legal process in order to make their model more applicable to Russian present-day life, in which sweeping legislation in regards to indigenous peoples is unlikely. Secondly, there was the process self-memorialization, entailing the glossing/selective remembering of history mentioned above. In Canada, respect for diversity might now be considered part of national rhetoric and identity. Perhaps the members of the delegation simply were not cognizant of the extent to which co-management does not flow from naturally good feelings and pre-existing mutual respect, but rather from legal foundations and political battles. Or, in wanting to present an ideal version of themselves to outsiders, perhaps the Canadian delegates envisioned respectful dialogue as a 'natural' activity for Canadians, not a legislated relationship that has resulted from over fifty years of often acrimonious political debate between indigenous peoples and the state. Although Canadians may have wished to understand it as such, co-management relationships, and the land claims from which they stem, are not the result of genteel civility or a natural impulse toward fairness, but rather the result of Supreme Court decisions forcing government to recognize indigenous rights.\(^{58}\)

I'd like to point out one decision made by the delegation that further develops the line of argument pointing to the Canadian process of self-idealization. In focusing on co-management, the Canadian delegation glossed over a widespread method through which the path for development is paved in the Canadian North – Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs). IBAs are essentially contracts between indigenous groups and development companies that enumerate specific benefits for indigenous communities

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\(^{58}\) See Chapter 7, Section 2 'The Role of the Courts' in RCAP (1996) for a review of the supreme court decisions relating to indigenous rights in Canada.
in the North (such as money and training) and responsibilities of extractive industry (such as environmental impact assessments and remediation plans and obligations). IBAs are meant to offset the negative, and sometimes irreversible, effects of development on land owned or used by indigenous peoples. Unlike co-management, indigenous groups normally do not have ongoing negotiations with companies outside of what contact is necessary to ensure that the company fulfills their contractual obligations outlined in the agreement. These agreements are much closer to the KMAO practice of compensation, which was looked upon quite negatively by the Canadian delegation, than the model of participatory management that the Canadians chose to promote at the seminar. Co-management was chosen over the tradition of IBAs as co-management is clearly enshrined in Canadian legislation and ways of governing. In the words of one DIAND expert, who was instrumental in explaining co-management to the delegation and to Russians: ‘In DIAND, IBAs are ultimately up to the individual minister. Co-management, on the other hand, is legislated through land claims.’ The choice of co-management was obviously a choice Canadians felt represented the best practices of the North. However, highlighting this model of participatory management to the exclusion of other forms of agreement through which northern territories are opened for natural resource extraction presented a highly skewed and idealized picture of how northern Canadian development actually occurs.

4.4 Relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Families, Regional Government, and Oil Companies in KMAO

In this section, I examine the relationship between oil companies, regional authorities, and indigenous family groups and peoples in KMAO – the triangle of users that co-management is meant to serve – in order to provide context for how Canadian co-management was received by the Russian seminar participants. More research would be required to fully and accurately describe this situation. However, it is safe to say that the attitudes toward development encompass everything from the triumphant progressivism of the Governor to the mournful sense of loss and disempowerment conveyed by Aipin expressed in the opening citations of this chapter and a range of
positions in between. The relationship between indigenous peoples, the regional government and oil companies was often alluded to at the November 2003 seminar, but only fully explained in my follow-up interviews, which took place in imposing government offices and cozy kitchens. I also had the feeling in some interviews that the interview was a welcome opportunity to air personal grievances to an attentive outsider and some comments might be construed as such. Consequently, I have attempted to weave these comments together with primary and secondary sources and with other interviews in order to provide a more balanced picture.

This section, however, should not be taken as an exhaustive depiction of the relationship between competing land users and powers in KMAO. The voices of the indigenous persons and families who actually live on the land are noticeably absent, largely due to the fact that few such persons were invited to the seminar. Their absence is significant as it indicates the extent to which the seminar was in part a performance oriented towards putting a good face forward for the visiting Canadian delegation, not a moment in which KMAO officials truly wanted to go over and discuss the relationship of Khanty and Mansi to the government and to resource developers. However, this section does serve to situate how those who actually did participate in the debate over Canadian-style co-management saw their situation and to frame their responses to the idea of co-management, which are examined in the following section. These major players (indigenous peoples and organizations, regional government, and oil companies) are treated in turn and their interactions are described throughout. Finally, an unresolved question that runs throughout the relationships between these three parties is explored: who is the owner of land in KMAO?

4.4.1 The Indigenous Peoples of the Territory

Although the indigenous Khanty and Mansi are the titular nation in the okrug, meaning that the okrug was designed to be their 'national homeland', indigenous

59 The okrug first took form under the name Ostyako-Vogulsky National Okrug in 1930, after the historical names given Khanty and Mansi, and was renamed and joined to the Tyumen' Region as Khanty-Mansiysk National Okrug in 1944. In 1977, in an effort to diminish the position of national
peoples now represent a minority of the population. The indigenous population is relatively small (~30,000) and, according to a government representative in 2004, includes Khanty (21,000), Mansi (8,000), and Forest Nentsy (1,000). All of these peoples are considered indigenous under the Soviet-invented categorization of the ‘Small-Numbered Peoples of the North.’ The regional government’s policies seem to indicate that not only does a people need to be a small population in order to qualify as indigenous, they also need to engage in traditional lifestyles and activities. For example, ethnically Russian ‘old-timers,’ whose ancestors came to KMAO during the conquest of Siberia (osvoenie Sibiri) or after, are considered eligible for benefits and support if they are involved in hunting and other subsistence lifestyles stemming from the land. This emphasis on lifestyle and tradition in Russian understandings of indigeneity was a prominent source of difference between Canadians and Russians.

The Khanty are the largest group of indigenous people in the territory and include three sub-groups (southern, northern and eastern), which are distinguishable from one another by variations in culture, dialects, and means of subsistence. All three indigenous peoples of the okrug base their economies in fishing, hunting, and gathering and the northern groups add reindeer herding to this pattern (Balzer 1999; Glavatskaya 2004). Indigenous ways, including shamanistic religious beliefs (such as the famous bear festival of the Khanty), language, culture and modes of subsistence, have undergone periods of change and revival in contact with other cultures. These traditions, particularly religious beliefs and ethnic identification, were ‘influenced, but not eclipsed’ by contact with Russians and have experienced a revival since perestroika in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union two years later (Balzer 1999: 6; Glavatskaya 2004).

The first records of contact are of trade with Novgorodian traders, in search of furs, around 1096 and Khanty predecessors were involved with the Muslim Tatars to the south by the thirteenth century. The Cossacks, under Ermak Timofeevich, began their ambitious and frequently violent conquest of Siberia in the sixteenth century. The Cossacks kept primarily to settlements along major river routes, largely in the south, in order to stay connected to imperial centers. Thus, indigenous family groups could
retreat from Cossack influence if they so desired and many did (Balzer 1999). Under the Tsarist imperial regime, policies towards indigenous peoples varied, but, beyond the extraction of sometimes crippling levels of taxation (yasak), were largely laissez faire.

The aggressive transformation of indigenous peoples and their livelihoods came only with the Soviet State that was established by the Bolsheviks in 1921. The Soviet emphasis on obliterating class and thereby paving the way for inculcating Soviet solidarity reached Siberia as part of the first unrealistically ambitious Soviet-wide five-year plan in 1928. Poelzer (1995: 141) argues that this is when Siberia and the North became integral parts of the state, rather than its frontier. This transition meant that indigenous persons were no longer members of the imperial periphery who could purchase their peace through taxation, but rather backward proletarians who had to be transformed into modern Soviet citizens. Balzer makes the case for a subtle understanding of the process and effects of Soviet policy:

Sovietization of the Khanty was neither uniform nor predictable in its actions and repercussions...Many Khanty became bicultural, with a pragmatic respect for Soviet technology and economic improvements but a wariness of official demands (1999:142-143).

She also points to differentiated contact throughout the Tsarist and Soviet period, with more extensive contact in the southern areas of the okrug and less in the north.

The 1930s witnessed aggressive assimilationist policies, such as banning shamanism, collectivizing traditional subsistence livelihoods from small, social, kinship-based bands into state production ‘brigades’ which consisted primarily of men, settling the formerly nomadic non-‘brigade’ workers into settlements, and removing young indigenous children from their homes to residential schools (Balzer 1999; Krupnik 1993; Pika 1999; Poelzer 1995; Slezine 1994; Vitebsky 2005). Simultaneously, Khanty herders with more animals became victim to the dekulakization policy, whereby certain families were classified as ‘rich peasants’ or kulaks and stripped of their property. A Khanty activist commented on this process in an interview:
History shows us that in the 1930s and 1940s, we lost everything in dekulakization. It was impossible to live. I told an economist in government that if you were to return to us all you had taken there wouldn’t be enough money in the okrug budget.

In this statement, it is clear that she views past wrongs as another reason for the state to recognize the rights of indigenous peoples today.

It was only in the 1960s that extensive settlement by outsiders occurred, due to oil and gas development (Balzer 1999). The oil-rich land used by Khanty and Mansi was seized by the Ministry of Energy and the government oil monopoly and many indigenous families and communities were forced to relocate either immediately or because the ensuing destruction of natural resources in areas of oil exploration made indigenous livelihoods nearly impossible (Wiget 1997). The oil boom, in one Khanty activist’s opinion, brought about the beginnings of an indigenous political movement in KMAO in the 1970s. She stated, in an interview over tea in her flat in Khanty-Mansiysk, that life was ‘complicated by the oil boom and we began discussing and corresponding amongst ourselves.’ She stated that before the oil era ‘we took responsibility for the land each family took care of their area and regulated it themselves to preserve the balance of nature...now we need concrete arguments to regain this right to regulate land ourselves.’

Twenty-two percent of land in KMAO is allocated to indigenous family groups and this land is also subject to intense pressure from oil and gas exploration, with 1,000 indigenous persons living in areas licensed for oil and gas exploration and 3,000 indigenous persons in areas that now encompass oil and gas fields (Department of the Affairs of the Small Numbered Peoples of the North, KMAO).\textsuperscript{60} Although some indigenous families may see oil development as an opportunity, the majority of indigenous interviewees spoke about oil development with a sense of loss, either angry or resigned. Pushkarev and Goryachenko (1995), writing in the extremely difficult years immediately following the end of the Soviet Union, pointed to low life expectancy and linked these statistics with the environmental consequences of

\textsuperscript{60} See Karapetova, Sokolova and Solov’eva (1995) for a detailed quantitative land use analysis amongst the eastern Khanty and Forest Nentsy in KMAO.
increased industrialization. They argue that over the period of industrial development, 11 million hectares (about 27 million acres) of reindeer pasture have been lost and 28 fishing rivers polluted (Pushkarev and Goryachenko 1995: 419). Despite competing land use and pollution, government statistics claim that 6.1% of the indigenous population, about 1,800 persons, continues to lead a nomadic traditional lifestyle on 484 parcels of so-called family land.

Despite multiple protests against certain developments, such as efforts to prevent the planned expansion of a railroad spur into the Yamal Peninsula by blocking a supply route and pitching traditional ‘chums’ (winter tents) in front of the parliament, indigenous leaders have struggled to present a united front and to mobilize support. One interviewee commented that ‘we have tried to discuss how to unite ourselves, but there are so many different approaches to one question: what is bothering us in our spirit and what should we do?’ She alluded to a history of shame in indigeneity, stating that ‘we won’t move forward until we stop hating ourselves.’ Another interviewee, a Nentsy/Khanty reindeer herder turned folklorist and activist, also spoke about the difficulty of unity: ‘it’s difficult to know how to unite because we have always lived independently in reindeer camps, where each person decides for himself how he wants to live.’ Balzer (1999: 221) also notes that Khanty leaders are rarely comfortable acting ‘at the level of mass political identity by speaking for their whole people. More often, they prefer to defend a particular group…against oil companies.’

Notwithstanding these difficulties, an indigenous organization, Spasenie Yugry (Salvation of the Yugra), was founded by indigenous activists in 1989 and has been active in lobbying for indigenous causes at the local and regional levels. The organization is now a constituent member of RAIPON, the national indigenous association in Russia. A young indigenous leader, involved in both Spasenie Yugry and the okrug’s bureaucracy, saw the history of the Khanty and Mansi since the fall of Communism in 1991 as a story of improvement. He stated:

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61 See Balzer (1999) chapters one and six for further details.
62 Although Spasenie Yugry has 23 local offices (RITC 2004), the extent to which this organization touches the lives of everyday indigenous persons can be questioned (Balzer 1999: 10).
We have come so far in the past 10 years in developing an aboriginal consciousness and becoming a strong and healthy nation. We now have thirty aboriginal PhDs from our area and the obshini are growing and quite strong.

At the same time, he noted that aboriginal activists had become ‘more patient’ and aware that ‘there are questions to be resolved at the federal level and that signing petitions and having demonstrations is not the way to change things. They need to know how to prepare documents and where to send them to get what they want. The question stands now: how do we participate in all this?’

This interviewee noted what he considered to be important changes in the relationship between indigenous peoples and oil companies since the November 2003 seminar on co-management. On the final day of the seminar on co-management, representatives of Lukoil and Spasnie Yugry signed a document agreeing to pursue open and productive dialogue. A year later, a joint document between Lukoil and Yukos, two of the major oil companies active in the okrug, and Spasnie Yugry was also signed. To this particular interviewee, it was evidence of progress. He stated, ‘it’s not co-management, but it is an indication that we have come a long way in ten years. We sat at one table, aboriginals and oil company representatives. And ten years ago this would have been impossible. It’s not co-management, but it is a dialogue.’

This positive assessment of the meeting is a stark contrast to the blistering review given it by an older Khanty leader, who was also involved in this meeting. She argued that overall oil companies put on a good face, but little of their ‘good’ intentions are realized on the ground. She commented vehemently:

If I had known in advance what it would be like, I wouldn’t have gone at all. They were all saying that indigenous peoples and oil companies have a good relationship and that the negotiations really work. We gave ourselves over to be bought by the oil companies...Oil companies will agree to everything while sitting at the meeting table, but so many promises are not fulfilled.

Several indigenous interviewees spoke to the lack of contract fulfillment, such as delayed payments or payments made contingent on ceding more land, and the
frustration of relying upon oil companies, who have their own agenda, for basic services, such as transport and health care.

Other indigenous interviewees seemed determined to challenge the image of well-funded, happy, indigenous residents of the okrug that the regional government presents. Another Khanty interviewee repeatedly pointed to what he perceived to be a disjuncture between the face shown to outsiders and the reality of indigenous life in the okrug. To begin our interview, he made this opening remark:

We hear that all the projects are going good and that the so-called leaders are all doing good things, but it is just a performance. Why are we still learning only Russian in schools? Why can’t we hold a conference in the Khanty language? Why do the oil companies take all the meat and fish from hunters and herders, before they are willing to compensate them for damages to the land? It looks like we have democracy, but it’s like in traditional Khanty culture, where the elders made the decisions. Here only the directors and the bosses decide things.

In his opinion, the situation was worsening for indigenous people and they had no location where their concerns could be discussed openly with those in power.

4.4.2 The Regional Government

Despite indigenous leaders’ concerns about the sincerity of the action of the government, there is much attention, at least in terms of legislation, focused on the issues of indigenous peoples. Indigeneity is highly legislated in the okrug with about forty normative and legal acts adopted by the okrug government, ranging from language to folklore to subsistence activity. Much attention is placed on supporting folkloristic aspects of indigenous life, such as books and musical and dance groups,

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Statistics vary as to the extent that Khanty continue to speak their native language. Stewart-Massey (1994/1995) puts the figure at 2/3 of all Khanty, while Pushkarev and Goryachenko (1995) posit that 49% of the population continues to speak the language.
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and the Department of the Affairs of the Small-Numbered Peoples of the North\textsuperscript{64} staff clearly indicated their belief that indigenous people should be kept in traditional livelihoods at all costs, even if this means forgoing the monetary benefits of oil extracted from the land that indigenous families have used for centuries.

A leader in the Department of the Affairs of the Small Numbered Peoples of the North had clear ideas about how indigenous people should live, asserting:

Aboriginals should not live in cities, but where their ancestors lived – wearing traditional clothing, eating traditional foods, and living in a traditional way. Aboriginal families in the cities fall apart, and they lose their language and their culture...there are really serious problems in our villages. It is better for aboriginals to live in \textit{obshini} than villages.

Another interviewee in this department had a similar perspective on indigeneity and viewed the presence of oil companies and the compensation packages that indigenous families consequently receive as a necessary evil: ‘with this new money indigenous people stop dressing in traditional clothes and may have a reduced desire to lead their own way of life...they might stop reindeer herding and go looking for regular jobs.’ This interviewee emphasized that the primary goal of the Department was to protect a uniquely aboriginal way of life and stated, ‘unlike Canada, we are paying serious attention to traditional lifestyle.’ He recognized that indigenous people involved in traditional livelihoods should set the conditions of how oil exploration should take place in their territories. However, he repeatedly stated that indigenous peoples were not interested in becoming big businessmen and simply wanted compensation. This interviewee went on to state:

If aboriginals were allowed to be involved in enterprises such as this, they would no longer be able to preserve their way of life...if they received leases for their land, or were offered equal right to commercial activity, or big

\textsuperscript{64} The Department of the Affairs of the Small Numbered Peoples of the North is, admittedly, a rather cumbersome direct translation of the Russian title: \textit{Departament po voprosam korennikh malochislennikh narodov severa}. Although this could be more fluently translated into English as Department of Aboriginal Affairs, given the differences in conceptions of indigenousness described in chapter three and that small-numbered peoples of the north does not unproblematically equal Canadian or North American conceptions of ‘aboriginal,’ I retain a translation closer to the original.
money, they would be in town working for companies and would have abandoned their traditional activities. I understand that this is what has happened to First Nations in Canada.

He went on to explain that they make certain that all compensation agreements are designed so that if aboriginal people wanted to become more involved with the oil company they could, but ‘that aboriginals have no desire to take advantage of these clauses.’

Irrespective of the apparently clearly defined attitudes and expectations of what indigenous people should be like and do, a highly placed KMAO bureaucrat claimed that the regional government’s role in the oil development process was mostly improvised, as most of the legislation and power was actually at the federal level. He said that the regional government could enact legislation related to land use and require negotiations between competing land users. However, the regional government did not have the right to set the terms of negotiation, but can come in as a third party in the negotiations to ensure that negotiations were fair and to mediate the direct relationship between oil companies and indigenous persons and families in the okrug. Many of these questions of regional-federal jurisdiction are related to the question of land ownership and responsibility, which is outlined below.

Several interviewees outside government commented that the regional government does not support traditional pursuits in such a way that they could become economically independent and viable ways of life despite the emphasis on maintaining traditional lifestyles. One interviewee, a herder and activist, commented that although the government points proudly to high numbers of persons involved in herding, the herds are not substantial enough to guarantee independence:

Many of the so-called herders only have twenty to thirty reindeer. With that number they need support from the government. They should let someone be independent as a herder, and for that you need a big herd and then you won’t need money from the government...we need to be independent. If I’m dependent, I’ll give anything away, I’ll give the land away.
Thus the government’s emphasis on the importance of indigenous peoples pursuing traditional activities did not translate directly into or facilitate the growth of these activities to the extent where indigenous families would be in a financial and political position to refuse or delay development.

4.4.3 The Oil Companies

Most indigenous and governmental interviewees tended to characterize the relationship between oil companies and indigenous families and *obshini* as largely, if unsatisfactorily and unfairly, normalized. One Khanty activist prioritized the need for a permanent fund from oil revenues for indigenous people above the concept of co-management and ignored my questions in our interview about the specific issues between subsistence land users and oil companies in the okrug. She dismissed these issues of overlapping land use as largely, if imperfectly, settled between the indigenous families directly affected by development and the local oil company and pointed to the need to think more creatively and actively about the future, beyond purely localized problems. In her opinion, a permanent fund from oil revenues was essential. She stated that with such a fund they could fight back, maybe even moving beyond personal concerns and pursuits and work as a group. She remarked that ‘oil companies will always have somewhere else to go, but we [Khanty, Mansi] have nowhere to go.’ Regional authorities had also commented that a fund for indigenous people would be a good idea, but that such a fund would have to be established and run by the federal government.

As it is, any compensation for oil exploration and extraction goes directly to the family group affected by individual projects and usually takes the form of technical assistance, snowmobiles, electrification projects, but rarely substantial cash settlements. In an English-language handout prepared for Canadian members of the co-management delegation, Konstantin Belyaev, Head Surveyor for LUKOIL in KMAO, which is one of the largest companies operating in the district,\(^65\) wrote that the company concludes contracts with indigenous persons according to federal and

\(^65\) The six largest oil companies, in respective order of size and activity, are Surgutneftgaz, Yukos, LUKOIL, Tyumen’ Oil Company, Sidanko, and Slavneft.
regional legislation. Belyaev sees Lukoil's approach of family-by-family individual negotiations as something that is especially attentive to indigenous needs:

As far as the Company concerned, it pays attention to interests of each and every member of the aboriginal population to optimally co-ordinate mutual positions and needs. The Company makes its best to enhance living conditions of the aboriginal population... all occurring problems are solved immediately and none of native's requests are set aside.66

These contracts provide 'socioeconomic development on the lands inhabited by aboriginal population' and are renegotiated on an annual basis. In exchange for allowing seismic units, exploration wells, and oil drilling machinery on their land, Lukoil claims to have provided, in 2003: compensatory payments (4,951,224 rubles, 177,600 USD), snowmobiles (56), boats (30), boat engines (60), chainsaws (22), mobile power generators (31), petroleum and lubricants, coveralls, and funds for medical treatment and education.

In many ways, oil companies are expected to fulfill the functions that most people would consider to be responsibilities of the state: education, health care, transportation infrastructure, actual transportation in terms of flights/helicopter rides, and even sponsoring the 'native day' celebrations that were formerly subsidized by the Soviet Union. This echoes the unclear line between business and government that characterizes the Russian North, particularly in oil rich regions, and the tradition of 'company towns' developed during the Soviet period.67 The oil company representatives describe, with seeming pride, all that they do for indigenous peoples and see it as a reasonable compensation for oil exploration. An indigenous interviewee commented that these efforts are always highly publicized and usually directed towards one 'model' village, while leaving others with no assistance. This person went on to say that because the government was not actually addressing their needs indigenous people were forced into reliance on oil companies, which necessitated the cession of land usage rights to these companies. Another Khanty

66 Belyaev, Konstantin. 'LUKOIL-West Siberia. The Experiences of Collaboration and Interrelations between the Oil Company "Lukoil" and the Aboriginal Population of the North.' Author's document, received November 2003.
activist decried the shifting of indigenous peoples’ needs to oil companies, commenting that lack of support for indigenous peoples’ work through salaries and permanent positions created a situation where ‘of course everyone gives their land to oil development! Everyone is in a position where they have to agree with oil companies in order to get by.’ Balzer notes that this issue relates to land ownership and privatization. As land is privately held, one ‘individual family’s finances, and need for oil company support, can affect an entire community’s reindeer breeding and hunting’ (1999: 156).

4.4.4 Who is the Owner of the Land?: Indigenous, Regional, and Federal Claims to the Territory of KMAO

The question of land ownership is at the heart of the relationship between indigenous families, regional government and oil companies in KMAO and is also a pressing and unanswered question at the federal level. At the federal level, RAIPON is lobbying for clarification of the ownership of Siberian land, particularly as land is seen as the foundation upon which indigenous peoples could develop their economies, be it from reindeer herding or oil extraction. One RAIPON official in Khanty-Mansiysk believed that indigenous peoples are due this land not only because they are its historical and contemporary users, but also because they were better stewards of the land than regional powers, federal government, and oil companies:

Aboriginals have always taken care of the land for Russia and for international society and that is the foundation of their desire to exert influence over oil and gas companies. Oil and gas companies can just move their equipment and start over somewhere new and leave the earth destroyed, and the world’s consumers don’t care about the genealogy of their oil. The main issue now is economic racism...oil money should benefit everyone.

Even though this question of ownership and control over land is a serious issue for indigenous peoples in Russia, there are presently only two recognized land ‘stewards’ in Russia – the regional and federal governments.
Almost all interviewees, both in and outside government, expressed general uncertainty due to the fluctuating federal-regional relationship and stated that these ambiguities affected the relationship between government, oil companies and indigenous peoples in the okrug and impair their ability to cope with new ideas, like co-management, and to plan for the future. They expressed concern at the recent shift under President Putin towards centralization, exemplified by Law #122 (enacted January 1, 2005). This law rendered regional laws void (i.e. only federal laws are legal after this point) and reworked the distribution of power from powerful regions to a system where most decisions should be made at the federal or municipal level. Regional governments were required to rewrite their legislation in accordance with federal laws and the federal government in Moscow must approve these laws before they can become effective.68 This change in jurisdictional power can be seen as an effort to regain political and economic control over resource rich regions within the federal structure and as an attempt to resolve the non-agreement between regional and federal laws that arose during the 1990s at the height of regional autonomy in the immediate post-Soviet era.

Interviewees hypothesized how these legislative changes could affect indigenous peoples and land management in the okrug. Particularly, they were concerned that, the mechanisms for implementation of federal laws related to indigenous peoples and land use rights were not as well developed or appropriate as the laws and mechanisms generated at the regional level. Those in departments dealing with indigenous issues expressed concern for the welfare of indigenous families should the regional government lose control over development decisions. One interviewee was worried that the legislation made in Moscow would only serve the influential oil companies. Another noted that this change in power inhibited regional authorities from taking a mediating role between indigenous land users and oil companies:

Now this regulatory relationship will go to the federal level and there are no mechanisms to regulate...In the federal constitution however [he searches

68 Most regional laws in KMAO do have some kind of basis in federal law as well. A KMAO lawyer, who had been involved in the drafting of much of the legislation relating to indigenous peoples in the district commented that they based their legislation in federal law, such as a 1992 federal law on land use policy (the zemel'niy kodeks) and a 1998 law on land zones/plots (zemel'niy uchastok).
with determination for the right page] there is a requirement to protect the traditional way of life of indigenous people. Now we just have to wait until things are decided. This is unfortunate, because as a regional government we have been able to move more quickly and respond to situations...

At this point, the interviewee, an expert in land use and mapping in the okrug, gave me a guide to land use regulations from 2001, with the caveat that at least eighty percent of it is no longer valid. By contrast, one government employee, an indigenous woman in the Department of the Affairs of the Small Numbered Peoples of the North who had also traveled to Canada as part of INRIPP, saw a more positive side to the legislative changes. She noted that another part of the centralization trend also includes devolution of more responsibilities to municipalities, manifested in the ‘Law about Local-Self Management,’ and felt that this could lead to greater self-management in smaller indigenous municipalities and villages.

Concern over the redistribution of legislative authority was also compounded by a regional fear over the loss of territory. One lawyer in Khanty-Mansiysk brought my attention to the issue of protected areas, which cover vast swaths of Siberia and include areas of traditional land use by indigenous peoples. As these lands are federally protected, the federal government could assert further control over them. In KMAO, for example, 90% of the land is federally protected and during my visit the okrug administration was scrambling to ensure its control over these lands in the future.

This uncertainty about land poses a challenge to indigenous families and persons engaged in subsistence activities. In 1992, KMAO enacted legislation demarcating 507 land areas granted to kinship groups as inheritable possessions, totaling 13.5 million hectares to ‘ensure...aborigines’ special rights connected with relations regarding the land plots and natural resources on them’ (Raishev 2004: 10). The expectation was that the ‘owners’ of these kinship-based lands, which were called ‘Territories of Traditional Nature Use’ (TTNU) (or in Russian territorii traditsionnogo prirodopol’zovania, TTPs), would be responsible for negotiation with ‘users of mineral deposits and other natural resources’ (Raishev 2004: 10). Raishev notes that recent federal legislation in many ways defends and defines indigenous
rights at the federal level. However, when implemented at the regional level, this legislation actually shifted ownership of the areas of traditional nature use out of the hands of the indigenous families and kinship groups and back into the hands of the federal state – indigenous kinship groups are now considered users of the land rather than owners (Raishev 2004).

Moreover, the recently updated federal Land Code now stipulates that land cannot be granted for non-profit use, which also serves to undermine the law on TTNUs, as TTNU legislation implies the free-of-charge transfer of ownership of land (Blakkisrud and Overland 2005). Raishev (2004: 12) argues that the acts taken at the federal level are not conducive to the KMAO government’s desire to ‘guarantee the preservation of reindeer pastures’ and lack clearly defined mechanisms to achieve implementation.69

Despite the uncertainty over questions of land ownership and use in the Russian Federation and at the regional level, the trend in Russia seems to be towards acknowledging rights to ownership or usage at a family/kinship-based level, provided that kinship group is engaging in a collective subsistence or profit-making enterprise (rodovaya obshina). This is in contrast to how contradicting claims to land made by the Canadian state and indigenous peoples are settled. These claims are resolved, however imperfectly, through modern treaties or land claims, which deal with indigenous peoples as collectives and grant land and funds to an entire indigenous nation. For example, the 1993 Nunavut Land Claim Agreement was negotiated on behalf of 25,000 Inuit in the eastern and central Canadian Arctic. This difference in the structure of the resolution of land ownership issues was brought out in an informal conversation over vodka and fish soup at a model cabin in a local Khanty/Mansi outdoor ethnographic museum where we sat in divided by gender along different walls as dictated by traditional Khanty culture. A Canadian member of the delegation commented that ‘in KMAO land ownership is becoming more individualized while in the Canadian North everything is about collective ownership.’ A high-ranking KMAO bureaucrat simply replied, ‘that is certainly ironic.’ The difficulty involved in applying the Canadian experience of co-management, which dealt solely with

69 See Blakkisrud and Overland (2005) for a discussion of the contradictions between legislation regarding Territories of Traditional Nature Use and the newly adopted Land Code. They argue that, due to these uncertainties, lack of mechanisms, and the absence of political will at the federal level to enforce this legislation, these territories exist on paper only.
resources and land considered either public lands or collectively owned lands, to a region where private ownership/usage by indigenous families was fast becoming the norm, however contested, was one of the issues that became evident during the three-day seminar and in follow-up interviews.

4.5 The Reception of Co-Management

In this section, Russian participants’ understandings of the co-management model are presented and the extent to which they felt it was applicable in KMAO and under what circumstances is reviewed. This serves to ground the discussion of power relationships and the reception of ideas that concludes the chapter. First, it is important to acknowledge that Russian skepticism towards Canadian-style co-management was not solely a reluctance to legitimate the assumption that Canadian ideas were superior – there were also practical reasons why Russians believed that co-management was untenable in KMAO. The bases upon which Russians grounded their arguments against co-management, such as distinctive forms of land ownership and different approaches to policy and legislation, were often well and calmly reasoned and practical critiques of some of the unexamined foundations and assumptions in the co-management process. It is beyond the scope of my research to hypothesize as to when participants’ dissent, at the seminar and in follow-up interviews, was related to practical differences and circumstances surrounding the idea of co-management and its application in KMAO or when they were actively resisting the power relationship implicit in taking on Canadian ideas. Therefore, in the remainder of the chapter, I highlight the ways in which it was both by first describing critical comments that appeared to be practical in orientation and then exploring dissent that seemed more anchored in rejecting membership in an Arctic community in which Canadians would be the experts and leaders.

During the seminar, it seemed to me that general confusion on co-management reigned. Regional and oil company representatives seemed polite, yet unconvinced. The range of opinion coming from the Russian indigenous seminar participants was also quite varied and many indigenous leaders seemed to be offering a corrective to the positive review that the Canadians gave co-management. The vice-president of
RAIPON, for example, warned that ‘co-management is not a panacea, but one method of reaching agreement.’ Indigenous representatives, like their Canadian counterparts, also tended to emphasize the need to talk to their communities before making a judgment. One leader asserted that ‘we will have to go back to our communities and explain things to people who don’t really think about these things...we will work on taking some, but not all, aspects of co-management.’ Finally there were those who, in the words of one speaker, were ‘glad that co-management exists, but it’s not for us.’

These reactions are explored here in three parts. First I discuss whether or not persons in KMAO who had attended the seminar gained and retained an understanding of the co-management process by asking for their definitions of the idea. Overall, it seemed participants, in hindsight and likely through discussion with one another, had developed a reasonably clear conception of the process. Secondly, I describe the differences that Russians thought should either keep them from adopting co-management on principle or would be an obstacle to adopting co-management. Finally, I examine the critiques that Russian seminar participants directed towards the co-management model as a whole, not specifically related to whether or not co-management could be adopted in KMAO.

4.5.1 Definitions

When I returned to Khanty-Mansiysk to do follow-up interviews almost one year after the co-management seminar, most participants easily offered their definitions and understandings of co-management. When attempting to simply define the idea, their concepts of the goals and mechanisms of co-management were relatively in keeping with the definitions presented by Canadian speakers. One governmental interviewee defined co-management as the ‘participation of indigenous people in the process of decision-making in nonrenewable resource use, such as oil and gas.’ Another, involved in both government and indigenous politics, offered a longer definition that noted two aspects of co-management:

Firstly, aboriginals themselves directly participate in the formulation of laws and in the regulation of oil companies in their territories – they are the deciding voice in the process because no one besides them can decide these
questions of land. Secondly, co-management helps them to develop the basic foundations that will work to assure their future livelihood and the further development of the people.

In this, I take it ‘foundations of future livelihood’ to be a matter of compensation and money, not on a family to family basis, but in some sort of permanent fund that could continue to provide for indigenous development well into the future.

Definitions were normally followed by opinions about whether and to what extent a form of co-management already existed in the okrug. This line of thought can be linked to the discussion of power that concludes the chapter. By arguing that KMAO already had co-management seminar participants were rejecting Canada as the source of ideas and the idea of Canadians as teachers to Russian students within the Arctic. One interviewee from the regional bureaucracy indicated they already had a responsible approach to development and, if so desired, they could implement co-management based on existing structures and laws:

In KMAO, we have all the elements of co-management, such as the okrug government and a department that works on the issues of the environment – so basically the structure exists. In the mid 1990s, we also reworked how we would deal with oil companies at the regional level and put in place a structure for resolving issues between oil companies and indigenous peoples relating to damages. In 1998, we made further changes and now oil companies are required to reach several formal agreements in order to do oil exploration. We have a committee that checks out the territory to be developed and makes sure it is eligible for development and not an area of ecological importance or of cultural and historical significance. This system has worked itself out fairly well, and now the relationship is more or less unproblematic.

Others pointed to the okrug’s long history of experience with something that they opined could be described as co-management. One interviewee reminded me:

Discussion of co-management is not only related to INRIPP. Ten years ago, laws about cooperative obshini were developed and these leaders of obshini
have a lot of knowledge and skill with the idea of co-management, but they only know about their own territories. We knew already about co-management, but the training in Moscow made us want supplementary information.

It is evident that this interviewee does not believe the Canadians invented or have an intellectual monopoly on co-management. Rather the Canadian version of co-management helped the Russians to consider and evaluate their own.

4.5.2 Key Differences

Following their definitions, almost all interviewees went on to carefully explain a variety of differences that they felt would keep them, or should keep them, from adopting co-management. Interviewees with experience in negotiating between indigenous herders and oil companies in the territory worked to explain to me how their approach to mediation differed from that of the Canadians. Generally, these were government workers and representatives of oil companies who presented the differences between Canadian co-management and their okrug system simply as technical variations, neither positive nor negative nor related to moral or ethical arguments about rights. For example, one top bureaucrat elucidated differences in a straightforward way:

Canada and Russia are different countries with their own experiences of co-management. Developers in our okrug are required to sign agreements with any aboriginals on the territory where they would like to work. Subsurface rights belong to the federal government, not to aboriginals and not to oil companies, for that matter. Our agreements differ from Canadian ones because in Russia the negotiation process happens between the oil companies and those immediately affected by development – aboriginals living and working in that area.
In this statement, the claim that Russia, and KMAO in particular, already had its own experience with something that could be called co-management comes through quite clearly. This is in contrast to the Canadian conviction that they were bringing something uniquely Canadian and deeply new to the Russian regions. Overall, objections to co-management in KMAO can be divided into three categories: 1) the contrasting legal and political climates of Canada and Russia; 2) the status of indigenous peoples and their relationship to land in KMAO; and 3) fundamental differences between hunting and herding societies.

The different legal and political 'climates' of Canada and Russia were seen as presenting a problem to implementing co-management in KMAO. As a process and an institution, co-management was seen by the Russians to be both too informal and too cumbersome. Because the Canadians had been trying to de-emphasize the legislated aspects of co-management arrangements, many Russian seminar participants seem to have seen the co-management process as based in positive feelings amongst the different constituents in the co-management process. One participant put it this way, 'I was really impressed with co-management - I love the touching relationship between the government and aboriginal people.' Because co-management was seen to be rooted in naturally good intentions towards one another, Russian interviewees found it difficult to imagine how co-management could be applied to their region, as they perceived the relationships and legal statuses of the various parties in Russia to be more unresolved than in Canada and hence more acrimonious.

While critiquing the informality of the arrangement, Russian participants were also quite skeptical of co-managements more formal aspects, such as the existence of a co-management board (soveto po so-upravleniyu), and indigenous participants were not particularly enthused about the idea of being invited 'to the table.' One indigenous participant, who worked in government as well as in the local non-profit indigenous organization, commented that establishing a 'board is the end of an issue, not the beginning of the discussion.' Due to their experience with formal boards under the Soviet state, which were also called sovety, Russian participants viewed such boards as symbolic structures weighted down by bureaucratic red tape. Participation on a board, in light of this experience, was seen as a waste of time and energy.
The Russian participants appeared to have an equally conflicted approach to legislation and law. They seemed to desire federal legislation on indigenous issues and co-management, while expressing awareness of the lack of meaning behind these laws. The Canadian delegation had repeatedly asserted that co-management could take place without being formally enshrined in legislation. Russian participants vociferously tried to make the point that 'in Russia unlegislated documents are useless...without a piece of paper you’re lost' and that 'we need rules, diamond companies need rules, legislatively fixed.' One study tour participant commented that 'we need legislation and regulations rather than just voluntary procedures...there have to be regulations for code of conduct.'

At the same time, indigenous participants repeatedly mentioned legislation that was not implemented, pointing to special rights and federal decrees. As one seminar participant put it: 'we have rights, but with what mechanism can they be implemented? So much depends on the federal level...' One Russian participant tried to express the extent to which the 'mechanisms of public control simply do not exist' and argued that, as a result, co-management seemed quite foreign and difficult to understand.

Other comments pointed to the different legal status of Canadian and Russian indigenous peoples, such as the status and entitlements that indigenous peoples in Canada have won based on recognition of their prior occupancy. One Khanty activist described these different legal standings as a key obstacle to adopting Canadian institutions:

We have to consider how this [Canadian] experience could work with us because we have different laws...we had some good ideas going from Canada, like permanent funds for indigenous peoples, but such funds were not

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[70] This was an issue noted by the first fact-finding 'mission' delegation to Russia in 1997 in an unpublished report titled 'Summary of Debriefing Held on July 16, 1997' (author's document, received from Walter Slipchenko in February 2005). They noted differences in the policy and legislative process, namely that legislation in Russia is seen as the initial step for creating new policies (and often the work of policy and mechanism creation does not follow). By contrast, in Canada policies are enacted in multiple ministries and at different levels of the federation and only backed by legislation if the force of law is required for some reason.
supported by the government because they didn’t believe that we should have special privileges.

The radically dissimilar legal and political standings of Canadian and Russian indigenous peoples and the different histories and ages of their political organizations were also obstacles to understanding co-management. As Khanty woman and activist stated, ‘we can’t understand co-management because we don’t even have co-participation! The question of indigenous peoples has already been settled – we have been sold to the oil companies.’ In her opinion, the idea of co-management was so at odds with their lived reality that it was difficult to fathom. On the basis of this interviewee’s and other indigenous interviewees’ observations, one can hypothesize that oil company representatives and regional bureaucrats may have in part resisted the idea of co-management because the process had the potential to change the balance of power in KMAO and cause the redistribution of financial benefit through the recognition of indigenous peoples as partners in development.

An oil company representative also commented on the differences between the status of indigenous Canadians, as owners of the land and bearers of rights that flow from ownership, with the situation of indigenous peoples in the okrug. He stated:

Maybe we could adopt parts of co-management, but in Canada, aboriginals try to make all agreements about land development through one system. We have to keep in mind that each place has their own conditions that have to be considered. Our legal base is also different. For example, to have co-management the aboriginals would need to have ownership or rights to land like in Canada. In Russia, aboriginals are not owners of the land, like in Canada, but users of the land. Here in KMAO, oil companies are users of the land in the same way that aboriginals are – we have a license to be there, even though neither of us own the land.

As is discussed in more detail in chapter five, co-management was seen as a technical model of organization suited to specific conditions, not as a manifestation of particular principles about equality, participation, or indigenous rights. Because co-management did not suit the present conditions of the okrug, it had to be rejected and
little discussion of whether or not the present conditions of the okrug were appropriate, just, or sustainable took place. The Russians’ observations rarely touched upon different Canadian and Russian approaches to the questions of indigenous rights, politics, or justice, but rather focused on the fact that the Canadian co-management model did not suit Russian legal and practical conditions.

To new members of the Canadian delegation, these differences between Canada and Russia emerged slowly. The extent to which the Canadians assumed that Russian indigenous persons were ‘knowable’ and similar in light of the delegation’s familiarity with the Canadian North and the politics of Canadian northern peoples became clear when the delegation tried to discuss the idea of traditional knowledge, which is a powerful and commonly used political concept in Canadian northern governance today. One Canadian consultant had mentioned briefly that traditional knowledge, the possession of indigenous people rather than the state, was the basis of power and influence in the co-management process. An indigenous representative from KMAO, who is also a trained academic and spoke very little at the seminar itself, commented to me at a tea break: ‘I don’t understand your debate over traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge.’ He continued on to explain that Russia is an ‘Eastern’ rather than ‘Western’ country, in which development was experienced later, so that ‘everyone, including ethnic Russians, are closer to the land and understand that all knowledge, including science, is based on observation.’ In using the idea of ‘traditional knowledge,’ the Canadians hoped to appeal to the Russian indigenous delegation, but this concept, articulated in a particularly Canadian way, did not translate into local indigenous concerns and understandings.

Another key difference relating to whether or not co-management could be adopted was that in KMAO the indigenous lifestyle centers primarily around herding. One government official, in an interview, argued that these differences caused the Khanty and Mansi to experience and perceive the impact of oil development differently. For herders, he argued, it was not a question of multiple uses of the same area of land.

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71 This was highlighted by the question of one indigenous Russian participant who needed clarification about a business in the Inuvialuit Settlement Area through which Inuvialuit hunters sold muskoxen fur to South America. This Russian participant asked the presenter to clarify whether or not the muskoxen were wild or domestic – a question which certainly would not have been asked by indigenous residents of the Canadian North, who have no tradition of large animal domestication or herding.
because oil development essentially precludes the possibility of herding, as the herds require large and peaceful areas to rotate through and are very sensitive to change. Sitting in his office, surrounded by detailed maps of the okrug, he argued that hunting, fishing, and gathering could co-exist alongside oil development more easily than herding and asserted that for herders, the question had to be ‘will you give your land over to development or not?’ He continued:

In Canada, they don’t have traditional obshini, like we do, it’s more like a business – a professional fishery or professional whaling, not unlike what other Canadians might do – they are not trying to hold onto their own personal land. They get these opportunities – commercial opportunities – on the basis of being a first nation and we don’t have that. Here, for example, an oil company might build 4 brick buildings, pay 10 million rubles and the aboriginals will agree, knowing that they will not have that land back in a usable form for at least 25 years. In the areas of the okrug where herding is still the strongest, like in Surgut, families refuse development if it will interfere with the herd. One family refused to have development in their spring pasture area, but they negotiated with the oil companies and the company agreed to change the road pattern and structures. So, they let the land go, but they still have no desire to be involved in commercial enterprises.

He argued that herding involves a different understanding of land use and that the nature of herding precludes the multiple uses of land that co-management is designed to manage. Furthermore, he emphasized that such ongoing involvement with an oil company would be impossible in light of the fact that herding, unlike fishing and hunting, requires constant involvement and is a full time pursuit. Once again, he reiterated, ‘I am certain that if Canadian aboriginals were doing agriculture, or some kind of herding that required constant participation in that activity and direct access to land there wouldn’t be such an easy consensus on co-management. They would have to find a different mechanism.’

Many interviewees believed that co-management could be a useful model for application in areas where herding was minimized or made impossible already through development. One commented that co-management could ‘work as a buffer
between oil companies and aboriginals.' Another saw the possibility for co-management:

[i]n areas where aboriginals have left a totally traditional, herding way of life already and where they are doing hunting and fishing, which is occasional and does not require total control of the land on which it occurs...here we might have some sort of co-management situation because we need to find common interests.

In this way, co-management was seen as something that could be applied when the 'true' method of indigenous livelihood – herding – was no longer possible and the process of assimilation had already begun. Whether or not co-management is predicated upon certain types of activity and patterns of land ownership more common in the Canadian North, such as hunting and gathering on collectively owned and managed land, was never addressed by the Canadian delegation. Thus, the extent to which the co-management could be applicable to Russian indigenous people engaged in reindeer herding on set portions of land remained an unexamined question.

4.5.3 Critique of the Model: Assimilation and Paternalism

While the Canadians thought they were offering a flexible model that could encourage cooperation between diverse parties and achieve sustainable development anywhere, many Russians saw co-management as a process that would lead towards greater assimilation, an undesirable level of interaction with opposing parties, and would be inattentive to the local and specific needs of property owners. Not only did interviewees tend to offer opinions as to how co-management could or could not be realized in the okrug, they also offered general critiques of the model as a whole. Interviewees, particularly government officials and oil representatives whose intentions can certainly be questioned, as well as some indigenous participants in the co-management seminar, seemed to see co-management as a seemingly harmless vehicle that could result in indigenous peoples losing their unique way of life.
A member of the Department of the Affairs of Small Numbered Peoples of the North, who works closely with oil companies on issues of land use, laid out his critique of co-management for me. He forwarded this opinion as his own and as representation of what the various oil company representatives who attended the seminar thought as well. From what they had heard of co-management, they all thought that:

there was an element of paternalism in Canadian governmental policy and with this approach indigenous people would certainly lose their interest in traditional life. I asked [one of the Canadian Inuit delegates] at the conference about what kind of compensation they got for loss of land and it was evident that this was about more than compensation, they were interested in participating in business and making money. So, co-management makes it more interesting for people to participate in business and making money than traditional life...now Canadian aboriginals aren’t really different from other Canadians. Everything we do is directed towards preserving the way of life of aboriginal people...If we had co-management for ten years there wouldn’t be any more questions about land use because all aboriginals would be living in comfortable, urban, civilized conditions and wouldn’t be thinking about the land anymore. Co-management is more than a question of compensation, and this would lead to a situation where aboriginals no longer used the land or spoke their own language. I asked one of the Canadians at the seminar if there had been one incident in fifteen years where aboriginals refused to let development take place, and she replied that there has never been such a conflict. No one will refuse because it is so beneficial for them to participate in co-management!

It seems that for them co-management was linked closely with modernity, something that in Russia was seen as the antithesis to indigeneity.

This perception played out in some disparaging comments about the Canadian Inuit delegation, which did not wear the traditional and folkloristic costumes that many of the Russian indigenous delegates chose to wear. At one point, a Canadian Inuit member of the delegation asked the head of the Department of the Affairs of the Small Numbered Peoples of the North whether or not indigenous persons are
employed by the oil companies working in the area. In response, the Russian bureaucrat stated that, ‘they are not employed by oil companies because they are busy carrying out traditional lifestyles.’ Subsequently, an oil representative attempted to challenge the extent to which one Canadian Inuit member of the delegation was really ‘indigenous’ and ‘really had a traditional way of life’ in light of his own political and economic involvements. Overwhelmingly, the participation of indigenous persons in co-management or in other development activities was seen by the government and oil officials as the entrance of indigenous peoples into a modern world of capitalism, which would be the end of indigenous life and culture as they knew it and believed it should be.

Government officials pointed to the distribution of ‘big money’ to indigenous peoples through negotiated agreements as the primary negative feature of co-management. They commented on the ability of big settlements to undermine a traditional way of life, while oil company representatives seemed happy to second that opinion. Oil company representatives were quite skeptical of co-management because, as one interviewee reported:

> In Russia it is not all about making people equal, but about preserving a traditional way of life. In Canada, there is a fundamental contradiction in ideas, and with us the deal is that if they can continue herding they do not need to be involved in co-management...aboriginals simply have different goals here...What is going on now though, is a fight for concrete areas of land and we’re not dealing with principles or overarching problems, the issues are quite specific and regional.

In this statement, it is apparent the ways in which equality is seen as a negative and destructive pursuit that can lead to the erasure of difference. The same interviewee went on to say:

> Co-management means losing a traditional way of life...Traditional land use supports language and culture and in order to carry out traditional land use, you need to keep your land! When oil companies show up, assimilation inevitably occurs. You could see that the Canadian Inuit and their
organizations aren’t really different from other Canadians or mainstream organizations. Russian indigenous people are still quite different from the rest of society.

In this way, co-management is seen as a kind of sell-out and as a potentially destructive process that creates uniform citizens broken from an indigenous past, not the pathway to an indigenous sustainable future envisioned by the Canadian delegation.

By contrast, indigenous leaders in KMAO frequently emphasized the need for funding to support everything from herding to cultural preservation activities and were interested in the financial benefits that can flow from co-management. However, they remained committed to channeling economic development through traditional lifestyles. As a result, the Canadian delegation felt that as if they were failing to convince indigenous representatives that there are benefits to involvement and control in mainstream development. Russian indigenous representatives seemed to argue that these ideas of participating in mainstream economic development was at odds with their livelihoods. One participant stated that ‘we live traditionally in contrast to the contractor who represents urban technology,’ a comment which makes it seem as if working with the contractors is unfathomable. During the role play few indigenous Russians demonstrated an interest in gaining active control over the process of development (in fact I was the only person in my role play group that suggested co-management), but rather focused on getting a better compensation package, more concessions, and more certainty in some kind of contractual form for individual family groups.

Another interviewee in government also forwarded a critique of the ecosystemic approach as lacking in specificity – perhaps the same kind of critique that he would have leveled at blanket federal legislation or the massive planning schemes of the former Soviet Union. He went on to describe that about 25% of the okrug is used for traditional pursuits, but the intensity and type of use varies. He said that this leads to a need to be:
specific and oil people look for the specifics of the situation because you can’t tell which principles would work in the conflicted areas. Co-management would only complicate things and can only begin after commercial work has already been done and the initial agreement reached.

This is an echo of Lukoil representative Belyaev’s written comments, cited earlier in this chapter, in which he highlights that oil company contracts, as they are negotiated on a family-by-family/territory-by-territory basis, are especially fair in light of their attention to specifics. Another governmental interviewee saw this family-by-family approach as offering more chances to resist or modify the trajectory of development. Throughout the interview, this person proudly listed all the times that indigenous peoples had refused initial offers of development and seemed to feel that co-management would destroy this incentive to resist.

Some interviewees, however, saw an attractive principle behind co-management, rather than focusing solely on co-managements potential shortcomings. These interviewees were primarily indigenous and outside government and believed that the idea had the potential to enable indigenous persons to exert control over and benefit more from development. An indigenous participant from a Khanty rural village commented that he thought co-management was a workable idea because then, ‘we could do things for ourselves…and be part of the commercial process. We do want change, but we want to control the change and decide how we want the changes to be, in keeping with how we think.’ In this statement, it is clear that co-management, or at least a similar system of management with an emphasis on the structured and sustained participation of indigenous peoples as a collective, was viewed in a more positive light by participants who, conceivably, had more interest in changing the status quo in the okrug.
4.6 Power, Language, and the Community Building Aspects of the Seminar

Despite the rough reception that co-management received, a relationship between Canadians and the Russians participating in the seminar (and between Canada and Russia by extension) was both assumed and reinforced throughout the interaction. In general, the Canadians themselves were well received and well liked and only faulted for not understanding or knowing about the specific situations in different regions throughout Russia. Even though the model of co-management was on the whole poorly thought of by the Russian participants, I argue that there are two indications that community building continued: engaging in testimony in the first place and coming to share or actively resist discursive constructs. The second factor, coming to share or resist certain uses of language, points to the role of power relationships in this encounter. Through the lens of language, the exercise of power and the designation of teacher-student roles in INRIPP Canada-Russia encounters become evident.

While pointing to the communal aspects of this cross-cultural encounter, I also highlight the ways in which this was not a dispassionate or neutral process. Rather, community building required the exertion of power and positing a community was a method for bringing people and places closer and exercising influence over them. If we conceive of space as socially constructed, demarcated by the practices of those contained within certain spaces, and acknowledge that this construction is about power (McDowell 1999; Sarup 1996; Soja 1989), the reorganization of space can be understood as ‘always a reorganization of the framework through which social power is expressed’ (Harvey 1995: 255). In other words, in order for a reorganization of space to be conceived of as legitimate, the social and spatial practices of those persons in a particular place must be standardized as well. In this light, efforts to structure the behavior of Arctic residents and governments (to accompany the structuring of the northern regions of eight different countries and the homelands of many indigenous peoples into the ‘Arctic region’) are not surprising. The intertwining of region
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building and relationships of power contradicts Lash’s definition of power in the information age as primarily exercised through exclusion (2002). Rather, this act of positing new geographical and social spaces can better be seen as a type of ‘enrollment’ after Latour (1987), in which power is both necessitated and exercised through inclusion into a geographical community of practice.

The Canadian government and prominent Canadian leaders were instrumental in Arctic region building and in placing the concerns of sustainable development and indigenous people at the heart of this new region (Keskitalo 2004). INRIPP can be understood as part of the region-building efforts in that project activities and leaders advocated for specifically Canadian ways of thinking about and acting in the Arctic environment. To illustrate how Canadians worked to bring Russians into alignment and the ways in which this was both accepted and resisted to some extent by the Russian bureaucrats and indigenous leaders involved in the project, I describe generally the community-building aspects of the seminar and then demonstrate how particular ways of speaking about the Arctic became contested as power was exerted and resisted.

4.6.1 Testifying and Community

The Canadian delegation arrived with a message and testified on behalf of a certain approach to the management of resources. In the field of epistemology, the simple transmission of information through testimony – meaning telling someone about something and, importantly, being believed – has been problematized and the idea of community brought to the forefront. Kusch (2002) argues that testimony is much more than ‘just a means of transmission of complete items of knowledge from and to an individual. Testimony is almost always generative of community: it constitutes epistemic communities and epistemic agents, social statuses and institutions’ (Kusch 2002: 12). Furthermore, it is important for those engaged in a process of testimony, namely the testifier and the audience, to perceive themselves as part of the same group, which enables them to have expectations of one another’s ‘honesty, competence and gullibility’ (Kusch 2002: 12). This assertion relates to Welbourne’s argument that acts of knowledge transmission create a community of knowledge,
which, in its most basic form, consists of ‘two people knowing the same thing and recognizing each other as sharers in that knowledge so that each can act on the assumption of knowledge in the other and they will be able to act co-operatively’ (in Kusch 2002: 57). In testimony, therefore, it is not simply information that is shared but also community that is assumed and constructed.

Lave and Wenger argue that this process of becoming part of a community, normally in the role of a student, entails learning to speak in certain ways. They write ‘learning to become a legitimate participant in a community involves learning how to talk (and be silent) in the manner of full participants’ (1991: 105). Understanding that acknowledging the testimony of another involves more than just accepting a given idea, but also entails becoming subject to certain power relationships as a member of a community allows for a more complex understanding of why particular ideas and ways of speaking about ideas are resisted. With this process of enrollment in mind, it becomes clearer why Russians would resist ideas forwarded by representatives of Canada – a country that had played a key role in establishing the Arctic as a meaningful region and was now seeking to assume a leadership role within it.

4.6.2 Community of Speakers

Something that Canadians saw as a positive result of the seminar, despite the difficulties they faced in communicating co-management, was the fact that Russians were increasingly using Canadian terms in translation. ‘Finding a common language’ with the Canadians was also a goal stated by Russian seminar participants (a frequently used saying in Russian-foreigner interactions). However, the act of finding a common language was not a shared endeavor with Canadians and Russians bringing their terms and understandings closer together. Rather, it involved Canadian delegates repeatedly using the same phrases and Russians coming to use, but also rejecting in some cases, these terms.

Canadian delegates often mentioned to me that certain ‘buzzwords’ were gaining greater currency, such as Russian translations of co-management (so-upravlenie),
community development (razvitiya obshin, razvitiya naselyonnikh punktov), and sustainable development (ustoichivaya razvitiya). One delegate noted that at the first co-management conference in Moscow 2002, Russians began using certain phrases, such as treaties, aboriginal rights, and sustainable development, without understanding what they actually meant. She noted that there had been progress since then and that there ‘appears to be a greater understanding than two years ago.’ Another consultant celebrated that there is now a “‘speak” that you couldn’t have several years ago...there were words spoken here that haven’t been talked before, five years ago you would have been laughed out of the room.’

Despite this sense of progress, those in the delegation fluent in both English and Russian and Russians themselves noted that although ‘words are familiar...no one knows anything beyond the abstract.’ One Russian participant commented that ‘there is not a problem in word for word translation, but somehow the meaning (smisl’) of certain phrases is lost.’ Issues often arose simply from the process of translation and the introduction of keywords, which carry a whole history of meaning in Canada, but were introduced to Russians participating in INRIPP events as set phrases. One example of this difficulty is the translation of the phrase ‘impact benefit agreement’ (IBA). This phrase is translated into Russian as an ‘agreement about economic and social development’ (soglashenie po ekonomicheskomu i sozialogicheskomu razvitiyu). This gives the sense, in Russian, that the company will assume general responsibility for the economic and social welfare of indigenous peoples, rather than that indigenous peoples can attempt to quantify the amount of harm that will be rendered them through a particular development project and then take that money to deal with economic and social welfare themselves, which would be more in keeping to the Canadian notion.

The process by which Russians came to adopt, if not understand thoroughly, a variety of Canadian phrases in translation indicates community building. The social nature of language – meaning that in order to communicate and speak with legitimacy persons require some sense of their own roles and positioning vis a vis other speakers – points to the community-building nature of this encounter (Haber 1994). In Bourdieu’s understanding of linguistic exchange, language is a fundamentally social endeavor and a speaker’s primary task is to make their utterances legitimate and believed.
Much of this believability is, as Jenkins (2002: xv) puts it, ‘a product of the power, authority and reputation of their authors in the field in question.’ Bourdieu argues that power is rarely exercised as physical force, but is rather communicated in symbolic form and, due to the absence of obvious coercion, gains legitimacy. The exercise of symbolic power, like enforcing a Canadian vocabulary about land and indigenous peoples, also has an inherently social and communal aspect, as such power must be rooted in a ‘foundation of shared belief. Symbolic power requires those that are subjected to it to believe in the legitimacy of power and those who wield it’ (Bourdieu 1993: 23). If adopting another’s vocabulary is seen as responding to and confirming a particular power relationship, the resistance of Russians to not only the idea of co-management, but to the word itself as well, becomes more intelligible.

It is important to note that there were a variety of phrases that Canadians could themselves have adopted in translation – for example ‘areas of traditional nature use’ or ‘small-numbered peoples of the North’ – but did not. This imbalance in the exchange of discursive constructs, namely that it was not a process of both sides working to bring their vocabularies closer together, reveals the operation of power in these community-building interactions. The Canadians are the experts, gaining legitimacy through the distance they traveled in order to ‘testify’ and the apparently advanced economy and stability of the Canadian state, which many Russian participants had either heard about or seen for themselves through travel. The Canadians worked to promote their phrases and slogans of development – co-management, dialogue, negotiation, and sustainability – without adopting any Russian phrases relating to how the relationship between indigenous peoples, land, government, and industry was actually structured in the okrug. This illustrates the assumption that was present in all project encounters: it was Canadian structures to be promoted and reproduced, not Russian ones.

Interviewees from government and oil companies were particularly resistant to adopting the word ‘co-management.’ They would often comment that they had similar practices already that are simply called by another name. For example, an oil company representative stated that they might adopt co-management and might already have the basics to some extent, but ‘so-upravlenie [co-management] – we might not use that word.’ Interviewees seemed to be both trying to fit co-
management into already existing frameworks, as a way of positioning this idea in order to better understand it, and arguing that co-management, using the exact word and methods introduced by the Canadians, was unnecessary or redundant. One interviewee commented that the desire for their own phrase also meant a desire for their own solution: that ‘co-management is workable, but Russia needs its own type of co-management.’ In light of this assertion, the Russians’ reluctance to use ‘that word co-management’ becomes more understandable and can be seen as an act of resistance. Co-management was not just any phrase that could be used to describe a mechanism for managing development and resources; its use would have been an acknowledgement of Canadian power and superiority and of Canada as the only source of legitimate Arctic ideas, institutions, and practices. Refusing the word co-management was also a refusal to take part in a community with values and standards dictated by outsiders.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter’s case study of the movement of ideas, it becomes apparent that the movement of information and knowledge cross-culturally and over national borders was an act of community building in which power and resistance played important roles. I often wondered, particularly during my follow-up interviews, why such development efforts continued even when the Canadians themselves did not consider an actual co-management pilot project to be possible in Russia. Recognizing that community building could also be a goal, in light of the Canadian foreign policy and region-building efforts outlined in chapters two and three, makes the worth of the project more apparent. Spreading Canadian ways of doing and being and thinking in the Arctic, if only in the form of shared vocabulary, shores up Canada’s vision of and centrality within the Arctic region. First of all, through these interactions, Canadian delegates built up a wealth of knowledge about the Russian North and cultivated contacts that could be utilized in future projects or trade relations. Secondly, it was a way of making Canadian Arctic practices somehow less Canadian. If these practices are adopted in Russia and other parts of the Arctic as well, the Canadian way of doing things simply becomes the way.
Russian dissent to co-management had practical aspects relating to how suited co-management was to conditions in the okrug and also entailed a more general resistance to Canadian leadership and authority. However, I do not wish to cast this resistance purely as a *response* to power. Such resistance can equally be construed as an *act* of power. The organization of the various Arctic states and peoples into a more unified Arctic region requires the voluntary assent of all involved. In contesting the Canadians’ position as the leaders and teachers of this emerging region, Russians were demonstrating their ability to simply decline the ideas offered by Canadians and to contest the legitimacy of the Arctic region as a whole – an act of resistance that was also the exercise of power.
Chapter 5: Moving an Economic Development Corporation Model to the Russian North

5.1 Introduction

INRIPP experts actively promoted the idea of economic development corporations (EDCs) to their Russian partners at meetings in Russia and on various study tours of the Canadian North, in hopes that EDCs could take root in Russia and facilitate economic development in remote regions and amongst underserved populations. EDCs – a central feature of the northern Canadian political economy and of most land claims agreements negotiated between the Canadian state and various indigenous peoples – are normally given initial capital through land claims settlements and sometimes through advances on the profits of resource extraction. These corporations manage large sums of money with the goals of increasing their overall worth via investment and of fostering economic development amongst the indigenous or northern communities/peoples to whom the corporations are ultimately answerable. EDCs were established during INRIPP in two northern Russian districts – Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (YNAO) and Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug (KMAO).

The Canadian delegations and project management staff were aware of potential challenges to moving knowledge and experience from one place to another and to achieving understanding across geographical, social, and cultural distance. In this chapter, I examine one particular communicative device – the model – that Canadians used in anticipation that it could overcome these challenges and render the changing and complex reality of Canadian northern economic development stable, intelligible, transportable, and replicable. In international development efforts, models, by which I mean simplified and schematic renderings of reality that are visually represented or spoken about as somewhat diagrammatic in form (i.e. an organizational flow chart),

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72 Approximately 140 Russians participated in study tours of the Canadian North throughout the first and second phases of INRIPP.
are often relied upon as a vehicle through which entire institutions and processes can be condensed in order to highlight essential aspects and relationships.

I argue that reliance upon models as a way of achieving clarity and almost science-like certainty about complex social processes resulted in a rather impoverished cross-cultural dialogue that focused primarily on questions of technical and factual difference rather than on values and principles. This commitment to abstract representations of EDCs and the highly rational/technical debate that accompanied these models precluded acknowledging and discussing two types of knowledge implicated in running EDCs in the Canadian North: tacit knowledge and moral and ethical principles. This may have contributed to the fact that EDCs were realized in Russia along significantly different lines.

The disjuncture between the Canadian template and the Russian outcomes raises the question of what kind of knowledge circulates easily and effectively in global or cross-cultural engagements. The INRIPP commitment to model-oriented technical debate resulted in Canadian EDCs being presented to Russians as ahistorical items rather than cultural artifacts with a story of development. Members of the last large Canadian INRIPP delegation became aware of these limitations of models and, consequently, switched from a technical debate centered around models to a storytelling mode in order to articulate their personal beliefs and tacit knowledge.

In this chapter, the role of models in development efforts and their limitations as communicative devices are examined in order to hypothesize how and why the Canadian model changed so much in its journey to the Russian North. First, I outline briefly how the language of models figured into Canadians’ performance of development and link the presence of the language of the model to development’s roots in modernization theories and social engineering. I investigate why models might seem particularly essential to development efforts and question the assumption that institutions and practices of government can be disembedded and transplanted in new locations. Secondly, I take the 2003 study tour as a case study and show how Russians on study tour in northern Canada were expected to simply ‘see’ models of economic development. This conviction that models would be visible and comprehensible to outsiders did not account for the centrality of tacit/implicit
knowledge to all skilled activities. I then illustrate the broad outlines of how Russians and Canadians discussed the economic development of indigenous peoples in one another’s company and highlight how their conceptions of this process converged and diverged. These differing conceptions provide the background for interpreting how EDC models came to differ.

I hypothesize that members of the Canadian delegation to the December 2004 Moscow meetings ultimately chose to talk about principles in the form of narrative in order to externalize some of their tacit knowledge and moral beliefs and to break out of the highly rational discourse imposed by models. This shift to narrative illustrates the different communicative tools available to persons working to move ideas, models, and knowledge across boundaries. The observations and notes used in this chapter are taken from two different events in which I took part – a three week study tour of the Canadian North and a weeklong series of meetings that took place in Moscow on the topic of economic development for indigenous peoples73 – and from follow-up interviews with Russians who had gone on study tour from 1999-2003.74

5.2 Models and the Practice of Development

Models were referred to throughout the project as part of a seemingly interchangeable chain of words indicating what was to be transferred or communicated during INRIPP: knowledge, experience, best practices, and models. I have chosen to focus on the idea of the model because it most closely corresponds with the type of information transfer that Canadian project organizers and participants seemed to be attempting to achieve and with development’s heritage in the quasi-scientific practice of social engineering. Furthermore, although some Canadians involved in the project remained ambivalent about the idea of the model, the term ‘model’ arose frequently. For example, in selecting case studies for a publication on successful economic development, consultants to the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, some of whom also

73 I believe that these two events can be usefully and appropriately linked due to their shared theme – economic development – and due to the fact that many of the participants at the Moscow meetings had been on an INRIPP study tour of the Canadian North sometime in the preceding years.
74 Interviews were conducted in Russia, October-December, 2004. A full list of all interviewees can be found in appendix one.
worked in INRIPP, chose to focus on indigenous-driven, successful, innovative, and *replicable* examples of development projects, writing: ‘the transferability and adaptability of the approach or *model* were considered critical elements in the selection process’ (ICC 2001: 3, emphasis added). This evokes the notion of the model as something that can travel and overcome the friction of distance and the possibilities of misinterpretation. The choice of discrete processes and institutions, such as co-management boards or EDCs, rather than a focus on, for example, the history and ethical and legal underpinnings of the relationship between indigenous peoples and the state in Canada, further supports my assertion about the model-oriented nature of the project.

A few Canadian delegates demonstrated misgivings about the use of models in statements indicating that models seemed overly prescriptive, such as ‘we’re not trying to give you a model.’ The majority, however, simply saw models as a vehicle for communicating their experience, saying ‘take a look at this model and see what you think.’ All, nevertheless, worked to avoid the impression that they were ‘telling Russians what to do.’ When opening the economic development meeting in Moscow, an ICC representative demonstrated an expectation that characterized the entire project – the Canadians were there merely to present information that the Russians themselves would have to analyze critically and implement in their own way:

ICC hopes that we have put together a team for you that can provide adequate information to describe how we have done development in Canada, or how indigenous peoples have organized themselves to deal with economic development. We want to share our experiences. There is no key formula that is out there, or that is a framework you can use anywhere. Rather, we want to share our experiences… and [you can] try to apply them back home where you need to.

This emphasis on leaving the process of knowledge and practice adaptation to the Russians themselves was not only a good face shown to the Russian audience, but also something frequently discussed by the Canadian delegation amongst themselves. For example, one experienced project worker admonished new Canadian delegates to keep Russian differences in mind:
Remember that in Russia there is a different standard of living and lower levels of resources for development... The Canadian experience isn’t a recipe, but can be an illustration of what is and isn’t possible. Prescribing solutions would be presumptuous, because to do that we would need to know more about their specific situations.

Project organizers frequently made statements along these lines when briefing the new members of the Canadian INRIPP delegation, emphasizing the need to refrain from prescribing exact steps, such as in a recipe, while still trying to provide a compelling and understandable illustration of how economic development is carried out in the Canadian North. To fulfill this tricky balancing act, Canadians presented models of institutions and processes, but stripped them of their history and their foundations in principles and beliefs about how the world should be ordered.

The co-presence of these prescriptive co-management and EDC models, which were ostensibly offered in order to be replicated in the Russian North, and the emphasis on restraint in prescribing solutions speaks to contradictions stemming from the history of development thinking. Immediately following the end of World War II, the idea of economic development as something to be promoted in ‘underdeveloped countries’ by the active intervention and guidance of ‘developed,’ namely Western, countries first emerged as a policy objective (Arndt 1987:1). Latham (2000) traces how an emphasis on economic development in the United States materialized in tandem with the theory of ‘modernization.’ In this period (~1945 to 1970), the idea that society and politics could be described and analyzed in scientific and law-like terms gained credence and resulted in a European and North American social science committed to universal rules and predictive models (Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons 2002). These theories are an extension of what Scott (1998) describes as the ‘high modernist ideology’ involved in modern state building and the design of rational forms of social and environmental order. He argues that this ideology is ‘a by-product of the unprecedented progress in science and industry’, but cautions that such an ideology is not rooted in scientific practice (Scott 1998: 4). Rather, its origins are in faith borrowed from ‘the legitimacy of science and technology. [High modernist ideology] was, accordingly, uncritical,
unskeptical and thus unscientifically optimistic about the possibilities for the comprehensive planning of human settlement and production’ (Scott 1998: 4).

The belief in the possibility of applying universal laws to all aspects of life is evident in modernization theory. This theory posits sharply dichotomized ‘traditional’ and ‘modern societies’ and the existence of universal interrelated steps in economic, social, and political life that could transform traditional societies into modern ones (Latham 2000). In this way, modernization was no longer an unpredictable process, but rather something to be achieved through ‘man’s control over nature and society. Any remaining errors or malfunctioning systems could be rectified by more and better science and more ingenious and detailed social engineering’ (Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons 2002: 5). Through contact with and aid from advanced industrial democracies and the application of empirically identified prescriptions for change, the process of transforming traditional or underdeveloped societies could be accelerated. The new policies of development echoed Enlightenment belief in Western superiority and the ‘scientism of modernization theory,’ which proposed that the West’s superior and guiding role was ‘objectively determined’ and ‘scientifically verified,’ served as a palatable and seemingly benign method for expanding power and influence in an era characterized by political decolonization (Latham 2000:16).

Despite concentrated efforts to transfer skills and capital in order to shepherd underdeveloped countries more quickly into ‘modernity,’ it became apparent by the end of the 1950s and early 1960s that this approach was failing. This failure resulted in a slowly changing orientation away from modernization theory towards assisting ‘underdeveloped countries in making their own type of investment in human capital and …development’ rather than prescribing set solutions (Arndt 1987: 65). Social engineering was partly discredited and belief in promoting development by establishing institutions through which the forces of the market and civil society could play primary roles in promoting ‘good governance’ gained credibility throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Sending 2003: 237).

Despite these changes, Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons (2002: 105) note an enduring belief that scientific or science-like empirical knowledge can be ‘a reliable source for all kinds of problems...because of its success, science has come under more and more
pressure from society to deliver effective solutions to a wider range of increasingly complex problems’ in both the social and physical worlds. This belief is partly manifested, they argue, in the continuing use of models, which have spread into new fields of research and policy-making (Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons 2002).

There are several reasons why the model would appeal to those working in the uncertain field of international development – one arena into which the language of the model has spread. Black’s (1962) study of the role of models in scientific inquiry and communication offers a useful point of departure for considering why models were used by those involved in INRIPP. In science, models are considered simplified abstractions that render certain variables, processes, and relationships more visible. This promise of clarity could be interpreted as an assurance of stable and successful communication and explication between persons and across space. Furthermore, models make an assertion about commonality between spaces and replicability of processes that is useful in development projects. Models are commonly understood to work in multiple places, given that the relationships models describe, such as the relationships between elections and democracy or (in my case) EDCs and indigenous empowerment, are often perceived to be universal. Development is normally a prescriptive effort – developers are attempting to convince the target audience that if they adopt certain practices, they will achieve certain desirable results. The appeal of the ‘model’ here, with its promise of replication and of results in any location, is understandable. Black argues that models are used as speculative and predictive instruments; in applying an old model to a new ‘field’ model-users ‘pin [their] hopes upon the existence of a common structure in both fields’ (1962: 238). Thus, in applying a model to a new place, an implicit argument is made that the new field is similar to the original field in significant ways. By assuming that the Canadian EDC model would work in Russia, Canadian project organizers were making an assertion about the Arctic region as uniform in fundamental ways – an assertion in keeping with Canada’s region building agenda.

I argue that the persistent use of models in development practice and the continued faith in their effectiveness, despite the proven failure of the modernization theories to which they are related, can be attributed to the existence of a development ‘narrative’ related to models. Roe (1991) and Hoben (1995) explore the role of narrative in
development efforts and point to the importance of narratives in facilitating action in conditions of uncertainty. Hoben describes narratives as stories with a beginning, a middle and an end that ‘purport...to describe and explain the problem addressed’ (Hoben 1995: 1008). Roe (1991: 288), writing about rural environmental development, argues that:

one of the principle ways practitioners, bureaucrats and policy makers articulate and make sense of this uncertainty is to tell stories or scenarios that simplify the ambiguity. Indeed the pressure to generate narratives about development is directly proportional to the ambiguity decision makers experience over the development process...

These development narratives prescribe particular actions. For example, the narrative of the ‘tragedy of the commons,’ which begins with undefined and unregulated ownership of open-access land and proceeds through the inevitable degradation and overexploitation of this land, prescribes privatization and regulation of land access. Narratives, like the tragedy of the commons, endure even in the light of opposing facts such as the continued degradation or overexploitation of land under private ownership, and outright failure of the narrative to prescribe effective action (Roe 1991). Hoben (1995: 1008) expands upon Roe’s analysis and argues that narratives are present in many areas of development polices and programs, which ‘rest on a set of more or less naïve unproven, simplifying and optimistic assumptions about the problem to be addressed and the approach to be taken.’ Without such a ‘cultural script’ action in the face of uncertainty becomes difficult, if not impossible.

The need for a narrative about models’ efficacy in cross-cultural communication becomes clearer in light of uncertainties facing those who were involved in INRIPP. In addition to incomplete knowledge about the situation of indigenous peoples in Russia and reservations stemming from the histories of development itself (namely how to effect change without prescribing universal solutions), INRIPP officials also faced the uncertainties involved in cross-cultural learning. Learning is much more than a straightforward transfer of information. It involves enrolling persons in particular relationships to certain communities and roles (i.e. teacher/student) and the unpredictable and complex movement of knowledge from one person, persons, or
community to another and over space (Wenger and Lave 1991). Lave (1993) argues that simple notions regarding the ‘transfer’ or ‘transmission’ of knowledge as the primary means through which information and know-how circulates in a society presupposes a consensus and uniformity amongst knowledge recipients. These notions assume that all involved will interpret knowledge and information in the same way and overlook the ways in which the different goals and circumstances of those involved in exchange can result in myriad interpretations.\footnote{Latour (1987: 68-70) explains, however, how the endless interpretation of knowledge can be limited. He argues that new knowledge bearers become subject to a community of knowledge-making, which makes the new subjects less inclined to challenge facts because of a new sense of belonging and because ‘dissent is costly.’ In this way, new knowledge bearers’ behavior is rendered more predictable and controllable.} Models, which seem to promise communication as stable as the ‘unchanging’ laws of science, can be understood as one way of setting limitations to interpretation and imposing discipline upon those receiving knowledge.

The persistence of models in development efforts is also related to contemporary beliefs about knowledge and how knowledge can be communicated that are linked to the modernist ideology described above. Practices and institutions of governance, such as co-management boards and EDCs, are undoubtedly social products that are rooted in and enacted by individuals and communities. However, legitimate knowledgeability in everyday discourse is often premised upon the ability to present information as purely factual, unchanging, and objective. Turnbull (2000: 212) writes:

Knowledge...is the messy, contingent and situated outcome of a group activity. Yet in order to achieve credibility and authority in a culture that prefers the abstract over the concrete and separates facts from values, knowledge has to be presented as unbiased and undistorted without a place or knower...

Knowledge is meant to be abstract and rational. Rationality, an undefined yet ‘constitutive element of the moral economy’ (Turnbull 2000: 212), relies upon notions of scientific logic, critical use of evidence, and consistent application in all situations. This contemporary orientation towards technical and objective discourse in tandem
with the models inherited from modernization theories resulted in a Canadian-Russian dialogue in which the narrative history of the Canadian cultural products being offered was almost entirely absent. Models seemed to promise to translate the complexity and ‘messiness’ of northern economic development into quasi-scientific and replicable structures that could travel reliably across distance and cross-culturally. However, the resulting model-oriented debate excluded explication of tacit knowledge and ethical beliefs, which led to the failure of the model to travel stably and contributed to the realization of EDCs in Russia along significantly different lines.

5.3 Moving People: Encountering Economic Development on Study Tour

In this section, I examine how Russians first encountered economic development institutions and processes in the Canadian North. The vast majority of those involved in establishing Russian EDCs had learned about them primarily through INRIPP organized study tours in Northern Canada (NWT, Nunavut). These travelers faced certain challenges in interpreting their observations of and information about economic development in the Canadian North both during the study tour and upon their return home. I note these issues briefly and then hypothesize that these difficulties are greatly amplified by the implication of tacit knowledge – ways of doing, being, and knowing essential to skilled activity that are rarely discussed explicitly – in the structures of economic development to which the participants were introduced. Moving a model from one place to another would entail both understanding the model and then proceeding to replicate it. The implication of tacit knowledge in skilled activity, such as running an EDC, elucidates why it might be possible for a model to be misconstrued and, subsequently, implemented in a different manner. This section’s examination of the extent to which the models encountered in the Canadian North were intelligible to an outside audience lays the groundwork for understanding how EDCs were realized in Russia.

Of course, in addition, the replication of models is also related to political will. A model could be visible and intelligible and still rejected or distorted. Investigating the sincerity of Russians’ desire to implement Canadian models lies outside the scope of my present research. However, chapter three’s discussion of differing conceptions of indigeneity and chapter four’s focus on the workings of power between Canadians and Russians indicate several reasons as to why Russians might be unwilling to replicate the Canadian model exactly, even if they understood perfectly.
In December 2003, I traveled with a group of Russian interns in the Canadian North for whom I had organized activities in Nunavut’s capital city, Iqaluit (where I had been living the previous five months). The main point of the study tour, which was the last of several years of study tours, was to familiarize Russian interns with Canadian ideas of sustainable economic development and to enable them to see these economic ideas ‘in practice.’ To this end, interns met with federal DIAND officials in Ottawa; with government representatives, economic development corporation representatives and economic development officers in Nunavut’s two largest and most developed towns (Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet); and with representatives from Arctic Cooperatives in Winnipeg. Russian participants on the tour represented two groups – 4 governmental interns, who were chosen by their regional governments from economic and aboriginal affairs departments to participate in the tour, and 5 indigenous interns who had been selected by indigenous organizations. All interns, in general, seemed quite eager to encounter Canadian ideas. They often stated, at various meetings, ‘we want to bring experience from Canada to Russia,’ primarily in areas of economic development corporations, tourism, and small business opportunities for indigenous communities.

The study tour was designed to highlight the role of Inuit-owned small businesses participating in the mainstream non-traditional economy (i.e. construction, services, and communications). This emphasis on small businesses in the market economy was chosen because project organizers were hoping to provide a counter-example to what they perceived to be a Russian overemphasis on the commercialization of traditional activities, such as herding, fishing, gathering, and arts and crafts, as the path towards indigenous economic development. The tour organizers had been reluctant to include the arts, despite the fact that the arts, ranging from soapstone carving and sewing to a budding film industry, generate 30 million Canadian dollars in sales annually and represent a significant source of cash income for many of the 4,200 residents of Nunavut who identify themselves as active artists (Sivummut 2003: 11). This emphasis on non-traditional business made an impression on many interns who expressed surprise over the ability of indigenous people in the Canadian North to run conventional, modern businesses. They commented favorably on the ‘combination of
traditional lifestyle with innovation' and the 'use of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples... in conventional business.'

The study tour went through two of Nunavut's most developed and populous towns. Both Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit have benefited from their status as government centers and, consequently, have well-developed infrastructure and residents more capable of purchasing services than some of the smaller, more remote, and economically struggling communities scattered throughout the territory. In this way, another aspect of the word 'model' emerges. The choice of study tour route through more prosperous towns and the glossing over of the importance of the arts economy in Nunavut certainly correspond with the sense of the 'model' as an idealized representation. In order to present Canadian northern economic development to Russians as a model, the complexity and diversity of the real economy and variations over space were excluded.

Figure 4: Map of Canada showing Nunavut (yellow), Nunavut's communities (red), and Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit (black)

The inclusion of travel in INRIPP, and in development projects in general, seems to be premised on the idea that ‘seeing is believing.’ As Outram (1999: 281) notes, ‘the link between traveling and truth finding sits deep in the organizing mythologies of the West.’ The addition of vision lends credence to the words and knowledge of the developers – an important act of acquiring power. If the ‘developees’ see with their own eyes that what the developers say is ‘true’ or at least exists, the agents of development and their words, advice, and knowledge are endowed with legitimacy. Latour notes that the strength of representatives’ words is greatly amplified when they speak ‘in the presence of what they represent...the solidity of what the representative says is directly supported’ (Latour 1987: 72). Through travel, members of the target audience in a development project can be shown the concrete results of the economic, social, and political practices advocated by the development agency. Furthermore, taking INRIPP interns to Canada, particularly given the emphasis on temporality described in Chapter 2 with Canada as the Arctic ‘future’ and Russia representing a backward Arctic ‘past,’ speaks to the link between travel and time travel noted by Helms (1988). INRIPP interns can be construed as doing more than simply encountering an alternative reality in northern Canada, built upon structures, circumstances, and ideologies vastly different from their home communities. The implicit assertion is that through travel the Russian interns encounter the future, potentially realizable if they are willing to promote practices similar to Canadian ones in their home communities in Russia.

Overall, interns commented that travel was useful as a way of expanding their circle of contacts and of understanding the international debate surrounding issues, such as land use conflicts or environmental degradation, that they deal with on a local level. One indigenous intern commented on the study tour by offering the Russian saying equivalent to a ‘picture is worth a thousand words’: ‘It is better to see something once than to hear about it a hundred times.’ The experience of traveling was also seen as valuable for the Canadian indigenous leaders who participate in delegations to Russia. One ICC interviewee informed me that she thought it was quite valuable to involve Canadian Inuit, who may only have experience in Canadian and local politics, in international endeavors. She explained that through travel to Russia and the need to explain the Canadian system to an outside audience, Inuit leaders get ‘a better sense of their own relationships with the federal government and this helps them see the
bigger picture.' It is clear here that travel is bound up with learning, gaining perspective, and acquiring the new knowledge and acquaintances needed to advocate more effectively.

Despite the knowledge gained through travel, many interns encountered the problems of trust and credibility that Smith and Agar (1998) and Outram (1999) describe as plaguing 17th and 18th century scientific travelers. These scientific journeyers struggled to render their discoveries made abroad credible in their home countries, as their stories lay far beyond the experience of those to whom they needed to report and who would affirm their accounts on the basis of trust. Most interns, in follow up interviews, mentioned the difficulties of communicating Canadian experience to their home communities. For example, one representative from the Far East of Russia commented that:

"at present, the traditional life [of indigenous peoples] is in no way connected to the area's economy. When people do sell their products, they sell them too cheaply because they don't have enough knowledge, experience and support to make a profit. I wish the leaders of our obshini in [our region] could go to Canada and see with their own eyes what is going on there, because it is so difficult for me to explain development to them and so difficult for them to understand."

The study tour participants representing indigenous organizations faced the additional challenge of convincing local government officials and dealing with entrenched political and economic interests upon their return home.

However, interns' difficulty in convincingly describing Canadian-style economic development in their home communities may be related to another problem beyond credibility. The economic development 'models' that were displayed on study tour may have varied in terms of their intelligibility to an outside audience. Canadian speakers along the study tour seemed to think they were presenting clear-cut schematic models that could easily be replicated. By contrast, the interns seemed to have gained impressions, many of which affected them deeply (i.e. seeing indigenous
peoples operating mainstream businesses), but felt they were lacking crucial information to interpret these impressions into action at home.

Several interns, when asked to reflect upon the study tour, commented on the importance of socializing with other indigenous peoples and seeing things with their own eyes, but still felt they needed further information on how institutions, such as corporations, actually worked in practice. One intern from KMAO, like many other interns, would have liked more time to study documents and deal with the presented Canadian organizations in more depth:

Maybe we should have stayed in one place a while. We would stop in at offices and see they have computers and everything was nice and clean. But I needed to know who does things with traditional products? It is hard to tell whether this [Canadian] knowledge is applicable or not.

This statement and the general feeling that study tour participants expressed about some element of explanation being lacking allude to the problem of ‘seeing a model’ in a new location. Interns seemed to have gained quite a few ideas, but not a ‘model’ that they could take apart, examine, explain, and reassemble in a new location as they were expected to do.

The emphases on schematic models as a way of gaining communicative clarity with visiting Russians and on technical explanation to the exclusion of narrative history precluded explication of a key aspect of any trained activity – tacit knowledge. This contributed to the lack of conceptual clarity cited by the Russian interns. Scott (1998: 7) has shown ways in which abstract state planning and formal schemes of social order are ‘untenable without some elements of the practical knowledge that they tend to dismiss.’ The exclusion of tacit knowledge points to Black’s (1962) assertion that intuitive or tacit knowledge is required to ‘read’ a model correctly. He argues that while models seem to summarize and schematically represent key relationships in a particular field, object, or process, ‘causal explanations must be sought elsewhere’ (Black 1962: 225). Due to this absence of causality, a person requires tacit knowledge or ‘intuitive grasp...of its capacities’ in order to properly interpret a model (Black 1962: 233). Thus, models are most intelligible to those who prepared them in
the first place rather than stable representations that can be understood by outside audiences.

Tacit knowledge, or the idea that ‘we know more than we can tell’ (Polanyi 1966: 4), can be understood as an ‘interiorization’ of particulars essential to achieving functionality in skilled activities. Polanyi (1966; 1969) describes tacit knowledge as a means through which persons can be aware of particulars, such as the exact contours of someone else’s face or the steps necessary to swim or ride a bicycle, but remain unable to identify those particulars. Polanyi argues that tacit knowledge defies representation, while explicit knowledge can be expressed in codified forms of representation. However, he cautions against a sharp dichotomy: ‘while tacit knowledge can be possessed by itself, explicit knowledge must rely on being tacitly understood and applied. Hence all knowledge is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge. A wholly explicit knowledge is unthinkable’ (Polanyi 1969: 144). Tacit knowledge is closely linked to theories of practice, which place emphasis on how actors strategically navigate the institutions and contingencies of their particular environment in an improvisational and less than self-aware manner (Bourdieu 1977; Lave and Wenger 1991).

Tacit knowledge is most frequently discussed in relation to professions, such as carpentry, nursing, or scientific research, that have essential and discernable skill sets (Collins 1985; Lave and Wenger 1991). I argue, however, that the knowledge needed to run northern EDCs, for example, entails more tacit or practice-based skills and understandings than one first expects.77 Descriptions of corporations or co-management boards as models, implying a step by step explanation or mapping of how one gets from point A to point B, underestimate the role of tacit understandings involved in being, for instance, a co-management board member or a corporation sub-director. All forms of work and knowledgeability entail the acquisition of certain practices of speech and action, techniques of the body, and the assimilation of principles and ethics.

77 See Gertler (2003) for a description of the debates about tacit knowledge in the business world.
If and how tacit knowledge can travel between persons remains a problematic question and is addressed in the final section of this chapter. At this juncture, however, it is important to note a relationship between the exclusion of tacit knowledge and the suppression of history that characterized INRIPP events. Speakers participating in INRIPP were often asked to refrain from explaining the bases upon which the institutions they represented were founded. These foundations are, by and large, in the land claims process through which indigenous peoples negotiated with the state and exchanged their largely unrecognized rights as first occupants and prior nations for clearly enumerated and limited rights to lands and resources. As project organizers believed that land claims and the combative and politicized discourse of rights and land ownership that precipitated this process in the first place in Canada were unlikely to take place in Russia, they requested that Canadian delegates focus on describing their particular institutions and refrain from speaking extensively about foundations upon which these institutions were built. Project organizers felt this glossing of EDC roots in land claims and the compensation packages that accompanied the land claims settlements would make Canadian models more applicable to northern Russia.

The exclusion of stories related to how these institutions came to be, in combination with an emphasis on science-like technical debate, caused EDCs and co-management boards to be presented to Russians as atemporal entities. While these bare-bones and de-storied structures are in keeping with what one might expect of a scientific model, they precluded opportunities for Canadians presenters to externalize some of their tacit understandings about how the world should be ordered by engaging in a narrative recounting of how their institutions came to be. As a result, the ‘model institutions’ remained out of focus to the visiting study tour group.

On the whole, as I argue below, tacit knowledge and understandings are difficult, but certainly not impossible, to externalize. This assertion is supported by a notable shift in how Canadian representatives talked about economic development corporations when confronted with evidence of the significantly different realizations of Canadian style EDCs in Russia. The delegation switched from discussing the technicalities of development to explicating their moral beliefs and the tacit principles underlying their institutions in the form of a story. Given more time and free reign to talk about the
history and evolution of their organizations and engage actively with Russian understandings and critiques as a contrast, Canadians may have externalized more of their tacit understandings and explicated their models to themselves as they illustrated them for outsiders. However, the Canadians were not the only ones participating in these cross-cultural encounters who possessed tacit knowledge about how the world should be ordered and how institutions should function. The Russian participants, as is outlined in the following section, also possessed their own implicit understandings about how reasonable and sustainable northern economic development should take place.

5.4 Russian and Canadian Versions of Economic Development

Drawing upon Black’s (1962) assertion that the ‘reading’ of a model depends on the outlook of the person doing the interpretation, an understanding of how Russian conceptions of economic development differ from Canadian beliefs about the process makes the Russian ‘reading’ of the EDC model more comprehensible. Throughout this section, I also flag when and how moments of discussion beyond the purely technical emerged and examine how these openings towards externalizing principles and tacit knowledge were received. This elucidates the nature of the debate and the limits of discourse at these meetings while laying the groundwork for understanding why Canadian delegates shifted from a discussion of the EDC models to a narrative description of how EDCs came into being in the first place.

The discussion of Canadian and Russian ideas of economic development for indigenous peoples and the case study of the corporations recently established in Russia for indigenous economic development are drawn primarily from my observations and conversations during a weeklong series of meetings held in Moscow (December, 2004). The first part of the week consisted of an evaluation of the government-government component of INRIPP and involved 10 representatives from regional governments in KMAO and YNAO, 3 Canadian economic development experts, and two representatives from DIAND. The latter half of the week was devoted to a conference on indigenous entrepreneurship and small business
development with a wider and more eclectic audience. This conference was attended by approximately sixty representatives from various Russian indigenous organizations and Northern regional governments (KMAO, YNAO, Chukotka primarily), several Russian federal representatives, 8 indigenous and non-indigenous persons involved in Northern Canadian economic development corporations, and 8 representatives total from DIAN and ICC-Canada. There were also representatives from the Norwegian, Australian and Canadian embassies in Moscow, the Committees on the North of both the State Duma and the Federation Council of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, and assorted participants from business organizations, academia, private organizations, and NGOs.

At both the smaller evaluation-oriented meeting and the larger seminar, the Canadians’ characteristic emphasis on dialogue and exchange was still prominent. However, Russians participating in the seminar seemed to take a more critical stance towards the Canadian ideas than I had witnessed at previous events. Perhaps this was due to the fact that these meetings represented the capstone of the project and many of the Russian and Canadian participants were already familiar with one another and felt they could speak more frankly. One long-time participant commented to me over a tea break that, ‘we all know each other now and are friends...now is the time to really test these ideas.’ Some Russian participants, on the other hand, may have believed that their approaches were simply the most suitable to Russian conditions and also may have resented outside critique, to which they have been exposed quite extensively following the collapse of the Soviet Union and loss of ‘superpower’ status. Another explanation for the more critical, and arguably more open, debate at this seminar might be an issue of location – the conference was being held in the imposing meeting rooms of Moscow’s Marriott Grand Hotel. In this situation, no one Russian group or region was the host and, free of the requirements of hospitality, participants could engage more critically with the various Canadian ideas they had encountered throughout the course of the project.

78 See Hønneland and Rowe (2004) for a discussion of the role that resentment and pride played in relation to transferring medical practices from Scandinavian countries to areas in the former Soviet Union.
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The central point of divergence in the discussion of economic development was that the Canadian model of fair economic development for indigenous peoples rested upon indigenous participation in the mainstream market economy, whereas most Russian participants believed that the path to economic and social sustainability must be primarily through the commercialization of the products of traditional activities. Both Canadians and Russians agreed on the importance of sustainable economic development for indigenous peoples, but proposed variations as to how this should be achieved.

On the Russian side, indigenous leaders and federal officials diverged slightly in their conceptions of how indigenous peoples should interact with the market. For example, a high-ranking member of the Committee on Northern Issues and Indigenous Peoples of the Federation Council, argued: ‘the question of integrating aboriginal businesses in the market economy is a crucial matter, because we have embarked on a path of market economy and we will not stray, only accelerate. There is no option for us here.’ This is reminiscent of a statement made by a Canadian federal representative:

Wage employment, the cash economy and the forces of the mainstream marketplace are the driving economic forces in Inuit society. While subsistence harvesting activity and the so-called informal economy is still a vital component of the social, cultural, and economic life of Inuit society, it is now inexorably intertwined with mainstream economic forces.

By contrast, Russian indigenous leaders and regional politicians seemed to reflect the opinion of one RAIPON leader that, even though development is important, ‘worship of the market’ must be avoided and development should be primarily channeled through traditional pursuits. This statement points to the divergent Canadian and Russian conceptions of what indigenous means, which are discussed extensively in the latter half of chapter three. To summarize roughly, Canadian definitions draw primarily upon an idea of descent or race as the arbiter of indigenousness, whereas the Russian definition of indigeneity is more linked to livelihood, implying that the significant experience of ‘indigeneity’ can be lost when indigenous persons cease to live on and use the land in traditional ways. In this way, it makes sense that federal officials, quite distant from the Siberian regions in which the majority of indigenous
peoples live and probably less invested in the maintenance of indigenous cultures, demonstrated less concern for traditional livelihoods than representatives from these regions.

Expert members of the Canadian delegation, mostly indigenous individuals hailing from the Yukon, the NWT, and Nunavik (northern Quebec), expressed big ambitions when they spoke about economic development and did not engage in the ‘traditional versus modern’ debate that so occupied Russian participants. Their goals were to get the best possible profits for their ‘shareholders.’ In the words of one participant from the NWT, they aim to gather ‘more than the crumbs from development.’ The corporations they represented, which served First Nation and Inuit groups and are discussed in more detail below, were involved in ‘big business,’ including airlines, shipping companies, and oil and gas services. However, these delegates saw their efforts as serving purposes beyond profit generation. They also anticipated that a large percentage of the businesses they acquired would offer training and ‘capacity-building’ opportunities for their ‘stakeholders’ and represent a path towards the active involvement of indigenous persons in northern businesses and higher levels of individual and communal wealth in the North. This dual goal came across quite clearly in the Canadians’ presentations to and conversations with Russian participants. The representatives plainly linked social and cultural stability with economic development and considered the corporations to be an important aspect of indigenous empowerment, often equating financial clout with political influence.

Indigenous and non-indigenous Canadian speakers differed slightly in terms of statements about who controlled development in the Canadian North. Indigenous delegates sometimes implied that they essentially had a veto over government, while the speaker from DIAND focused more on the idea of building shared agendas and partnerships in the North, rather than on scenarios that might involve one party wishing to veto another. All Canadian delegates exhibited faith that ‘win-win’ situations for government, indigenous peoples, and industry are possible and achievable through good-faith processes and negotiations. These accounts were rather idealized and many reports on the northern political economy point to the ways in which the Canadian government perpetuates the social suffering of indigenous communities in the North through the systematic appropriation of indigenous peoples’
lands and through untenably complex political and financial relationships between indigenous communities and governments and the federal government (Bielawski 2003; Irlbacher-Fox 2004). Consultation, for example, mentioned frequently by the DIAND official quoted above, was ostensibly the primary method through which this government representative believed equitable partnerships between government, industry, and the state could be achieved. The requirement to consult is laid out in federal statutes, as well as in land claims, and, in the words of this particular speaker, is also based on the ‘principle that communities that are impacted by a particular development have views on how they should be consulted and what should be discussed...consultation is a foundation for developing a shared vision, that’s what you want to reach.’ Consultations, however, have come under critique for their time-consuming nature, government directed agendas, and the fact that being ‘consulted’ does not necessarily lead to indigenous peoples’ wishes or positions being respected when the government makes development decisions about federal land (Bielawski 2003) – such critiques were not mentioned by members of the Canadian delegation.

In some ways, Russians’ skepticism of the Canadian models presented may be related to their perception of these Canadian accounts as self-serving or idealized. While this was rarely brought up in public debates, in interviews many Russians commented on persistent problems, such as alcoholism and unemployment, which they had noticed while visiting Canada. If Canadian-style economic and political development were meant to be the roadmap for healthy and thriving northern indigenous communities, both indigenous and non-indigenous Russians saw aspects of the Canadian North that made them reluctant to embrace these approaches wholeheartedly. Although Russian interviewees recognized that their northern communities and peoples struggle with similar problems as well, these rarely acknowledged Canadian issues made the Canadian message somewhat suspect in their assessment.

This misgiving about the credibility of the Canadian message remained a largely private one. However, public discussions of economic development, particularly responses to the Canadian emphasis on the participation of indigenous peoples in mainstream business and in the resource development of northern land, illustrated four key areas in which Russians had reservations: 1) that this approach or model did not coincide with Russian understandings of indigenous life, 2) that Canadian
approaches to economic development would not take traditional land use and
preservation of culture into account, 3) that it was impossible to realize such
economic development in Russia for legislative and political reasons, and 4) that
market-oriented development in keeping with the Canadian experience may be
possible, but only gradually and not at present.

First, many Russian indigenous participants seemed to find that indigenous
participation in oil and gas businesses in Canada went against the basic values of
indigenousness and community life. A woman representing Sami of the Kola
Peninsula commented, ‘indigenous peoples are the depository of wild nature, but they
are not uncivilized. How could they so easily agree to the construction of pipelines?
What will be left for posterity if industrial development occurs on the land of
indigenous peoples?’ In response, a Canadian project coordinator and indigenous
delegate took it upon themselves to explain the long process of environmental
assessment that had to occur before any development project was approved in the
Canadian North. The line of thinking here is that because indigenous people can
control the process to some extent, they can allow for and approve of development,
sometimes with irreversible results, without losing their connection to or their
stewardship of the land.

Secondly, Russian participants were concerned that the Canadians’ emphasis on
economic development and profit margins precluded attention to social and cultural
difference. This is an issue that arose repeatedly on study tour as well. One
indigenous study tour participant, at a meeting with regional economic development
officers in Nunavut’s Rankin Inlet, echoed the sentiments of the rest of the delegation:

In Russia, there is the opinion that a traditional lifestyle is the basis for the
preservation of the etnos. So there have been attempts to commercialize this,
but we haven’t been successful. What percentage of your businesses is related
to traditional practices? Are they successful?

The answers to this type of question, when posed in the Canadian North on study tour,
tended to be a discussion of the northern carving industry, meat processing,
commercial fisheries, and any kind of grassroots or ‘local’ business. If it involved
indigenous people at the local level, it was seen to sustain them, regardless of whether or not the employment was based in tradition. Two guiding principles for economic development in the Nunavut Economic Development Summary illustrate this clearly. Economic development must take place with 1) respect for cultural integrity, 'preserving the primary relationships and values that come from Inuit Quajimajatuqangit [Inuit ways of knowing and doing]' and 2) community control (Sivummut 2003: vi). Thus, the goal of economic development is not to preserve traditional activities as such, but rather to provide for the continued exercise of the 'relationships' and 'values' that characterized pre-contact life, such as providing for family and community, taking counsel, and resourcefulness (Inuit Qaujimajatuqanginnut Task Force 2002: 8). In Ottawa, federal bureaucrats answered along the lines that 'Inuit and northerners are adept at taking one thing and adapting,' meaning that all kinds of business, if they draw on the spirit of adaptation and involve indigenous persons, will support indigenous life and cultural vitality in the North.

For Russian indigenous leaders, economic development based on traditional life primarily means the commercialization of the concrete products of traditional pursuits, such as herding, fishing and hunting, rather than attempting to extend the beliefs and values of herding and hunter/gatherer societies into different endeavors. A RAIPON leader commented:

Successful development is possible when all the aspects of development are taken into account...we should keep in mind that economics are only a component of the total development of indigenous peoples...for us, economic development means development from the traditional use of nature. Everyone today has mentioned that Russia is now a market economy, but the way we see it is that the economists who draft the government plans for economic development see the market as a deity, as a god...we want to think about economic development differently...the world economy will always be a market economy, but it is not a panacea and there should be limits...Even in the US, the most market economy ever, there are special non-market relations and monopolies when it comes to indigenous peoples.
A delegate from the federal government, representing the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, echoed this emphasis on traditional practices. He commented, 'the traditional way of life is the basis of the indigenous peoples of the North, for that reason, we would like to develop the traditional economy to support the mentality of the indigenous peoples and on the other hand fully integrate these people into modern society.' How this dual movement was to be achieved was not further clarified. However, even with the federal government’s emphasis on traditional activities, comments from indigenous delegates indicated that funding for subsistence activities, such as hunting and herding, remained difficult to come by. One representative from a resource-poor region, Khabarovskiy Krai, related a story from a meeting a few days prior to the seminar with federal officials. He had asked for funding to help restore reindeer herding to his region and was told by the federal officials that he would be ‘better off breeding bees than reindeer…there won’t be any funding in the near future.’

This incident relates to a third type of critique: Canadian-style economic development was impossible due to Russian political realities. Interns on study tour often expressed frustration on this point. They believed that the relationship between government and indigenous peoples in Canada was a special and respectful one that facilitated shared goals and trusting partnerships and noted that much of this relationship and the realization of economic development in the North was rooted in agreements between indigenous governments, the state, and industry. For example, one indigenous

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79 The indigenous members of the Canadian delegation remarked that it seemed like what the Russian indigenous peoples wanted most was subsidies for herders, rather than the opportunity to acquire ownership or control of large businesses. While this seemed difficult for them to relate to, they were still very supportive of this desire. As one Inuk representative from Nunavik noted, ‘if herding is such a big part of their culture, they have to keep it going.’

80 Overall interns had difficulty understanding these various levels of agreements, such as land claims, impact benefit agreements, and co-management arrangements, that coordinate development in the North. They did receive information on land claims in their ‘briefing books’ that accompanied the study tour where land claims were described as agreements concluded with aboriginal peoples that ‘resolved the legal ambiguities associated with the common law concept of aboriginal rights. The objective is to negotiate modern treaties which provide clear, certain and long-lasting definition of rights to lands and resources.’ However, the rights-based discourse as well as the New World conception of aboriginal rights stemming from ‘prior occupancy’ of land – a concept quite foreign in Russia, where even the Russian population can claim a sense of ‘native-ness’ (see Keski-Itako 2004) – were never discussed explicitly. Despite the difficulties in understanding the indigenous-state relationship in Canada, many indigenous leaders seemed to take at face value idealized characterizations of this relationship. Perhaps this is because Canadian idealizations could serve as a useful pretext for critiquing their own local and federal governments.
intern spoke out angrily about the situation in Russia, when asked about applying Canadian experience:

    The status of aboriginal peoples, industry and government are not equal in Russia. Government officials don’t see us as partners. How do you create partnership if you’re not seen as partners? If our government didn’t hide information, we could be their partners and show them how to make use of our territory to best effect.

A delegate to the Moscow conference on economic development echoed the interns’ comments when highlighting a disjuncture between stated policy and actual financing. She stated:

    We don’t have a sincere dialogue between indigenous people and the authorities, they just consider our proposals. We’re not in a position to debate our key issues, we’ve never had a debate about indigenous peoples and what we should pursue...we must find a common concept for the development of indigenous peoples...we have no concepts to smooth the way to sustainable development. We envy our brothers and sisters from Canada that they can fully participate and take for themselves commercial control of the North.

This delegate pointed to a lack of political will and lack of interest in indigenous peoples’ rights at the federal level as the main source of indigenous peoples’ economic and social difficulties.

Her statements were countered by a RAIPON leader who emphasized that progress had been made and that the Canadian experience needed to be understood in light of Russian realities:

    It might not be necessary to get a full federal policy, because there have been many progressive reforms at the regional level. Our Canadians who come here know that our situation changes often and that our Russian realities are different.
However, another speaker from RAIPON went on to enumerate basic problems, stemming from indecision in both the federal and regional political spheres, that represented hurdles to any kind of economic development, based on tradition or otherwise. He listed the following problems: unresolved issues in terms of land ownership, problematic access to education and health services, lack of infrastructure and distance from markets, irrational use of resources, low access to capital, and lack of a clear governmental policy. This speaker acknowledged the usefulness of foreign experience from ‘other countries, like Canada, but also Australia, New Zealand and Scandinavia.’ Regardless, he saw a key obstacle to taking on Canadian experience to be the fact that in Canada ‘the legal basis on which to achieve development has been established. This is on the basis of principle.’ Therefore, adopting Canadian models of economic development was difficult due to the vastly different relationships between indigenous peoples and governments in Russia and in Canada.

Finally, some felt that Canadian models or approaches to economic development may be possible, though not in the present situation. Many participants, especially Russian indigenous leaders, chose to emphasize the importance of time and further political and social development when considering market economy participation. They seemed to be saying that they want to participate in the market economy, but that their communities were unprepared and therefore they must proceed gradually and with caution. Indigenous delegates often talked about slowly changing the ‘mentality’ of indigenous peoples in order to protect their way of life, instead of wholeheartedly embracing market economics today. As one interviewee who worked in the government of YNAO as head of their indigenous corporation commented:

We work to get a lot of feedback from our ethnic communities, because even though I am a Nenets I’m an official now and it is hard to imagine what reindeer herding is really like. That’s why our major task is to modify the psychology of our people so that they can use creative approaches to their

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81 From the Russian word ‘методы’. This term, which can be traced back to sociologist Levy-Bruhl, is rarely used in Western academic discourse as it has come to be considered a highly essentialist way of categorizing worldviews. However, it retains currency amongst the indigenous and non-indigenous Russians with whom I spoke and was used in conversation to describe how a people or group think about and act in the world.
traditional economy and we need to understand their approaches as well, to know where they are.

Another representative from YNAO commented that while they struggle with infrastructure problems, such as refrigeration and transport, they also face what he described as a psychological problem in promoting economic development. He continued, 'not all indigenous peoples are directed towards markets or to capitalistic thinking...there hasn’t been enough time to develop Canadian models or attitudes, and this will be a long process.' Many participants implied that this would involve a shift both from some indigenous traditions or 'mentalities,' but would also include coping with the legacy of Soviet paternalism, which they felt introduced a culture of dependence, and with the abrupt end to the Soviet Union, which further challenged state-subsidized indigenous herding economies.

Canadian project workers seemed to understand why the Russians were objecting to the style of economic development they promoted, but did not accept Russian objections at face value. Although never articulated to Russians explicitly, the Canadians seemed to hope that their model of economic development would illustrate to Russians that Russian conceptions of what indigenous people should do were actually wrong and in need of change.

One Canadian project leader, however, seemed to think that perhaps the emphasis on full time engagement in solely traditional endeavors may be a rather permanent feature of Russian indigenous life, not easily changed through the introduction of new models. With some frustration he commented:

The training center [RITC] was supposed to show that you don’t have to live in reserves\(^2\) to preserve a culture and this idea was sidetracked. Instead, they talked about how to make reindeer herding and gathering more profitable. From evaluations, this is what the interns say, this is what they really want to talk about.

\(^2\) In referring to reserves, the speaker seemed to be speaking metaphorically to the expressed belief in Russia that in order to remain indigenous, indigenous persons had to be protected and distanced from the outside non-indigenous world, rather than referencing First Nation or Indian reserves in North America.
Although frustrated by the Russian emphasis on commercializing traditional practices rather than engaging in mainstream economic development projects, other Canadian project workers seemed to think that it was only a matter of time before Russian indigenous peoples and the federal government adopted a similar approach. They demonstrated continued faith in their models to act as vehicles for principles and beliefs that could lead to the development of unexpected reorganizations of power relationships in Russia. One project worker noted:

It will take a long time to develop an understanding of small business as we understand it. More than a shop selling traditional crafts, there should be airlines, pipeline servicing like in Canada...even though tangible results are hard to see the exposure to Canadian lifestyle must have inspired some [Russian] indigenous peoples.

The obstacles to transferring economic development knowledge were apparent to those engaged in the project over the long-term and became increasingly obvious to the relatively new members of the Canadian delegation throughout their week in Moscow. Regardless, one model of economic development proved to be of mutual interest to both Canadians and Russians throughout, albeit in varied forms: the economic development corporation.

5.5 Moving Models: The Economic Development Corporation

The EDC model was discussed extensively throughout INRIPP as a set of relationships that could facilitate economic development and generate revenue in indigenous communities of the North. Indigenous ‘corporations’ first surfaced in the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, through which 13 regional and village corporations were established for approximately 75,000 Alaskan Native ‘shareholders.’ These corporations, with a very mixed record of success, are responsible for managing the initial claims settlement of nearly 1 billion dollars and 44 million land acres. The corporations, and ostensibly by proxy the native
population of Alaska, received this settlement in exchange for settling sovereignty issues and paving the way for high-profit resource exploitation in Alaska (University of Alaska 1991).

Despite the critiques leveled against the Alaska corporation model, namely that it did not provide for indigenous empowerment or sustain stable relationships to land and resources (Berger 1985; Duhaime et al. 2001), both community level and regional corporations became an integral feature of the Canadian land claims agreements (Mitchell 1996). In Canada, corporations were seen as the most appropriate mechanism for ensuring that an entire land claims group, rather than individuals, benefited from land claim money (Duhaime et al. 2001). It was also seen as a way in which Canada could promote the growth of indigenous-owned businesses and of a northern manufacturing and service sector to serve the North (Whittington 1986).

The corporations, in theory, belong to the indigenous people, with individual members of any group designated as ‘shareholders.’ However, Duhaime et al. (2001: 200) observe a sense of remoteness in everyday people’s relationship to their regional corporation, a situation that is ‘aggravated by the fact that some corporations cannot pay dividends to their shareholders…thus benefits for members are indirect, taking the form of better services and donations to different initiatives.’ Some scholars have taken a more critical stance towards indigenous corporations, describing them as ‘Trojan horses bringing the destructive American business and capitalist culture into the hearts of old societies and threatening them’ (Jull in Mitchell 1996: 342). Mitchell (1996) sees the introduction of corporations in the Canadian North as part of the Canadian government’s continuing efforts to colonize the lands and peoples the North by imposing a liberal-capitalistic political economy upon them.

Despite these critiques, such corporations are now a feature of the political economy of the Canadian North. Consequently, many Canadian representatives of northern indigenous-owned and government-owned EDCs came to Russia at various points. Businesses run by Nunavut Development Corporation (NDC), which belongs to the Government of Nunavut and is mandated to ‘stimulate the growth of local businesses and promote economic diversification,’ were also a feature of the northern Canadian
study tour. Corporations for indigenous peoples were the main aspect of the political economy of the Canadian North that Russian INRIPP participants hoped to realize in their own regions. The process by which the corporate model was moved to Russia involved a double movement: the movement of Russian interns to Canada to encounter the model and the movement of that particular model abroad. To get a sense for this dual movement, I first present a brief summary of how the Russian interns on the study tour in which I took part encountered the corporate model in the Canadian North and then continue on to a more in depth case study of how corporations have been realized in Russia.

While on study tour, the Russian interns toured two of the nine subsidiary companies of the NDC: Ivalu Ltd., which produces embroidered goods, and Kivalliq Arctic Foods, which carries out value-added processing of caribou meat and fish. Both companies are located in Rankin Inlet, a Nunavut town of about 2,500 on the shores of Hudson Bay. Corporations facilitating small businesses, like the NDC, were presented to the Russians as a model for achieving economic self-sufficiency in remote, indigenous communities in the North. Russian interns were hopeful that the model of economic development corporations would prove to be a useful one, as they believed that both Russia and Canada exist under the market economy and therefore operate in similar economic environments.

However, after our time in Rankin Inlet, most Russian participants began to note a discrepancy in the model. They were being presented with models that were described as capable of achieving northern self-sufficiency, but saw businesses that continued to require subsidy in practice. Two government representatives from oil-rich regions in Russia who were both keenly interested in development corporations expressed their frustration while touring a pottery and arts production company in Rankin Inlet. They asked whether or not the business was subsidized and exchanged exasperated looks and exclamations of, ‘Finally!’ upon hearing that the business was actually independently profitable.

83 Nunavut Development Corporation website. www.ndcorp.nu.ca/aboutus.htm (accessed June 4, 2005). Some clarification may be needed here. Although most of the Canadian EDC representatives who traveled to Russia as part of INRIPP delegations represented corporations owned by indigenous peoples via land claims agreements, the public governments of the North, such as the Government of Nunavut, also own and operate corporations designed to promote economic development within their territories.
The lack of need to be profitable over long periods of time was puzzling to most Russians. Over the course of the study tour, interns became increasingly aggravated by the high level of subsidy of northern businesses and the inability of many economic development officers to present clearly how they acquired sources of funding. One intern, representing a newly founded government-owned corporation oriented towards the economic development of indigenous peoples in YNAO, noted that ‘when we visited the processing plant [Rankin Inlet], I asked about profit, and the answer was, “we do as much as we can”…This is surprising, I don’t really understand.’ Another intern commented, ‘I came to Canada expecting to see independent businesses operating in a market economy and found no such thing.’ She further mused:

The funding and the main principles of these endeavors are to create jobs for the aboriginal peoples. The Canadian government has set for itself the goal to create employment, not profit. It’s very surprising and it seems totally unnatural for the government to be so involved. When I came here I thought there would be more of a market economy in place and that aboriginal peoples would be involved in making money. But what I saw is that they are working and functioning as corporations, but their subsidiaries are not profitable. It remains a mystery to me how it will become profitable.

The interns’ critiques echo the criticisms leveled against the NDC in Nunavut’s press for failing to generate actual profits (on average all NDC subsidiaries are subsidized for about 60 cents to every dollar generated in sales) (Johnson 2005). In fact, NDC officials recently indicated that the profit-making aspects of their mandate were simply unachievable: ‘Given the volatility of Nunavut’s emerging economy and the logistical and capacity issues that hinder business development in the smaller Nunavut communities…[we] now put the emphasis on return of capital’ (in Johnson 2005).

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84 The newspaper article, however, did not cite the relative success of one of NDC’s subsidiaries - Kivalliq Arctic Foods. Kivalliq Arctic Foods had 1.4 million dollars (CDN) in sales in 2004 and net profits of $165,937 (NDC 2004), partly due to increased marketing efforts and receiving European Union certification in August 2003 (Howatt 2004).
The Russians’ surprise at the presence of subsidies and the highly interventionist role of government in the economy points to a different conception of how a neo-liberal market economy functions. The idea that a true market operates, by definition, without the intervention of the state is a widely held belief and Russians often suppose that Western countries must have fully market economies. However, as Galbraith (1968: 296) aptly noted, ‘the industrial system, in fact, is inextricably associated with the state.’ More recently, Mansfield (2004) has explored the ways in which the practice and implementation of neoliberal policies, which are rhetorically committed to the market as its own best regulator, demonstrate intense variation. She notes that politicians and policymakers around the world are implementing ‘market-oriented approaches in myriad political economic settings,’ such as welfare being reinterpreted as ‘workfare,’ and share a belief that ‘free markets lead to the best outcomes’ (Mansfield 2004: 565). However, Mansfield asserts that the market society for which they advocate actually requires high levels of political and social intervention and regulation. Thus, the neoliberal market economy can be understood as an idealized abstraction – presented glowingly to Russians following the collapse of the Soviet state-regulated communist economy – that fails to live up to its ‘model’ form in reality.

Despite their skepticism and frustration, many interns agreed that some variant of economic development corporations would be of use in their regions, as a way of uniting the productive capacities of indigenous resource users, from fishing to processing cedar nuts, in order to generate profits for entire indigenous communities. In Russian indigenous regions today, individuals typically sell the products of their harvest on their own and for little profit (if at all). Many interns had concerns, however, about the difficulty of realizing the corporate model because of ‘different structures’ in Russia and evinced a desire for ‘smaller, concrete steps.’

Government officials in YNAO and KMAO, who had been on earlier study tours in the Canadian North, were also quite taken with the idea of an economic development corporation and corporations have been established in both regions to date. However, the way in which this model was realized in Russia differs substantially from the Canadian corporations that were meant to serve as templates. These disparities emerged quite strongly at a meeting in Moscow organized by DIAND and attended by
representatives of Canadian northern EDCs and delegates from the regions with which DIAND had worked most extensively – KMAO and YNAO.

The stated goal of the two-day meeting was to evaluate the cooperation between the Canadian government and the regional governments present. However, after a short evaluation-oriented discussion, the meeting consisted primarily of the presentation of information about the two regions, in particular their recently established EDCs. Canadian EDC representatives were called upon to comment and ways in which Canadians and Russians diverged in their understandings of the corporation model became quite prominent throughout the meeting. Despite these differences of opinion, the mood of the meeting was generally convivial and informal, as most of the participants knew one another from previous events.

The meeting began with a general discussion of how Canadian practices could be adapted to suit Russian circumstances. There was no discussion of specific difficulties or opportunities within particular models or mechanisms. Rather, participants seemed to take a more philosophical stance with statement such as ‘we can learn lessons and transform and adapt this experience to Russian realities, but we can’t copy it.’ A well-placed government representative from YNAO, who had participated wholeheartedly and enthusiastically in INRIPP, put it this way:

I’m in agreement with those who evaluated the program and said that we can’t take 100% of Canada’s experience, it just can’t be applied totally in the Russian North, especially in Yamal-Nenets. But it is useful for us to be able to compare and contrast, to adapt ideas to our own conditions by using creative approaches.

While the need to adapt models and innovate was often mentioned, there was no discussion of why such changes were necessary at all and the topic of the different ethical and moral understandings involved in these distinct approaches to economic development did not arise. The Russian attendees also emphasized the element of time and often described their regions and their corporations as works in progress. One participant from YNAO noted that their corporation model will continue to develop, stating ‘we need time for the seeds to grow – this EDC model took 40 years
of work in Canada...we also have our own ways of doing things that work well and we hope the corporation will fit within this tradition.’

Representatives from Yamal-Nenets seemed proud and eager to present their prosperous region to all assembled. YNAO, which has a population of 516,000 persons and extracts 90% of the gas produced in Russia and 12% of all oil, is home to 33,800 indigenous individuals coming from three indigenous peoples (72% Nenets, 24% Khanty, 4.6% Sel’kup). Of this population, about 14,000 people continue to live a nomadic lifestyle based around reindeer herding. YNAO, which is the size of France, is also home to the world’s largest population of semi-domesticated northern reindeer and areas of traditional land use make up 77,000 of the okrug’s hectares. A delegate from YNAO described their primary difficulty, similar to issues in KMAO discussed in the previous chapter, as:

supporting oil and gas extraction while protecting the natural conditions necessary for the traditional land use of indigenous peoples...the goal of the social policy of the government in Yamal is to support steady improvement in the life of the population...by crossing over to a regime of sustainable social-economic development on the entire territory.

Like KMAO, oil companies in YNAO are required to deal with local authorities and family groups to come up with plans for social development, including cash compensation, training, and support for fisheries and herders.

One of the efforts to sustain traditional practices was the newly established (2003) government-owned and operated ‘Corporation for Small-Numbered Indigenous Peoples,’ which had recently completed a survey of traditional resources in the okrug that may prove marketable as the first step towards the production of value-added goods. The corporation planned to process the products of traditional livelihood, like fish and meat, in keeping with international standards to inject cash into the traditional economy of the region.

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85 YNAO provides 2.5% of Russia’s gross domestic product and the average salary in YNAO is four times the national average. The statistics cited here are taken from two governmental presentations given at the 2004 Moscow meetings.
The corporation in Khanty-Mansiysk followed similar lines, although they seem to have reached the production phase more quickly. The Corporation was also a government-run enterprise and called the ‘KMAO-Yugra Corporation of the Obshini of the Small Numbered Peoples of the North.’ It was founded in November 2003 and a network of 13 intake points was established throughout the okrug. At these intake points, Khanty and Mansi herders, hunters, fishers, and gatherers could sell their raw materials, which were then taken to a factory in the capital city of Khanty-Mansiysk for added value processing and packaging and marketing. The products included cedar nuts, canned mushrooms, dried and salted fish, and some reindeer meat. As of 2004, ten of the sixty-two national obshini in KMAO were participating in the corporation.

I spoke with people about the corporation on an earlier trip to KMAO and the opinions about the corporation were certainly mixed. A high-ranking KMAO bureaucrat had established the corporation after an INRIPP study tour to Canada. In an interview with me, this bureaucrat said that the idea of a corporation struck him the most because he thought it was a means of ‘unifying the productive capacity of the collective enterprises.’ In an article published around the time of our interview, it’s clear that this bureaucrat saw the corporation as a way of instilling a work ethic in a population perceived to be too ‘dependent.’ He stated:

Everyone who gives their products to the corporation will receive money for their labor. I ask you to note that the corporation isn’t a freebie (khalyava), at the corporation no one receives money without doing something first (RITC 2004: 35).

One person inside the department noted that a corporation was a good idea, but had not brought about any real results.

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86 Intake points are: Khanty-Mansiysk, Sovetskiy, Yurai cities and Boshoi Altim’, Maliy Altim’, Kondinskoe, Kama, Korliki, Saranpaull’, Sosva, Tegi, Ugut, and Tsigali villages.

87 The use of the word ‘khalyava’ in this citation is important and speaks to broader conceptions and prejudices about indigenous people in general. Indigenous peoples in Russia are often referred to derogatorily as ‘khalyavshiki’ or people who are just living off the state. The closest equivalent in English may be the idea of a freeloader or welfare bum.
An indigenous interviewee outside of the regional government was much more critical of the plan. She stated that the corporation could not work because, ‘although the Canadian idea was preserved and followed closely, it did not build upon existing links between villages and obshini or involve existing small-businesses and trade patterns…the Corporation was not designed to work in our territory.’ This interviewee had hoped that such a corporation would entail more than indigenous peoples simply handing over their raw products for processing, such as the promotion and support of indigenous-owned small businesses in tourism and services. In this way, the corporation would be much more in keeping with the Canadian model in which a diversity of economic opportunities are offered to indigenous people as a whole, not just to those who continue to live traditionally.

After the Russians presented their corporation business plans, which rested upon commercializing the products of gathering, hunting, fishing and herding, the meeting convener turned the floor over to the Canadians representing various EDCs in northern territories. A representative of the Inuvialuit Development Corporation (IDC), a corporation established in 1977 with 10 million dollars in initial equity in anticipation of the settlement of land claims with the 2,500 Inuvialuit people of the Beaufort Sea region (NWT), was asked to tell about his corporation’s holdings. This representative, whose corporation reported 6.1 million dollars in revenue in 2002 (Inuvialuit Corporate Group 2002), proceeded to glibly list: ‘currently we own airlines, hotels, drilling rigs, helicopters, real estate, grocery stores, and consultancy firms.’ He went on to contrast their approach with the Russian one, stating ‘while in the Inuvialuit region we like traditional activities they are not necessarily the best investment…so we pursue other elements such as airlines or oil and gas production and if those are successful we have more money to support traditional activities.’ Canadians emphasized that their goal was to generate profit in order to support various communities and indigenous peoples, which would in turn help support indigenous ways of life. Furthermore, it was obvious that their idea of indigenous was not linked to traditional in the same way. When Russians spoke about supporting indigenous peoples, they almost always spoke of supporting specific traditional livelihoods, such as reindeer herding. By contrast, one representative from an indigenous-owned EDC in the Yukon commented that they invested in airlines and hotels and larger businesses not only because they were more profitable, but also
because they wanted indigenous persons to be able to take over the key economic activities that now take place in their traditional homelands. They saw their goal as moving indigenous persons into positions of control and influence in the economies of their region as a fundamental aspect to maintaining, and in some cases regaining, the independence of indigenous nations.

An additional difference that a representative from the Inuvialuit Development Corporation pointed out was that all those around the table speaking about Russian corporations were government bureaucrats. He stressed that the issue of ownership was integral to the Canadian model of EDCs and clarified that the IDC is owned by the indigenous peoples of the area with government participating only through advice and subsidy, but 'never ownership or control.' He went on to suggest an alternative model for setting up corporations in Russia, wherein indigenous peoples would control the corporation:

If I were starting up a new development corporation in Russia, this is how I would go about it, knowing the Inuvialuit experience. First, I'd lobby government for initial capital and make sure this capital is directly responsible to the shareholders [indigenous persons]. Then I'd identify key investments that are safe. You have to make sure you have a success, if not a home run.

These changes would entail a shift in ownership from the Russian regional governments to a group representing indigenous peoples and involve indigenous peoples becoming substantially involved in the market economy and goods and services provision in their regions. It would also be an acknowledgment that indigenous people are entitled to some sort of settlement from the state. In Canada, this settlement flowed from state recognition of indigenous peoples' original occupancy of areas subsequently colonized by the Canadian state.

Russian participants recognized that their approach to development corporations differed from that of the Canadians. After the meeting, I interviewed several of the Russian regional bureaucrats who participated in the two-day evaluation. Many of them sought to demonstrate their understanding and awareness of how their corporations differed from Canadian ones. Some seemed to see their models as
unfortunate, but necessary, modifications in light of the impossibility of realizing Canadian-style corporations on Russian soil. One indigenous interviewee, who worked for the government of YNAO, commented that the corporations in Russia were different because they could not use the leverage of ownership over land to secure money or higher levels of participation in natural resources development – in Yamal almost all land is federally owned. From his perspective, their inability to realize a Russian model was not due to a lack of desire or commitment to another kind of model, but rather stemmed from the impossibility of securing such large settlements and wide powers in light of the federal government’s nearly total control of regional land and resources and the relatively low place of indigenous peoples concerns on the federal agenda. Although this kind of critique could have been seen as speaking to principles and moral questions, such as why indigenous peoples in Russia do not have control over the lands that they have occupied and managed for centuries, it was still presented primarily as a practical difference: indigenous peoples in Canada own land, in Russia indigenous peoples do not.

Others gave the impression that they viewed Russian-style EDCs as an expression of Russian strengths and differences and an appropriate adaptation of the Canadian model to its most suitable Russian form. One interviewee from YNAO noted that Canadian EDCs were more substantial and profitable and that, by contrast, the Russian endeavors were quite modest. However, he emphasized: ‘in Russia we have preserved the traditional way of life, in comparison to the Canadian indigenous peoples who seem to have lost more. They are certainly well-organized, but they have lost their roots somewhat.’ From this perspective, the Russian model was an appropriately modest effort at economic development that had at its heart the desire to preserve traditional ways as they have always been practiced. This kind of commentary speaks to the fact that perhaps Russians would have liked to critique Canadian models and principles and to argue that the Canadian orientation to the market was wrong, assimilationist, and should be changed. However, in their role as the students in this learning relationship, such a critique was muted.
5.6 The Narrative Journey of Principles and Tacit Knowledge

Many members of the Canadian delegation, especially indigenous participants new to the project, felt frustrated in trying to explain the Canadian approach to northern and indigenous economic development to the assembled Russian audience at the seminar. The Canadian delegation became increasingly aware that Russians had realized EDCs in a way that differed greatly from Canadian understandings of how such corporations should be structured. The ways in which the Russians realized so-called Canadian-style EDCs according to very different principles, such as the government ownership of the EDC and the emphasis on traditional lifestyles rather than mainstream market participation and profit generation, made it evident to many Canadian delegates that somehow the moral and principled foundations of their model had been obscured or ignored.

In light of the ability of Russian participants to justify their own versions of the EDC model and in order to express what they perceived to be essential and overlooked aspects of Canadian EDCs, several Canadians changed their communicative approach, choosing to talk about ‘principles’ rather than ‘models’ or the ‘ideas as such.’ For example, a non-indigenous representative from the Inuvialuit Development Corporation began emphasizing the importance of particular principles to structuring Canadian efforts and told Russian regional bureaucrats that, ‘although your corporations may be small, the principles and rights they work to realize should be ambitious.’ An indigenous delegate from the NWT started to talk about basic messages and argued that the fundamental idea communicated should be that ‘all people in the Arctic have a vested interest in the Arctic and should participate meaningfully.’ These delegates seemed to feel that addressing principles was a way of overcoming practical and technical differences between Canada and Russia, in light of the fact that the moral foundations of their model could be critiqued or ignored on the basis of not suiting specific Russian circumstances. Principles seemed to offer universals that could inform the process of building institutions for indigenous peoples in Russia that may differ in form, but remain in keeping with the basic Canadian ‘message’ of indigenous self-determination.
As indigenous delegates began to talk about principles, many of them related more about the history and evolution of their corporations and the economic and political situation of indigenous peoples in the North. I argue that this switch to a discourse of principles, primarily communicated through storytelling or narrative, was a way of making principles and tacit knowledge more explicit than was possible during model-oriented discussion. In light of the Russian realizations of the Canadian EDC model, it became clearer that aspects of the Canadian delegations’ professional and personal experience, including tacit knowledge and moral beliefs, remained to be externalized. Storytelling, it seems, provided the time and narrative space needed for expressing fundamental understandings that did not lend themselves easily to bullet point lists, organizational diagrams, or power point presentations.

For example, an indigenous (Dene) politician from the NWT with significant business experience decided that talking ‘about principles, rather than models’ would be a better approach overall. He noted that the Russians were ‘picking on all the details around these issues as a way of distracting from the basic principles of self-sufficiency and self-determination.’ He argued that corporations were not the end goal in and of themselves, but rather a method for achieving greater indigenous independence and prosperity. In his presentation to a group of Russian indigenous interns, and later to the conference as a whole, he attempted to convey these principles and also narrate the process through which these principles were developed:

I know there are differences between indigenous peoples. It’s important for us to understand how things are with you...we have a long history and in the NWT there are a lot of different peoples. I myself am a Dene. We’ve negotiated for many years, and when it came time to change the constitution [1982] we included the rights of indigenous peoples in it. There have been court cases where the rights of indigenous peoples went to the highest courts in Canada. We’ve established a policy of negotiation from which the land claims flow. Because of these land rights, we can negotiate with oil companies. Now I’m trying to think of what from our experience would be of practical use and what I come up with is a principle: the idea of self-determination and self-sufficiency, to be independent and not depending on the government or anyone.
In this statement, as in other presentations by indigenous delegates, there is a sense of narrative, of movement through time, rather than a simple unit of information or an ahistorical model of single institution.

In a way, the reintroduction of narratives – stories of effort and struggle – made it possible to talk about principles and the questions of why and how. This is in contrast to models, which frequently lack or even obfuscate causal or legitimating explanations (Black 1962) and, I would add, the moral contents and foundations of an idea. Young (1997) notes that narrative and storytelling can be an effective way of achieving understanding between people situated in different geographical or social environments. Furthermore, narrative is a way of revealing sources of:

values, culture, and meaning...values, unlike norms, often cannot be justified through argument. But neither are they arbitrary. Their basis often emerges from the situated history of a people. Through narrative, the outsiders may come to understand why the insiders value what they value and why they have the priorities they have (Young 1997: 72).

Young also argues that narrative is a way of revealing a more ‘total social knowledge,’ which I believe can include the expression of tacit knowledge.

An ongoing debate in the literature on tacit knowledge is how it might be communicated or passed from one person to another. On the whole, it is argued that tacit knowledge can be acquired through observation and experience, such as the doctor’s ability to diagnose diseases more efficiently as his or her experience increases (Polanyi 1966), and gained through personal contacts and interaction through which tacit knowledge – rarely accessible in published or more codified formats – can be gleaned (Collins 1985). Polanyi (1966) does suggest that tacit knowledge can be explicating, but argues that persons are kept from externalizing their tacit knowledge by time limitations and a lack of awareness of the role of such knowledge in daily functioning. In other words, tacit knowledge remains ‘imperfectly accessible to conscious thought’ (Gertler 2003: 77). Gertler (2003), however, asserts that a distinction needs to be drawn between tacit knowledge as ‘uncodifiable,’ that is
totally defying representation and explicit communication, and as simply 'uncodified.' In the latter category, tacit knowledge can be communicated, but first the implicit understandings and skills essential to understanding any knowledgeable process must be determined and then a way to explicate these tacit skills and understandings to an outside audience must be developed. This is, to say the least, a task that would take lengthy reflection, effort, and creative communication. Perhaps storytelling is one such way of beginning to externalize tacit knowledge and deeply held beliefs about how the world should be ordered.

5.7 Conclusion

The challenges encountered and multiple communicative approaches demonstrated by Canadians and Russians in their effort express knowledge about economic development remain largely unacknowledged in studies of globalization and knowledge. The Canadians’ shift from the model to narrative highlights the toolbox of resources that people have when communicating cross-culturally. We do not live, as some would argue, in an ‘information age’ with little recourse to narrative and principles. Rather, I would argue that we live in a society where the ability to be technically and objectively informative – to present models and charts – is highly valued and considered to be the safe and effective way to communicate across social and physical distance.

Much of this ‘information age’ literature makes grand assumptions about the capacity of information, as bullet points, to travel successfully in the absence of narrative. For example, sociologist Scott Lash forwards an explanation of how ‘information’ differs from communication based in narrative:

Unlike narrative, information compresses beginning, middle and end into a present immediacy of ‘now-here.’ Unlike discourse, information does not need legitimating arguments, does not take the form of propositional utterances, but works with an immediate communicational violence (Lash 2002: x).
He continues on to assert that: ‘Information is compressed in time and space...information shrinks or compresses metanarratives to a mere point, a mere signal in time’ (Lash 2002: 1). I would argue, by contrast, that information rests on narratives and implicit propositions that, despite their relative lack of expression, are still essential to interpreting informational ‘bytes’ or models, such as the EDC model. While it may now be possible to move information around the world quickly, it is incorrect to assume that a piece of information or a model, divorced from the implicit understandings and narratives upon which the knowledge ‘unit’ rests, will remain stable and legible throughout this journey.

The difference in the abilities of certain types of knowledge to travel speaks to an observation made by Lash with which I agree more. He notes that tacit knowledge and skills that are more concrete are ‘not so easily transferable,’ while explicit information is ‘eminently transferable’ (Lash 2002: 142). I argue that both types of knowledge can travel, but require different communicative mediums through which to journey. Narrative is a mode through which principles and tacit knowledge can be externalized. The model may be useful for relaying specific types of knowledge about structures and institutions. In the concluding chapter of this dissertation, I argue for retaining both – the model and the narrative.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have shown that theorizations of how ideas move across borders in an increasingly globalized world must account for the social aspects of such knowledge-moving interactions, such as the exercise and resistance of power and the construction of communities of knowing and doing. While the literature on globalization certainly describes the increasingly interconnected world within which INRIPP took place, different methods and concepts were needed to understand how ideas travel and to illustrate the process and results of this act of learning across boundaries. Considering the movement of knowledge as an intensely social journey presents a contrast to the dominant ways of writing and thinking about knowledge in an ‘information society’ as flowing freely, stably, impersonally, and intelligibly across cultural and political borders.

In following INRIPP workers’ efforts to promote Canadian political and economic models in northern Russia, it became clear that it was not only ideas themselves, such as co-management boards and EDCs, that were considered by the target audience of development. The Russian recipients were also weighing the relationship implied by the exchange – the positing of teachers and learners, experts and interns – in deciding whether or not to accept certain models. Consequently, I have argued that analyses and descriptions of the movement of knowledge, particularly in order to understand why some ideas fail to travel or are rejected by the target audience, must entail attention to the social production of knowledge and its transmission in situations marked by inequalities in power and by politics of resistance and acquiescence. The process of moving knowledge in INRIPP resulted in increasingly close, although by no means equal, social relationships between Canadian and Russian INRIPP participants. This closeness, which I argue represents something best understood as an emerging community in the North, did not guarantee the transfer of knowledge from one part of the Arctic to another. Rather, such familiarity enabled Russians to
become increasingly adept at resisting Canadian strategies of similarity and closure and challenging the applicability of Canadian models.

The notion of community encompasses both familiarity and resentment, thus permitting an examination of ways in which the two are intertwined. Thinking about community opens up the spaces flattened by contemporary theories about globalization and networks, in which knowledge moves primarily as concrete ‘bytes’ of information to be acquired or ignored by the rational economic men long ago abandoned in other social science theories, and allows us to envision strategic actors navigating certain discourses and institutions. Furthermore, community can accommodate change in its reach and meaning, unlike theorizations that posit a disciplining, homogenous, and shared ‘Arctic identity.’ For example, an ‘Arctic community’ or the ‘Arctic region’ may be more relevant to and resonant in negotiations over transboundary environmental issues at the international level than in debates about indigenous land rights and use at more local levels.

The Canadian development team recognized that moving knowledge from one location to another was a precarious project and utilized multiple strategies to render Canadian knowledge stable, mobile, and applicable to northern Russia. They included: 1) obscuring the problematic relationships between indigenous peoples and the Canadian and Russian states through idealization and the imposition of a non-confrontational notion of dialogue; 2) referring to a shared Arctic indigenous identity to render Canada/Russia differences irrelevant; 3) positing a teacher-student relationship to construct a community of knowledge in which Canadian ideas and vocabularies were dominant; and 4) employing the language of the model to demonstrate that Canadian knowledge was complete and not open to reinterpretation. These strategies were techniques for imposing discipline on Canadian-Russian communication, primarily through assumptions of similarity, and closure upon knowledge excavated from the contentious political realities of the North. The ways in which the use of the model imposed closure upon knowledge extracted from the messy political and discursive landscapes of the Canadian North were explored in chapter five and are reviewed in further detail below. At this juncture, I would like to delve further into the role that strategies and notions of similarity played in moving knowledge around the Arctic.
The idea that knowledge can and should be moved from one part of the Arctic to another is predicated upon the belief that there are significant shared features of Arctic places that facilitate and justify such a transfer. The political drive towards thinking about the Arctic as a region plays upon enduring and essentialist beliefs about the uniformity of Arctic space (Bravo and Sörlin 2002). This assumption of similarity echoes assertions made about the possibility of certain economic and social relationships (most often ‘Western’) to be replicated across a homogeneous ‘global’ space.  

The INRIPP team’s understandings of how knowledge could be moved reflect a common belief about the movement of ideas and information in a globalized world – that knowledge moves through the replication of context, through people and places becoming more and more alike. For example, the models used throughout INRIPP and the hope that these models could be replicated in a new location involved an essentialist assumption about space: that the model’s new field was or would quickly become like the old field in significant ways. The challenges involved in making one country’s Arctic knowledge and models applicable and appealing to another illustrate that the notion of a uniform Arctic region is primarily a politicized assumption about space that is problematical to enact in concrete cross-cultural Arctic endeavors. These discourses and strategies of similarity – be it globalism’s Spaceship Earth or the Arctic region – are easily undermined by the existence and endurance of differences. The limited reach and effect of these discourses of uniformity, documented throughout the dissertation, indicate that the movement of knowledge cannot rely upon a rhetoric or attempted production of sameness or context (i.e. a circumpolar identity, a homogenous indigenous identity, or a uniform Arctic space).

The question, then, is how to understand and position the boundaries that transect the North – and the significantly varied societies and polities that these boundaries demarcate – within an emerging discourse of regionalism. Another way of putting this question is how to accommodate the realities of difference within discourses of unity, globalism, and cooperation. In my case, following ideas and persons in motion

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88 See Massey (2005) for a description of conceptions of space in much of the literature on globalization.
in the North contributed to a more precise and developed notion of when and how boundaries become significant, taking us beyond positing blanket uniformity or irreconcilable difference within the Arctic. Throughout this text, I endeavored to pay attention to when project participants felt it necessary or useful to highlight their senses of difference from one another, while at the same time illustrating how Russian and Canadian participants were becoming closer through increased interaction, the construction of shared discourses and concepts, and varying levels of belief in the significance of shared Arctic space. Importantly, this approach also illustrates the ways in which the construction of similarity and difference are linked, often emerging from the same process or simultaneously. Such an approach corresponds with Massey's (2005: 66) injunction to think of ‘difference through connection, rather than separation.’ Thus, rather than treating the North as an unproblematic spatial zone or reifying Arctic national and cultural differences, I believe that further research into the Arctic ‘space’ must pay attention to both when and how boundaries are encountered or constructed and when and why movement across these boundaries fails or is achieved. This approach serves to illustrate that the reach and currency of narratives about the meaning of the Arctic region, or any significant geographic space, vary in relationship to the personalities and concrete interests of the actors involved, the topic being debated, and the hierarchies of power that are assumed and contested in a given interaction.

Since, as I have argued, strategies of similarity and discourses about a homogenous Arctic space and identity cannot be relied upon as bridges across which Canadian institutions and knowledge can be moved to Russia, improved communicative techniques should be developed. Therefore, in this concluding chapter, I both review my overall argument and hypothesize as to how potentially useful models and knowledge could be more successfully shared within a heterogeneous Arctic space.

6.2 Review of Chapters

In chapter two, I worked to ground the idea of ‘flows’ by exploring exactly why the encounters engineered by INRIPP took place. Despite the fact that we live in an
increasingly globalized world, in which interactions across space are more possible due to email, jet flights, and so on, the fact that such interactions occur cannot be taken as a given. To counter the rather tautological assumption that in an age of globalization ideas move simply because of globalization, I examined the intentions behind INRIPP itself and the political and economic benefits that the Canadian organizations involved could achieve via the development project. This demonstrated that ideas and knowledge in a global society are not magically or automatically disembedded and constantly circulating. In this case, rather, ideas and knowledge were lifted out of the Canadian North and actively promoted to northern Russians by persons who were meant to ensure the proper interpretation of these models.

In many ways, the motivations behind such endeavors are unsurprising. The promotion of Canadian ways of knowing and managing the Arctic and its peoples reinforced Canadian leadership in the Arctic, acted as a response to concerns about difficult living conditions in many northern Russian communities, and built political and economic contacts in the resource-rich Russian North. Recognizing these motivations clarified why some Russians at times resisted Canadian models, experience, and knowledge. Despite the humble and dialogic approach that most of the Canadians took in promoting their models, the underlying assumption that Canadians were the experts and the leading country in terms of Arctic knowledge came across clearly to most Russian participants. The ways in which Canadian project workers, despite their good intentions, entertained visions of Russia as somehow ‘in the past’ and on a lower evolutionary rung than Canada demonstrates the related assumption that Russia’s institutions were outdated, inappropriate, and should evolve into institutions and practices of governance more like Canadian ones. This temporal displacement is a version of a strategy of sameness – Russia became almost completely knowable through its similarity to Canadian experience and the prescription of Canadian models seemed, consequently, more logical.

The process of communicating Canadian experience to an outside audience was a way of achieving one further objective that has to do with the notion of time: reframing Canada’s colonial past and positing an idealized present. Throughout INRIPP, co-management boards and EDCs were presented as straightforward technical models and stripped of their historical foundations in political and legal struggle between
indigenous peoples and the Canadian state. Canadian bureaucrats and indigenous leaders presented, for example, co-management as a process rooted in mutual trust and a shared sense of responsibility for the land. In absence of other explanations, these admirable qualities seemed to be simply ‘natural’ for Canadians – an assertion that most Russians came to doubt and countered with their own narratives about the social suffering that they had witnessed while traveling in the Canadian North. This points to another reason behind Russian skepticism towards Canadian experience: Canadian ideas seemed too good to be true. I would argue that, in many ways, they were. The use of models was a way of imposing closure upon and idealizing the Canadian past and present, concealing the fact that many of these institutions and processes face critique in Canada amongst the populations that they are meant to serve and that the question of indigenous peoples in Canada is far from being politically or discursively settled.

In chapter three, the claims made by both politicians and scholars working on Arctic region building were examined. Arctic region building can be seen as the political background against which INRIPP took place, as well as one of the primary impetuses behind the project itself. I investigated the claim, made by both theorists and politicians, that region building results in a kind of shared identity amongst those who take part in regional activities and amongst the regional population as a whole. This identity, once produced, is envisioned to do significant work as the primary social bridge facilitating cross-cultural communication and cooperation. However, I argued that identity is both too strong of a social category to assign to a relatively weak experience of regional interaction and too difficult to document and evidence. Discourses about the ‘Arctic Region’ must be understood as limited in their reach and effect, particularly in terms of legitimating and facilitating the transfer of governance practices. To contest the claims about the role of identity in region building and subsequent cooperative efforts, I illustrated how the assumption of a shared indigenous Arctic identity throughout INRIPP did not successfully facilitate the transfer of knowledge and practices.

However, the task of identifying the social product of these interactions remains an important one and, to contribute to this effort, I forwarded community as a replacement for the overworked and under-documented ‘identity’ of Arctic region
building literature. In the definition used throughout the thesis, community is a product of increased interaction and transaction, but one in which membership is conscious, strategic, and fluctuating. This Arctic regional community of transaction can accommodate a changing, heterogeneous, and rather loosely affiliated membership because of the essential role of symbolism within any given community. The Arctic itself is the central symbol of this community – a geographical reality with which all can identify that serves to legitimate interaction initially across political borders, but remains open to multiple and changing interpretations. The Arctic community is a site within which strategic actors can engage in the process of becoming more familiar with and debating one another’s perspectives and discourses without necessarily accepting or becoming subject to them.

Chapter four demonstrated that the community produced through Arctic region building and INRIPP was one within which power was exercised and contested. By constructing a teacher-student relationship, Canadians were attempting to enroll Russians into an Arctic community drafted along Canadian lines and to posit Canadian knowledge and practices as the most appropriate ones for a uniform Arctic. At the co-management seminar in Khanty-Mansiysk, the implication of power became particularly evident as the Canadian delegation attempted to enforce ways of speaking about the Arctic environment and its indigenous peoples that were based primarily on Canadian experience. Canadians clearly felt the Russians should bring their ways of speaking, thinking, and doing in line with Canadian discursive practices. In order to make Canadian knowledge applicable, the Canadian INRIPP team evidenced the belief that they first had to create a field of sameness by promoting one way of speaking about the Arctic and how it should be managed.

Russians resisted the idea of co-management on the basis of practical (and often unacknowledged) distinctions stemming from the different political and social histories of Canada and Russia and in order to reject the notion of Canadians as leading Arctic experts. This resistance points to the fact that Russians, despite the Canadians’ self-assigned expert role, could and did contest or simply opt out of the ideas and ways of speaking that the Canadians promoted. Thus, power, like discourse, in this cross-cultural, globalized, and scarcely institutionalized encounter needs to be considered a boundary object of fluctuating force. The Canadian
delegations promoted their ideas on the implicit assumption that they were more powerful and more correct. This assertion of power was easily ignored or contested in the presence of the Canadian delegations or forgotten entirely in their absence. In other words, the validity and superiority of Canadian ideas would have to be acknowledged; it could not simply be imposed via assigning teacher and student roles.

In chapter five, the communicative approaches used by Canadians in working to build this Arctic community and promote EDCs within it were explored. One particular communicative device that featured prominently in INRIPP efforts was the idea of the 'model.' The history of the model in development efforts was investigated and its potential for moving knowledge was examined. The Canadians commitment to and belief in models as concise, efficient, and safe ways of moving information from one location to another resulted in a largely technical discussion that excluded fundamental aspects of Canadian resource management and economic development institutions. This orientation prevented INRIPP delegation members from examining the models that they promoted as cultural constructs rooted in socially developed tacit knowledge, principles, and particular places and societies.

Principles, such as self-determination or independence for indigenous nations, were excluded by the model-oriented technical debate and thus could be and were absent and, perhaps, actively circumvented in Russian realizations of the EDC model. On the other hand, Russian realizations may have been more in keeping with Russian tacit knowledge and implicit beliefs about how indigenous people should participate in the mainstream economy. Regardless, at the late stage of INRIPP documented in chapter five, some Canadian participants seemed to realize that the moral content and tacit knowledge underlying their models remained to be made explicit. These delegates chose to switch to narrative as a way of expressing principles and tacit knowledge and overcoming the limits of a primarily technical and model-oriented Canadian-Russian debate. This switch to narrative represents a moment I expand upon here to argue for an approach to communicating ideas cross-culturally that involves the combination of models and narrative. I argue, below, that one way of reaching this 'models plus' approach is to engage in a debate in which more questions are asked.
6.3 Is Anything Transferable?: Suggesting a 'Models Plus' Approach

Much of this dissertation has been a critique of the assumptions made both by theorists and development practitioners about what knowledge is and the conditions necessary for it to move across cultural and political boundaries. This line of inquiry does raise the basic question of whether or not practical differences between locations and the difficulties of communicating cross-culturally, even within an emerging Arctic community, make development an irremediably problematic endeavor. Are some aspects of Canadian models useful to Russians and Russian institutions? Are there ways in which models could be communicated more effectively across borders?

Despite the difficulties encountered throughout the process of promoting Canadian models in Russia, INRIPP efforts had an effect. In a personal interview, out of the spotlight of accepting or rejecting Canadian ideas in the presence of those that promoted them, one bureaucrat from YNAO commented that, although they find some of the ideas confusing or inappropriate, ‘honestly speaking, we think about Canadian and foreign knowledge and experience almost everyday.’ Others, in interviews and at INRIPP events, made similar comments about how Canadian experience informed their actions in a kind of background way, even if it was not realized in actual replicas of Canadian models.

Although INRIPP did not result in the transplant of Canadian models to Russia it provided some food for thought for Russian indigenous leaders and northern bureaucrats in considering their own experience, representing a moment in which Russian participants could gain critical distance from their own practices and modes of governance. I agree with a comment made by one INRIPP project worker that Russians have to make their own way using a blend of imported and domestic material. However, I believe that international efforts to promote critical reflection on governance practices and institutions in Russia remain worthwhile. Kotkin (2001: 165), for example, argues that:

in an unsentimental world consisting of powerful countries with liberal systems... “defence” of Russia’s institutional traditions condemned Russia’s
people to fall well short of their aspirations of prosperity. All cultures, not just Russia are unique...but either a country has some form of effective regulatory service or it does not...Russia did not...it had a maze of laws that were not enforced and lacked some of the most elementary laws necessary for new conditions.

Furthermore, quantitatively, Canada is ranked far above Russia in terms of quality of life. Russia was recently downgraded from 57th to 62nd on the United Nations Development Program’s (UNDP) ranking of developing countries due to a low life expectancy and economic instability. While Russia’s Federal State Statistics service claims that average income has increased by 8.3%, UNDP argues that poverty in Russia has been exacerbated by an unstable petro-economy. Russian citizens rank among 40% of the world’s poorest population, on average spending less than two US dollars a day (Nezavisimaya Gazeta 2005). While Canadian models may not be applicable in their entirety and were often presented as gross idealizations to Russian audiences, these models do represent some of the governance practices of a country that does offer a higher and more stable quality of life to more of its citizens than Russia does.

The notion that models can render complex and changing relationships and institutions (and the knowledge that underpins them) transparent, stable, travel ready, and replicable is an enduring, yet misleading, narrative in the practice of development. However, as Roe (1991) argues, narratives do much towards assisting development workers and the target audience in coping with the intrinsic uncertainty and complexity of the processes of political and economic development. Narratives provide shared points of reference and set the parameters for what is to be discussed. For example, the commitment to the use of models as a key communicative device in INRIPP contributed to a sense of certainty, which could be either reassuring or oppressive depending upon actors’ positions and desires within the debate, that the discussion would remain relatively technical and not explicitly touch upon moral and ethical questions. Narratives are necessary and thus theorists must do more than simply demonstrate the fallacies contained within them. Roe suggests, rather, that ‘our efforts should shift to creating and engaging counternarratives to the more
objectionable narrative or modifying that narrative to make it less objectionable’ (Roe 1991: 288).

As a counter-narrative, I would like to forward a ‘model plus’ approach. I argue that models may continue to serve a purpose, as long as those that rely upon the narrative of the model are cognizant of what models and technical debate tend to exclude or diminish in cross-cultural conversation – principles and tacit knowledge. Some Canadian INRIPP participants demonstrated a solution to these exclusions and tendencies when they switched to describing, in narrative form, the history and development of their institutions, rather than presenting their institutions as unchanging knowledge objects. I believe that this approach, which combined a technical description of institutional structure and a narrative explanation of the evolution of and principles underlying a given institution, could contribute to overcoming the shortcomings of the model format and the impoverished nature of technical debate.

It is first important to note that a model-oriented and technical discussion may have suited INRIPP project workers’ needs. Having inherited a legacy of failed social engineering that made them reticent to prescribe solutions, the Canadians tended, as argued in chapters two and five, to simply describe their co-management and EDC models. They would then state that it was up to the Russians as to how these models should be realized or if they should be taken on at all. This open-ended and non-prescriptive approach was seen as the way in which Canadians could avoid ‘preaching’ to Russians or ‘telling them what to do.’

Despite Canadians’ protestations, it was clear throughout the project that Canadian models and knowledge were meant to be replicated in Russia. INRIPP was, fundamentally, a prescriptive endeavor. This was evident in light of the fact that Canadians were the experts, whereas Russians were the ‘interns’; the ways in which Canadian phrases and words related to Arctic resource development and indigenous peoples were meant to be used by Russians in a language exchange that was almost entirely uni-directional; and the expectation that Russian indigenous peoples would identify with a general indigenous identity designed in keeping with the Canadian experience of state-indigenous relations. In many ways, despite Canadians’ restraint
from declaring their ideas ‘better,’ this assumption of superiority and an inherent critique of Russian ideas and institutions was ever present, if unarticulated. Consequently, I argue that a more explicit debate during the project about why Canadians believed their models to be worthy of Russian attention could have served to both clear the air amongst project participants and encourage greater reflection on the part of Canadians as to why Russians should actually consider Canadian ideas.

However, it is unlikely that clearer or bolder Canadian statements about why Canadian models could and should work in Russia, which would involve more ethical and moral debate, would sustain the sense of goodwill that was crucial to maintaining a voluntary project like INRIPP. The ‘models plus’ approach could perhaps contribute to navigating these rather tricky waters. Models could function as a safe and technical conversation from which to begin (and to which one could return if debate grows too heated), while simultaneously an effort could be made to externalize and explicate the foundations of an idea or institution through storytelling.

Fundamentally, this approach is about asking questions and I argue that the act of questioning may serve to overcome some of the resistances and difficulties that Canadians encountered in attempting to move models across borders to the Russian North. Critical questioning should play an important role both prior to and during any development project involving the export of knowledge. This would involve the developers, in my case study the Canadians, externalizing the tacit assumptions and principles that underpin their models and coming up with arguments, in which the target audience could engage, about why Canadian models deserve consideration. Moreover, such an approach would entail acknowledging that institutions and processes of governance in any country are not inevitable outcomes of an impersonal state-evolutionary process. Rather, they are results of specific choices and making these choices explicit could facilitate productive debate between the developers and the target audience. For example, a presentation of the choices behind co-management, including the less celebrated and rarely advertised choice that northern land in Canada does not belong solely or even largely to indigenous peoples who live there, makes it possible to debate whether these choices were correct in Canada and whether they might be potentially fruitful or desirable choices in the Russian North. During INRIPP, the only clear reason why Canadian models should be considered
was the Canadians’ self-assigned leadership position in the Arctic. If Canada does deserve to occupy a leadership position, it should be substantiated to others in explicit argumentation, quantitatively and qualitatively, rather than simply assumed by Canadians and perceived resentfully by Russians. As this act of questioning and reflecting would certainly be a time consuming one, ideally INRIPP would involve fewer actors rotating in and out of the project, thereby building up a more experienced team, especially amongst the indigenous delegation. While this would certainly sacrifice the breadth of experience that the large set of actors involved at different points brought to the project, a more developed understanding as to why Canadian ideas should be relevant to Russian indigenous peoples and northern bureaucrats would be gained.

Furthermore, those working in development would do well to pay more attention to and allow for the expression of their target audience’s world views, histories, institutions, and aspirations. Throughout INRIPP, it was primarily Russian participants who were meant to demonstrate curiosity and ask questions about Canada and Canadian ideas. This asymmetry became prominent at a meeting between regional authorities and the INRIPP delegation in Khanty-Mansiysk prior to the seminar on co-management in November 2003. The Canadian delegation was being hosted in the offices of a departmental director and briefly informed about KMAO over tea. A regional bureaucrat outlined various statistics about KMAO and commented on several related pieces of legislation and the regional government’s overall relationship to the indigenous peoples in the district. He also pointed out a large number of indigenous persons in higher education that far outstrips the comparatively lower Canadian levels of indigenous persons pursuing university and advanced degrees.

At this point in the meeting, our host asked if anyone had questions and one or two people asked some basic geographical questions about the okrug. Not a single member of the delegation, however, commented on or asked about this high level of local indigenous persons in KMAO acquiring advanced degrees – a statistic that the Russian regional bureaucrat knew surpassed the corresponding Canadian one. However, an indigenous member of the Canadian delegation asked the bureaucrat if he had any questions for the Canadians, in a polite and friendly tone of voice. The
bureaucrat replied, rather sharply, ‘I asked a lot of questions when I was in Canada and I assume it is now you who should be asking questions.’ It seems that something about the lack of questions was a point of offense. This lack of curiosity demonstrated a basic assumption of the project: Russian practices, ideas, and relationships were not particularly important to understand because they were meant to be poorly developed and slated for replacement. In the absence of questions, Russian participants could only struggle resentfully with the seeming Canadian conviction that Russia had no history, institutions, tacit knowledge, principles, or models of its own.

Young (1997) takes up this issue of questions in her study concerning the promotion of public debate over ethical and moral issues. She explores ways in which communication oriented towards achieving understanding and consensus frequently requires unrealistic identification among dialogue participants because of the belief that dialogue requires homogeneity, be it as citizens of one state, women, indigenous people, or, I would add, Arctic residents. Young points to the everyday saying that one should always attempt to consider an issue from others’ points of view and argues that this assumption of others’ perspectives neglects the fact that ‘each participant in a communication situation is distinguished by a particular history and social position that makes their relation asymmetrical…’ (1997: 39).

In place of attempting to adopt the standpoint of others and in acknowledgement of the difficulty of understanding not only others’ positions but also their *positionings*, Young calls for a practice of public discourse and communication that gives ‘more attention to questions as a way of expressing moral respect’ (1997: 41). The use of questions can be a way of clarifying the misrepresentations that occur when the more powerful party in a dialogue attempts to represent or imagine the less powerful party’s situation and opinions. This was evident in that Canadians certainly did try to understand Russian views of the world, as outlined in chapter two. However, these discussions about Russia as Canada ‘in the past’ or hypotheses about the ‘post-Soviet mindset’ did not include asking questions of or debating these issues with Russians. Rather, such impressions emerged as Canadian delegations conversed about Russians amongst themselves. Recognizing Russian participants as knowledgeable agents in their own lives would not have precluded suggesting improvements. Rather it would
have been a much needed signal to the Russians that INRIPP delegation members appreciated that Russian indigenous leaders and regional bureaucrats were navigating a complex political and economic terrain of their own – filled with already extant institutions and practices.

Young speaks to the potential of questions for facilitating more equality within debate, writing:

If you think you already know how the other people feel and judge because you have imaginatively represented their perspective to yourself, then you may not listen to their expression of their perspective very openly...If you enter a dialogue with all the best intentions of taking the other people’s perspectives, and then in the course of discussion they express anger and frustration at you for misunderstanding their position, you are likely to become defensive and shut down the dialogue. It is more appropriate to approach a situation of communicative interaction for the purpose of arriving at moral or political judgment with a stance of moral humility. In moral humility one starts with the assumption that one cannot see things from the other person’s perspective and waits to learn by listening to the other person to what extent they have had similar experiences (Young 1997: 48-49).

This path of listening and questioning could lead towards greater mutual understanding, overcoming the imaginative misconceptions of the more active party, such as Canadian workers’ assumptions that Russia was in a state of institutional transition and a reflection of the Canadian past. From the broader social history that emerges via questioning and through allowing all to represent their own experience, conclusions can be drawn, judgments formed, and knowledge shared.

With a greater emphasis on questions, Russian participants would have gained the opportunity to present their objections to Canadian models, many of which I learned about only in follow-up interviews when I returned to Russia and asked questions myself. This would have enabled the Canadian team to hypothesize as to whether Russians objected to Canadian models on practical differences or on the ethical foundations of the models themselves. Consequently, a clearer picture of what
Russian participants would like to gain from such Arctic development efforts may have emerged and a better way of utilizing Canadian experience and knowledge to meet those needs could have been developed. Asking more questions would have been a way for Canadians to demonstrate moral respect to the Russians because such questions would have indicated that Canadians understood and acknowledged that Russians too have political and economic institutions and models that are rooted in their society, history, and experiences. Moving beyond strategies of sameness and unrealistic expectations about the orderliness of knowledge may have allowed for a more engaged debate between Canadians and Russians. Such a critical discussion could have clarified the extent to which Canadian knowledge might be applicable to the Russian North and may have better supported Canadian knowledge on its intensely social journey across northern borders.
# Appendices

## Appendix One: List of Interviewees

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<td>Afanasyev, Alexandr</td>
<td>RITC Intern, Krasnoyarskiy Krai</td>
<td>10/25/2004</td>
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<td>Aktanka, Galina</td>
<td>Indigenous Youth Legal Centre, Primorye Indigenous Association</td>
<td>10/12/2004</td>
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<td>Belyaev, Konstantin</td>
<td>Head Surveyor, Lukoil West Siberia</td>
<td>10/12/2004</td>
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<td>Ellis, Wendy</td>
<td>INRIPP Facilitator</td>
<td>11/28/2004</td>
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<td>Filatova, Irina</td>
<td>Head of the Regional Development Division of the Economic Policy Dept., KMAO</td>
<td>10/12/2004</td>
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<td>Fillipov, Mikhail</td>
<td>Director of the Department for External Economic Relations, YNAO</td>
<td>11/30/2004</td>
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<td>Finkler, Harald</td>
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<td>12/4/2004</td>
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<td>Executive Director, ICC-Canada</td>
<td>12/4/2004</td>
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<td>Guindisheva, Svetlana</td>
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<td>10/10/2004</td>
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<td>Representative, DIAND</td>
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<td>10/8/2005</td>
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<td>Keeping, Janet</td>
<td>Professor, University of Calgary Institute of Resource Law</td>
<td>11/26/2003</td>
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<td>Khorolya, Dmitriy</td>
<td>Assistant to the Governor of YNAO, President of the Reindeer Association YNAO</td>
<td>12/3/2004</td>
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<td>Khvan, Viacheslav</td>
<td>General Manager, Magnes Inc.</td>
<td>12/02/2004</td>
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<td>11/25/2003</td>
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<td>RITC Intern, KMAO and Head of Economic Planning, Department for Issues of the Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, KMAO</td>
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<td>Moldanov, Timofei</td>
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<td>10/11/2005</td>
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<td>10/14/2004</td>
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<td>INRIPP Project Manager</td>
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<td>Simon, Mary</td>
<td>Former President, ICC-Canada</td>
<td>1/7/2005</td>
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<td>Slipchenko, Walter</td>
<td>Former Director, CLD; Former Canadian Secretary to Arctic Council</td>
<td>1/5/2005</td>
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<td>Smith, Duane</td>
<td>President, ICC-Canada</td>
<td>12/3/2004</td>
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<td>Stanishevskaya, Vera</td>
<td>Lawyer, Department for the Issues of Small-Numbered Peoples of KMAO</td>
<td>10/12/2004</td>
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<td>Head of Shoria NGO</td>
<td>10/12/2004</td>
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<td>Timoshkov, Sergei</td>
<td>Head, Section on Industry Regulations, Department for the Issues of Small-Numbered Peoples of KMAO</td>
<td>10/11/2004</td>
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<td>Head of the Agro-Industrial Department of YNAO</td>
<td>11/30/2004</td>
<td>Moscow</td>
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<td>Vadichupov, Anatoliy</td>
<td>RITC Intern and artist, KMAO</td>
<td>10/8/2005</td>
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Appendix Two: List of Abbreviations

**CIDA**- Canadian International Development Agency

**CLD**- Circumpolar Liaison Directorate

**DFAIT**- Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Government of Canada)

**DIAND**- Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

Goskomsever- Gosudarstvenniy Komitet Rossiskogo Federatzii po voprosam ravitiya severa (Governmental Committee of the Russian Federation on Northern Development Issues)

**IBA**- Impact Benefit Agreement

**ICC**- Inuit Circumpolar Conference

**IDC**- Inuvialuit Development Corporation

**INRIPP**- Institution Building for Northern Russia’s Indigenous Peoples Project

**ITC**- Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (now known as the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami)

**KMAO**- Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug

**MOU**- Memorandum of Understanding

**NDC**- Nunavut Development Corporation

**NDFP**- The Northern Dimension of Canada’s Foreign Policy

**NTI**- Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated

**NWT**- Northwest Territories (Canada)

**RAIPON**- Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North

**RITC**- Russian Indigenous Training Centre

**UNDP**- United Nations Development Program

**YNAO**- Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug
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