

Proposed Research: “The Inuit Circumpolar Council – vehicle for Inuit decolonization and a model for Inuit peacemaking for the Inuit in Nunavut and West Greenland?”

Lydia Schoeppner, March 2016

Inuit are nationals of four different countries (US, Canada, Russia and Denmark), but share the same past and common traditions across international borders. Inuit culture and traditional way of life is deeply impacted by the effects of colonialism. Inuit founded the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), a non-governmental organization (NGO) in 1977. The ICC, as a transnational, indigenous peoples' organization, represents and makes heard the voices of Inuit 160,000. It aspires to further Inuit decolonization and peacebuilding through the protection and practice of Inuit culture and tradition, by incorporating the Inuit voice in (inter-national) policy-making bodies and structures, and through the active creation of new political approaches to policy-making in the fields of climate governance/ indigenous governance in the Arctic.

In this doctoral research, the Inuit Circumpolar Council's capacity for decolonization and (indigenous) peacemaking is analyzed. In particular, the organization's efforts to reduce the effects of climate change and to enhance Inuit sovereignty will be scrutinized to develop a better understanding of ICC's potential as a means of empowerment for Inuit on the local level in Canada and Greenland as well as on the international level.

The research is guided by theories of decolonization and peacemaking (multi-track diplomacy/ citizen diplomacy/ track two diplomacy; hybrid peace, everyday peace, indigenous peacemaking) to explain the role of the ICC as (1) an NGO and (2) as an agent that incorporates indigenous forms of peacemaking to transform conflicts around climate change and sovereignty. Of particular importance in this research will be the development of an understanding of the interactions of the micro and macro levels within the ICC. Based on this, the research objectives can be summarized in the following three questions: What are the everyday realities of Inuit in communities in the North regarding issues related to climate change and sovereignty and how are these challenges addressed locally? What is the relevance of the international/ transnational level for Inuit for the addressing of conflicts related to climate change and sovereignty? How are the micro and macro level connected and (how) does the ICC actively work towards the enhancement of such connections?

The research methods are guided by an indigenous paradigm/ methodology and involve observation and conversation with Inuit in two local communities (one in Nunavut and one in Greenland) and key informant conversations with current and former ICC representatives and staff. In addition, this project will be informed by the results from a policy analysis of ICC documents.

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This project advances the field of Peace and Conflict Studies’ more recent understanding of the importance of the bottom-up,¹ multi-track-,² multi-faceted-,³ inclusive,⁴ emancipatory-,⁵ and every-day nature⁶ of peacebuilding approaches that call for acknowledgement and inclusion of indigenous peacemaking/⁷ hybrid peace.⁸ The study will build on these works to create new insights about indigenous peacemaking / emancipatory peacemaking on the micro and macro level. This research will provide new insights into interconnections between the local and international level of the ICC and the reflection of traditional (local) Inuit approaches to conflict in a trans- and international non-governmental organization. Thus, this study contributes to their process of decolonization by focusing on the Inuit point of view regarding climate change, sovereignty and peacemaking.

¹ Lederach, *Preparing for Peace*.

² Louise Diamond and John McDonald, *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace* (Hartford: Kumarin Press, 1996).

³ Sean Byrne and Amos Nadan, “The Social Cube Analytical Model and Protracted Ethnoterritorial Conflicts,” in *Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies. Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy*, ed. Thomas Matyók, Jessica Senehi, and Sean Byrne (Plymouth: Lexington, 2012), 61–80.

⁴ Louis Kriesberg, “Waging Conflicts Constructively,” in *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, ed. Sean Byrne et al. (Oxford: Routledge, 2010), 157–69; David W. Augsburg, *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures* (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1992); Nils Aarsaether, Larissa Riabova, and Jorgen Ole Baernholdt, “Community Viability,” ed. Stefansson Arctic Institute (Akureyri: Stefansson Arctic Institute, 2004), 152.

⁵ Charles Thiessen, “Emancipatory Peacebuilding: Critical Responses to (Neo-) Liberal Trends,” in *Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies. Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy*, ed. Thomas Matyók, Jessica Senehi, and Sean Byrne (Plymouth: Lexington, 2012), 115–40.

⁶ Roger Mac Ginty, “Indicators +: A Proposal for Everyday Peace Indicators,” *Evaluation and Program Planning*, Special Section: Rethinking Evaluation of Health Equity Initiatives, 36, no. 1 (February 2013): 56–63, doi:10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2012.07.001; Roger Mac Ginty and Pamina Firchow, “Everyday Peace Indicators: Capturing Local Voices through Surveys,” *Shared Space: A Research Journal on Peace, Conflict and Community Relations in Northern Ireland* 8 (2014): 33–39.

⁷ Roger MacGinty, “Indigenous Peace-Making Versus the Liberal Peace,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 43, no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 139–63, doi:10.1177/0010836708089080; Jessica Senehi and Sean Byrne, “Where Do We Go From Here?,” in *Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies. Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy*, ed. Thomas Matyók, Jessica Senehi, and Sean Byrne (Plymouth: Lexington, 2012), 397–403; Hamdesa Tusso, “Indigenous Processes of Conflict Resolution,” in *Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies. Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy* (Plymouth: Lexington, 2012), 245–70; Lederach, *Preparing for Peace*; Thiessen, “Emancipatory Peacebuilding: Critical Responses to (Neo-) Liberal Trends”; Sean Byrne and Jessica Senehi, “Revisiting the CAR Field,” in *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, ed. Dennis J. D. Sandole et al. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 525–33; John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

⁸ Roger MacGinty, *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance: Hybrid Forms of Peace* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Roger MacGinty, *No War, No Peace: The Rejuvenation of Stalled Peace Processes and Peace Accords* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Roger MacGinty, “Indigenous Peace-Making Versus the Liberal Peace,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 43, no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 139–63, doi:10.1177/0010836708089080.

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