Reconciliation and Renewed Relationships in the Co-management of National Parks

by

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Abstract

RECONCILIATION AND RENEWED RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CO-MANAGEMENT OF
NATIONAL PARKS IN CANADA

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A new era of Indigenous-led collaborations signals a shift in approach by Parks Canada – in response to commitments to reconciliation – to the involvement of Indigenous peoples in the governance and management of national parks, national park reserves, and national marine conservation areas. However, co-management, the institutional arrangement on which these and other longstanding partnerships in parks contexts have been built, has a contested and uneven track record in meeting the needs, interests, and aspirations of Indigenous people. Using qualitative methods of governance analysis combined with interviews reflecting Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives, this thesis addresses the question: "what is the potential of co-management as a vehicle for reconciliation within national parks"? The thesis is comprised of two manuscripts. The first confronts a critical gap in empirical data about the content and context of formal national park co-management agreements through a scan of available agreements and the creation of a governance typology, as a basis for exploring strengths and weaknesses of agreement-making in serving reconciliation commitments. The second, through a community-partnered project with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, examines relationship-building processes in the context of Vuntut National Park, as an example of a mature claims-based northern national park co-management arrangement. Using the lens of ethical space, the research sheds light on enabling and constraining factors for relationship-building and offers insights into the principles and elements of an ethical space process for national park co-management arrangements supportive of Indigenous-state reconciliation. Overall, this thesis aims to contribute to understandings of the potential of co-management agreements to support reconciliation and renewed relationships in national parks.

Land Acknowledgement

The entirety of this graduate program took place on the territories of Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and, through a virtual correspondence, the unceded lands of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal where Concordia University is located. I would like to express my gratitude to these First Nations and for their continued stewardship of the lands on which I am privileged to play, work, live, and learn.

Acknowledgements

Contribution of Authors

I am the author of all chapters presented in this thesis. Dr. Monica Mulrennan is a co-author to the ideas presented in Chapter 4 and 5. The development of the research projects and decisions around methodological approaches and analysis was done in collaboration with Dr. Mulrennan through regular discussions over the course of the master's program. I am responsible for writing the entire thesis, to which Monica Mulrennan made substantive intellectual and technical contributions.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Research Problem
Collaborative conservation approaches between Indigenous peoples and state governments have been highlighted as a solution to mitigate the twin crises of climate change and unprecedented declines in global biodiversity (Artelle et al., 2019; Borrini-Feyerabend & Hill, 2015; Gavin et al., 2018; Zurba et al., 2019). However, establishing meaningful partnerships will be impossible without addressing underlying issues of Indigenous self-determination, jurisdiction, and rights, and a fulsome recognition of Indigenous leadership and agency (Artelle et al., 2019; Howitt, 2018; ICCA Consortium, 2021; Tran et al., 2020). Recent estimates suggest that Indigenous peoples hold customary tenure of close to 50% of the global land base (Garnett et al., 2018; Rights and Resources Initiative, 2015) where they use and care for their territories in accordance with their own legal traditions and governance systems despite on-going colonial encroachment (Artelle et al., 2019; Coulthard, 2014; Gibson et al, 2020; Manuel & Posluns, 1974; Simpson, 2016; von der Porten et al., 2019). Following decades of political advocacy by Indigenous peoples and their allies, the critical role of Indigenous and local environmental stewardship in meeting climate change and global biodiversity commitments is now widely acknowledged within settler-colonial state contexts (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2014; Corrigan et al., 2018; IUCN, 2011; Tauli-Corpuz et al., 2020).

However, until recently, colonial states have by and large deemed Indigenous stewardship as irrelevant to, or at odds with the objectives of environmental management as understood within a Euro-centric conservation paradigm (Smith, 2020). As environmental governance scholar Melanie Zurba and others (2019) explain, in responding to the imperatives of a "new protected areas paradigm" that recentres Indigenous peoples and local communities as stewards of the land, many settler states are now contending with their own "wicked problems" linked to the ongoing legacy of colonial, exclusionary, and racist conservation approaches. These practices have been felt most acutely by Indigenous peoples whose cultures are inextricably connected to the lands and waters on which many protected areas now exist (Binnema & Niemi, 2006; Brockington & Igoe, 2006; Moola & Roth, 2019; Stevens, 2014). One stark account of these practices can be found in the history of the establishment of national parks in Canada which included the intentional marginalization and displacement of various Indigenous peoples, dispossession of lands, and rampant human rights violations for the better half of the early 21st century (Agrawal & Redford, 2009; Mark et al., 2019; Stevens, 2010; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015; Youdelis et al., 2020).

It is therefore promising that recent commitments of the Canadian federal government suggest there is a window of opportunity to meet the ambitions and imperatives of a new conservation paradigm that could support Indigenous-state reconciliation through ethical and equitable means. These commitments include the Crown's ongoing efforts to adhere to the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), recently implemented in 2021 by the *UNDRIP Act* – part of the Canadian governments on-going response to the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (Canada, 2021b; Department of Justice Canada, 2018; Government of Canada, 2020; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015; United Nations, 2007) – and Canada's alignment with global biodiversity conservation

objectives, specifically the CBD's Aichi Targets as expressed through Canada's Pathway to Target 1 initiative to conserve 30% of biodiversity by 2030, and the recently established targets of the 2022 Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (Canada, 2022; Conservation 2020, n.d.; Convention on Biological Diversity, 2020, 2022).

Parks Canada, the federal agency responsible for the administration, management, and control of national parks, park reserves, marine conservation areas (NMCAs), and historic sites (NHS), has responded to these mandates through commitments to reconciliation and renewed relationships with Indigenous communities and its demonstrated support of Indigenous-led conservation and collaborative conservation approaches (Parks Canada, 2019). Currently, many Indigenous governments actively engage with Parks Canada to negotiate and renegotiate the terms of governance and management of protected areas as a strategy to assert their presence on their homelands, practice their Indigenous rights, and ensuring the stewardship of lands and waters is grounded in Indigenous forms of governance, knowledge, and values. Parks Canada has demonstrated a new degree of willingness to respond to these efforts, as reflected in recent collaboratives with Indigenous communities like Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation in the co-establishment and shared governance of Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area (CBC, 2022b; Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation, 2020).

According to settler conservation scholar Justine Townsend, "Establishing fair, ethical, and supportive relationships with Indigenous Nations that respect their governance and self-determination—even where goals diverge—is key to building relationships that advance reconciliation" (2022, p. 220). Yet there is some uncertainty as to what extent the existing governance[1] institutions at Parks Canada's disposal are appropriate mechanisms to support processes of reconciliation and the renewal of relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canada. Indeed, Parks Canada's primary vehicle of formal engagement, co-management[2], which it frames as being "reflective of the renewed relationship the Government of Canada seeks with Indigenous peoples", has been subject to a longstanding and animated debate over its potential to enable power-sharing, participation, and respectfully integrate Indigenous and Western knowledge systems (Clark & Joe-Strack, 2017; Parks Canada, 2018, p. 11). Parks Canada claims to cooperatively manage more than 40 national parks, NMCAs, and national historic sites with Indigenous partners and is under a federal mandate to "establish 10 new national parks and 10 new national marine conservation areas (NMCAs) in the next five years, working with Indigenous communities on co-management agreements for these national parks and NMCAs" (Canada, 2021b).

In both theory and practice, there is significant momentum behind the notion of co-management as a mechanism for supporting reconciliation and the renewal of relationships with Indigenous

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[1] I adopt governance to refer to who has decision-making authority and the "interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibility are exercised", whereas management concerns the actions and approaches taken in pursuit of objectives (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013, pp. 10–11).

[2] Co-management, also known as cooperative management or joint management, has existed since the 1970s in Canada, broadly referring to the sharing of power between state and Indigenous peoples over the governance and management of a resource or land base. While a narrow universal definition of co-management does not exist, Berkes (2009, p. 1693) defines co-management generally as "a range of arrangements, with different degrees of power sharing, for joint decision-making by the state and communities (or user groups) about a set of resources or an area".

peoples (Nesbitt, 2016; Smith, 2020). Existing cases within the national parks system, such as Parks Canada's agreement with Haida Nation for the co-management of Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve (1993), have long been regarded as exemplary shared governance arrangements (Nesbitt, 2016; Shields, 2020; Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012). Indeed, across various environmental contexts, scholars have brought to light a long pattern of strategic co-management by Indigenous peoples as a means to achieve self-determination and other goals (Clark & Joe-Strack, 2017; Diver, 2016; Hill et al., 2012; Lyver et al., 2014; Martin, 2016; Zurba et al., 2012). More recently, it has been argued that co-management may offer an effective mechanism to support Indigenous-led conservation efforts, self-determination, and the resurgence of Indigenous cultures, broadly (Artelle et al., 2019; Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; Zurba et al., 2019).

Despite this optimism, critics have argued that Canada's reliance on co-management is in fact detrimental to the pursuit of a "new paradigm" (Stevens, 2014) of conservation in Canada that upholds Indigenous self-determination and reconciliation (Finegan, 2018; Smith, 2020). While the advent of co-management in the 1980s signified a notable shift in Parks Canada's approaches to Indigenous engagement, the primary vehicle for the establishment of co-management arrangements in national parks has been comprehensive land claims (Atkinson, 2001; Fenge, 1993; Notzke, 1995). Therefore, some consider co-management as an institutional framework that is "colonially entangled" (Dennison, 2012), as scholars have argued that the negotiation of modern treaties have effectively distanced many Indigenous communities from decision making processes, made space for increased extractive industry activity on their homelands, permitted continued colonial encroachment in the North, and thus have served to co-opt narratives of justice (Amagoalik, 2016; Pasternak, 2017; Sandlos, 2014; Simpson, 2016). In practice, research has documented myriad ways in which co-management arrangements have shown a propensity to displace and co-opt Indigenous peoples, their governance, and knowledge systems into the settler state and its governmental processes (Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020) – imbalances likewise manifest in the context of national parks in Canada (Dearden & Bennett, 2016; Johnston & Mason, 2020; Langdon et al., 2010; Lemelin & Bennett, 2010; Sandlos, 2014; Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012; Timko & Satterfield, 2008; Youdelis, 2016). Yet, as argued by Sandlos (2014) and Grey and Kuokkanen (2020, p. 920), "a perceived or stated lack of alternatives (attributable, in turn, to either a dearth of practical imagination or a lack of political will, or both) often presents co-management as a relatively better – or better-than-nothing – scheme".

In light of these tensions, Canada has perhaps too long embraced co-management as a suitable platform to rethink Indigenous-state relationships (Notzke, 1995). As such, Indigenous leaders and conservation scholars and practitioners have called for more suitable approaches to engaging across differences (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; M'sɨt No'kmaq et al., 2021). One approach to re-imagine and enhance Indigenous-state relationships, the concept of "ethical space", introduced by Sturgeon Lake First Nation scholar Willie Ermine (2007), offers a dynamic, neutral space of engagement to work respectfully across disparate worldviews, knowledge, and legal systems and "requires dismantling oppressive and assimilative systems for Indigenous peoples 'to be themselves' in conservation" (Nikolakis & Hotte, 2021, p. 2).

While frameworks such as ethical space may provide a pathway to renew Indigenous-state relationships in conservation (as I explore within Chapter 5), I recognize that reconciliation

remains a contested project, in particular its state-led configurations which have been repudiated by certain Indigenous leaders and communities which invites concern around how Parks Canada undertakes its approach to nation-to-nation relationship-building and reconciliation (Amagoalik, 2016; Daigle, 2019; Guerin, 2019; Littlechild et al., 2021; Maddison et al., 2016; McGregor, 2018b; Robertson, 2023; Unist'ot'en Camp, n.d.; Whyte, 2018; Yellowhead Institute, 2019b).

In summary, given the compounding uncertainty around co-management as an effective platform for engagement and the contested nature of reconciliation, there is a strong rationale to interrogate the imposition of reconciliation onto Canada's cooperative management regime from various angles. To paraphrase co-management scholar Douglas Clark and Champagne and Aishihik First Nation biologist *Daqualama* Jocelyn Joe-Strack (2017), the research necessary to determine whether co-management "works" as a mechanism to support reconciliation and renewed relationships has not yet been done. Echoing the voices of Indigenous conservation leaders, scholars have called for a concerted research effort in identifying the changes and solutions required to elevate Indigenous leadership and authority in conservation governance based upon true nation-to-nation relationships (Artelle et al., 2019; Tran et al., 2020; Youdelis et al., 2020). Clarifying these gaps in knowledge are crucial steps in identifying equitable and effective partnered approaches to support the diverse and evolving aspirations and priorities of Indigenous communities in conservation. The purpose of this research, through studying Indigenous-state relationships in national parks, is to shed light on the potential of protected area co-management as a vehicle for reconciliation. It does this through a complementary, two-pronged approach situated in two different arenas of Indigenous-state relationships.

1.2 Scholarly Context and Research Questions
This is primarily motivated by two gaps identified in the literature. Here, I provide a general summary of two sets of research objectives and questions, each of which corresponds with the two manuscripts presented in Chapters 4 and 5 that provide in-depth justifications for the undertaking of their respective research projects.

1.2.1. Research Objective 1
The first research objective responds to the absence of a definitive framework for understanding the different types of co-management agreements, as a set of diverse governance institutions, under Parks Canada. The lack of empirical data around negotiated agreements in national parks is a stark omission when compared to the field of study surrounding the related instrument of Impact and Benefit Agreements between Indigenous groups and private industry, which have been comprehensively documented and tracked by researchers thus allowing for deeper critical inquiry (Caine & Krogman, 2010; O'Faircheallaigh, 2016; Peterson St-Laurent & Billon, 2015). Therefore, my first research objective is to recognise and reveal differences and commonalities across a range of co-management types under Parks Canada and identify their enabling and constraining elements as mechanisms to support Indigenous-state reconciliation. I approach this objective through developing a typology based on a comprehensive review of negotiated co-management agreements between Indigenous groups and Parks Canada, focussing on contextual and governance dimensions. This approach not only helps to refine and understand the possibilities that co-management, as a broad category of governance institutions, presents, but it also provides a descriptive account and a lens for a deeper exploration of mechanisms (e.g. board

composition, dispute resolution) within those types for their potential to support renewed relationships and reconciliation (Hill et al., 2012).

1.2.2. Research Question 1
This study asks the following questions:

- What are the different types of co-management agreements in national parks and NMCAs?

- To what extent do these agreements support and enable Indigenous governance and self-determination?

- To what extent may co-management agreements serve as a mechanism to support renewed relationships and reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and Canada?

1.2.3. Research Objective 2
The second research objective responds to a lack of grounded understanding of relationship-building in national parks, particularly as this understanding relates to Indigenous perspectives on co-management and its attendant processes, and Indigenous priorities and aspirations for national park conservation. Relationships between Indigenous resource users and conservation managers have been used as a lens in co-management research as they are considered indicative of the adaptive capacity of a co-management relationship through its maturation (Carthew, 2007). However, the lack of local Indigenous community perspectives and an incomplete understanding of how cooperative management in fact "works" in the northern national park context muddles the linkage between reconciliation and co-management (Timko & Satterfield, 2008). Through a community-based participatory research approach, I explore the capacity of northern claims-based national park co-management as an ethical space of engagement. I work with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Vuntut National Park management to explore community perspectives around relationship-building between Parks Canada and the VGFN. This study responds directly to Nikolakis and Hotte's (2021) invitation to adopt ethical space as a lens to understand governance vitality, or, in other words, the capacity of a co-management agreement to adapt and learn over time (Borrini-Feyerabend & Hill, 2015). While I understand that both ethical space and reconciliation are entirely place-specific processes (Curran, 2018), a deeper understanding of the enabling and constraining elements to operationalizing ethical space in one northern national park may facilitate a refinement of Canada's approach to open and honest dialogue with Indigenous peoples in existing protected areas as per the ICE's recommendations (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018).

1.2.4. Research Question 2
This study asks the following questions:

- What potential is there for claims-based co-management arrangements under Parks Canada to serve as an ethical space of engagement between Indigenous communities and national park management?

- To what extent does claims-based co-management arrangements under Parks Canada serve as an appropriate relationship-building mechanism to support renewed Indigenous-state relationships and reconciliation?

1.3 Background to Case Study: Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Vuntut National Park

The Yukon First Nations share a remarkable history of Indigenous governance and political advocacy. The Vuntut Gwitchin of Old Crow is one of 15 communities across Alaska, Yukon, and Northwest Territory that comprise the Gwich'in Nation (Gwich'in Social & Cultural Institute, 2015). The community of Old Crow, the only fly-in community in the Yukon, had a reported population of 236 in 2021, with many Vuntut Gwitchin residing in other communities across the Yukon and further. Vuntut Gwitchin stems from the Van Tat Gwich'in (people of the lakes) or van (lakes) tat (many) Gwich'in (people), referring to the Crow Flats, an important area of life (The Firelight Group & Vuntut Gwitchin Government, 2018). The Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory and the area stewarded by the Vuntut Gwitchin spans 55,548km^2 across mountain and wetland terrain. It is also home to wildlife such as vadzaih (caribou), dinjik (moose) and dats'an (ducks) which remain a central part of the Vuntut Gwitchin way of life.

In 1973, *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow,* a report developed by Kwanlin Dün First Nation Elijah Smith and various Yukon Chiefs, was brought to the Government of Canada, led by Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau at the time. The report, addressing grievances of Yukon First Nations and principles for negotiating a land claim that would protect the rights of all Yukon First Nations, led to a 20-year negotiation process resulting in the settlement of the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) signed by Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon Indians, the Premier of the Yukon Territory, and the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The "Umbrella Final Agreement provides a framework within which each of the 14 Yukon First Nations will conclude a final claim settlement agreement … The Final Agreements contain all of the text of the Umbrella Final Agreement with the addition of specific provisions which apply to the individual First Nation" (Council of Yukon First Nations, n.d.). Under the provisions of UFA, Yukon First Nations retain and define their rights to harvest on their traditional territories and participation in the management of Special Management Areas which includes the potential cooperative management of National Parks or National Park Reserves with Parks Canada as well as the implementation of co-managed Renewable Resource Councils that oversee regional wildlife management (VGFN, 1993). Vuntut Gwitchin is one of eleven[3] self-governing Yukon First Nations that have settled land claims following the finalization of the UFA in 1993, under which the establishment and cooperative management of Vuntut National Park and other protected areas under territorial legislation were negotiated.

National parks and national park reserves in the Yukon are, therefore, among the earliest co-managed national parks in Canada and thus provide suitable cases for researching the role of existing institutions of co-management as mechanisms for reconciliation and renewing relationships. Chapter 5 provides further justification for the case study approach.

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[3] In 2022, only 11 of 14 Yukon First Nations have settled Final Agreements.

1.4 Positionality

I am cognizant of the tensions of decolonization in the field of geography, especially that, rather than emphasizing the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in colonial spaces, "decolonization still remains principally *read* and *thought* about" (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018, p. 5). In response, and informed by the seminal work of Indigenous scholars and philosophers including Deborah McGregor (2018a), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 2012), Shawn Wilson (2001, 2008), and Margaret Kovach (2009), I took a research approach that centered relationality and reciprocity as per decolonizing, Indigenous, and Indigenist methodologies (described in greater detail in Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods). I acknowledge that these methodologies are principally targeted at Indigenous scholars rather than for unbridled use by non-Indigenous scholars. Shawn Wilson's co-authored book *Research and Reconciliation: Unsettling Ways of Knowing Through Indigenous Relationships* suggests that Indigenist research, that centres Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies, can inform the work of non-Indigenous researchers so long "as they are working from a relational understanding of reality" (Wilson et al., 2019, p. 8). According to education scholar Margaret Kovach (2009) of Plains Cree and Saulteaux First Nations this requires acknowledging our own place and situatedness in our relations (Kovach, 2009). Recognizing one's positionality is one approach to doing so that is increasingly encouraged and practiced in decolonizing methodologies (Smith, 2012). I also recognize the importance of self-identity in research and its interplay with storytelling which has a central importance in Indigenous culture and knowledge systems (McGregor, 2016). In this way, I understand that through my own lived experiences, I have constructed for myself a particular worldview and perception of self and others which means that the stories I construct through research are intrinsically and inseparably attached to my own worldview and are therefore inevitably partial in nature.

I am a settler academic of Scottish and Irish descent raised on the Saugeen Peninsula on the traditional territories of Saugeen Ojibway First Nation, and more recently living on the traditional territories of Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation. As a white southerner with prior experiences living and working in northern remote Indigenous communities, I was well aware of how deeply prejudice can influence perceptions and impressions when entering a new place and was attentive to the ways in which this could influence my approach to the research. I endeavoured to remain critical of how my identity influenced all aspects of the research study, from planning to publication. In this light, I was fortunate to have ample time throughout the research to connect with the land and reflect upon my own relationships and responsibilities to the place where I live, to my identity as a settler, remembering my own rights and responsibilities. As a part-time outdoor educator working with a diversity of Indigenous and nonindigenous students in Whitehorse on Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation lands, I was privileged to have various other opportunities to learn and take guidance from the priorities and aspirations of the traditional stewards of this land.

I am also cognizant of the tensions that my positionality brings to this research on a methodological level. Aware of the critiques of reconciliation in the university and how they could very well apply to my own circumstances; for example, hopping on the "reconciliation bandwagon" for financial and academic currency (Daigle, 2019, p. 705) or co-opting reconciliation as a "protective armour of good intentions" (Wilson et al., 2019, p. xiii), I justify my role in this research as a leveraging of my position of privilege and power as an "insider" of

Western culture to "clear space for others to do what they want to do for themselves" (Wilson et al., 2019, p. xvi). To paraphrase Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), I aim to exploit the power I have to conduct this research to lend the absolute usefulness of research to those who have historically only witnessed its absolute uselessness. Part of this approach involves a "studying-up" of the culture of the colonizer and the culture of power – in this case, Canada (Nader, 1972).

1.5 Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership (CRP)
The Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE), alongside a National Advisory Panel, was assembled as an independent advisory body by the federal government to identify the appropriate conservation alternatives for meeting the ambitions of Canada Target 1 in a manner that (re)centred Indigenous peoples in protected area governance and management (Littlechild et al., 2021, p. 667). While the culminating 2018 report, *We Rise Together*, placed a heavy focus on the recognition of Indigenous Protected and Conservation Areas in Canada, the report includes guidance and principles for introducing Indigenous-led and shared governance approaches in existing parks. Specifically, Recommendation 6.2 of the ICE report calls for state governments to "develop collaborative governance and management arrangements for existing federal, provincial and territorial parks and protected areas" through appropriate dialogue based in ethical space with affected Indigenous communities (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018). As well, the report recommends Crown authorities to "acknowledge and address past wrong doings— such as appropriating lands and waters from Indigenous Peoples, refusing to recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and excluding them from access to their resources" (Recommendation 6.1).

The SSHRC-supported Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership (CRP), an Indigenous-led decolonial partnership comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, governments, and academic researchers, was established in 2019 to act on the ICE recommendations in a non-partisan approach over a seven-year period (CRP, 2020). Alongside the University of Guelph, the CRP is co-hosted by IISAAK OLAM Foundation and the Indigenous Leadership Initiative. The CRP began with two main objectives to support the establishment of IPCAs and to support the transformation of existing state-led protected areas. It approaches these objectives through co-learning circles and knowledge mobilization, promoting ethical and collaboration research, and increasing capacity among Indigenous governments and communities, as well as state governments and other conservation authorities and practitioners (CRP, 2020).

As a member of the CRP, this thesis belongs to a broader organizational objective and collective effort to facilitate and coordinate story-telling projects, research, and knowledge mobilization around relationship-building and reconciliation approaches in existing national parks and NMCAs. This is done in open collaboration with Parks Canada and its Indigenous Affairs Branch, as one of the partnered organizations of the CRP.

1.6 Thesis Structure
This thesis is composed of seven chapters. Chapter 1 being thus concluded, Chapter 2 reviews several bodies of key literature with a goal to provide context for the presentation of the two manuscript chapters. Chapter 3 concerns the role of co-management in Indigenous-led conservation and introduces the Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership (CRP) from

which the research takes its direction. Chapter 4 describes the research approach, methodology, specific research methods used to meet my research objectives, and raises some methodological limitations critical to understanding the rationale behind the approaches taken. Chapters 4 and 5 are presented as individual journal manuscripts, each of which confronts the two main research questions and presents the research findings and discussions thereof. While the journal manuscripts present the bulk of the discussion and conclusions for the thesis, Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by recapitulating the broad practical and scholarly implications of the research findings, identifying directions for future research, and a final discussion of the study's limitations. Appendices to each manuscript are included therein.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

This chapter focuses on contextualizing the manuscripts presented in Chapters 4 and 5. First, it reviews key bodies of literatures addressing the history of Parks Canada's approaches and attitudes to Indigenous engagement and the emergence of co-management in national park governance. I focus this section on historical research and grey literature (i.e., legislation, policy) at the intersection of Indigenous communities and protected areas. Second, I review scholarship that has sought to define, clarify, and critique reconciliation, placing a large focus on the work of Indigenous scholars. Lastly, I provide a review of Indigenous environmental governance which includes recent scholarship around IPCAs and their connection to Indigenous resurgence and self-determination. This review excludes key literature on co-management which is instead covered in context in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.2 Indigenous Peoples and National Parks

Reconciliation and the renewal of nation-to-nation relationships presents an urgent and complex challenge for Parks Canada in relation to the diverse range of relationships and histories it has with more than 300 Indigenous partners (Littlechild & Sutherland, 2021). Efforts to document the evolution of Parks Canada's policy and regulatory approaches to Indigenous relations reveal that Parks Canada approaches have oscillated in and out of synchronicity with federal policy over time (Dearden & Bennett, 2016; Langdon et al., 2010; Ostola, 2010; Sandlos, 2014). A brief overview of this historical narrative is provided below. A review of additional key studies and analyses of national park co-management and governance is included in the manuscript presented in Chapter 4.

Co-management, in its conventional form, represents only one part of the complex history between Indigenous peoples and national parks across Turtle Island/Canada. While certain co-management agreements are celebrated today by Parks Canada and the Indigenous groups involved[4], these cases occlude the winding timeline of Indigenous activism, legal decisions and government responses that led to the proliferation of co-management agreements in national parks, national park reserves, and NMCAs across the north and along the Pacific coast.

As acknowledged in their own policy literature, Parks Canada is contending with the legacy of its colonial and exclusionary histories (Parks Canada, 2019). The establishment of the national parks network spans a vast temporal and geographical scope which has had significant implications for the consistency and quality of engagement of Indigenous peoples across national park governance and management arrangements. The relationship between Indigenous peoples and national parks in the North, where Indigenous peoples and Parks Canada engage in co-management arrangements protected by comprehensive land claim agreements, are notably different to those in the south, where parks were established through an older colonial, capitalist conservation paradigm (Cronon, 1996; Sandlos, 2014).

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[4] See, for example, the Gwaii Haanas Agreement (1993), Thaidene Nëné Establishment Agreements (2019), and Ndahecho Gondié Gháádé Agreement (2022).

Many national parks were established prior to the Crown's formal recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights, now enshrined in *Constitution Act,* 1982 (Dearden & Bennett, 2016). In the Canadian context, the earliest national parks established in the south categorically excluded the involvement of Indigenous peoples in their establishment, governance, and management through what is referred to as 'fortress' or Yellowstone style conservation approaches (Binnema & Niemi, 2006; Langdon et al., 2010; Tauli-Corpuz et al., 2018). The earliest national parks, an "unexpected result" of the construction of the transcontinental railroad into Western Canada, served as a strategic tool and symbology in the building of Canada's nation-state well through the first half of the 20th century (Goldstein, 2013; Neufeld, 2008). Abetted by the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, the early conservation paradigm exclusively reflected Western conservation values and modernist ideology premised upon the protection of a so-called untouched and pristine wilderness, void of human interference (Cronon, 1996; Moola & Roth, 2019; Youdelis et al., 2020). Furthermore, early national parks were regularly rationalized by neo-liberal economic reasoning to develop the country's tourism and resource industry (Binnema & Niemi, 2006; Johnston & Mason, 2020; Youdelis et al., 2020). These western-colonial attitudes were antithetical to the cultures of local Indigenous peoples whose worldviews, governance, and legal orders, were intrinsically tied to the land. Prevailing attitudes not only failed to recognize the integral relationships Indigenous peoples hold with their lands but eventually contributed to an intentional process of the destruction of these critical relationships (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018). For example, the establishment of Banff National Park (1885) and Jasper National Park (1907), Canada's most renowned protected areas, forced the removal of several Métis and First Nations families from their homelands (Binnema & Niemi, 2006; Youdelis, 2016). Relationships between Parks Canada and many Indigenous groups are often fraught and "many older parks are still lagging behind in adequately sharing power with local aboriginal groups" (Dearden & Bennett, 2016, p. 23).

It was within the negotiations of Canada's first modern treaty, that co-management with Indigenous groups emerged as a solution to land use conflicts and a means to achieve legal certainty over land claims (Pasternak, 2017; Rodon, 1998). The advent of modern treaties, formally referred to as comprehensive land claims agreements, began with the 1973 Calder decision, wherein the existence of Aboriginal title was first recognized in Canadian courts (*Calder et al. V. Attorney-General of British Columbia*, 1973). The subsequent implementation of the Comprehensive Land Claim Policy (CLCP) laid a foundation for the Inuit and Cree of Northern Québec to negotiate the James Bay Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA) in 1975, Canada's first modern treaty, as a response to the impacts of hydroelectric projects along the eastern shores of James Bay. For Indigenous groups who had never signed treaties with the Crown, modern treaties clarify undefined Aboriginal rights through the negotiation of a new bundle of Aboriginal rights specific to a limited tract of Indigenous traditional territory and including broad compensation packages (Saku & Bone, 2000). In the case of the JBNQA, co-management was introduced to allow Cree and Inuit to exercise a degree of influence in decision making and management over their territories on which they depended (Rodon, 1998). Since, modern treaties have been negotiated with Tsawwassen First Nations, Maa-nulth First Nations, Nisga'a Nation, Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Labrador Inuit, Sahtú Dene, Tlicho, Yukon First Nations, Tłįchǫ Government, Nunatsiavut Government, the Makivik Corporation, Eeyou Istchee (for the Eeyou Ischee Marine Region), Tla'amin Nation, and Naskapi Nation (Land Claims Coalition, 2022). Yet, due to various legal, political, economic, and sociocultural factors, many negotiation

tables have stagnated and some Indigenous groups have chosen to forgo or reject modern treaty negotiations (Alcantara, 2013; Pasternak, 2017; Penikett, 2006).

The establishment of Ivvavik National Park in 1984 marked the first instance of a national park created through a modern treaty which included provisions for a cooperative management board to advise in park planning and management (Inuvialuit Final Agreement, 1984). Under the provision of the IFA, the Inuvialuit have an advisory role in the cooperative management of Ivvavik through the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) and Inuvialuit beneficiaries retain exclusive rights to harvest within the park's boundaries (Goldstein, 2013; Notzke, 1995). Subsequently, there followed an intensified period of national park establishment across the north, facilitated by treaty processes, whereby various Inuit and First Nation groups established themselves as co-managers of protected areas, as well as wildlife and natural resources (Atkinson, 2001; Notzke, 1995). This approach to northern park establishment was facilitated by the introduction of National Park Reserves which effectually permitted Canada to establish national parks "to-be" in areas under on-going comprehensive land claims, although this practice was not formally recognized until an amendment to the National Parks Act in 1994 (Langdon et al., 2010).

Yet as Sandlos (2014) explains, national park establishment in the north was not a clear departure from earlier colonial conservation approaches. Early modern treaties required that Indigenous peoples "cede their Aboriginal title and the majority of their territory to the Crown in exchange for 'certainty' about their rights" which was facilitated by a disputed process of land ownership selections (Pasternak, 2017, p. 5). For example, while Canada was intent on establishing national parks in the north as part of modern treaty negotiations, Fenge (1993) observed that Inuit negotiators involved in the NLCA negotiations saw joint management of national parks as a compromise that would allow them to retain a degree of control over their lands thus allowing them to focus on negotiating land ownership selections for other desired regions. It was not unanimously understood at the time that Parks Canada would maintain veto power and that the joint management was intended to be a consultative arrangement in the eyes of the government (Fenge, 1993). As well, these agreements have only ancillary importance to treaty negotiations and are not a guaranteed element of settlements (Atkinson, 2001).

Throughout the second half the 21st century, Parks Canada's approaches to Indigenous relations further evolved in response to the implications of the cooperative management regime introduced through the Comprehensive Land Claims Policy, court jurisprudence and Indigenous political activism. Chiefly, as a response to on-going Indigenous advocacy surrounding the Berger Report (Berger, 1977), the *Parks Canada Policy of* 1979 acknowledged the deleterious impacts that national park establishment had on local communities, and the potential for cooperative management between Indigenous peoples and the state that would be respectful of Aboriginal rights. This recognition was well before national park creation was included as part of the benefits package of a modern treaty settlement (Dearden & Bennett, 2016; Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012; Timko & Satterfield, 2008).

The repatriation of Canada's Constitution in 1982 which recognized and affirmed Aboriginal rights and Canada's constitutional relationship to Indigenous peoples, galvanized another significant shift to the Canadian government's approach to the involvement and leadership of

Indigenous peoples in national park governance and management (Langdon et al., 2010). This shift has been further propelled by Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence clarifying the nature and content of Aboriginal rights under the *Constitution Act, 1982* such as *Sparrow R. v. Sparrow*, 1990)*, the first court ruling to interpret Section 35 of the *Constitution Act,* 1982 and define the scope of Aboriginal rights, *Delgamuukw* (*Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, 1997)*, the first account of Aboriginal title, and both *Taku (2004) and Haida (2004)* (*Haida Nation v. British Columbia*, 2004; *Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia*, 2004) that recognized the Crown's legal duty to consult. In response, Parks Canada made numerous policy adjustments throughout the 1980s and 1990s to allow for traditional harvesting within park boundaries, and to engage Indigenous peoples through partnerships and cooperative arrangements as expressed in the 1994 Guiding Principles and Operational Policies (Langdon et al., 2010). These changes culminated in amendments to the *Canadian National Parks Act* in 2000 that legally enabled the Minister to enter into agreements with Aboriginal groups and other jurisdictions and formally recognize the right to traditional harvest within park boundaries (Canada National Parks Act, 2000; Langdon et al., 2010).

Since 2000, Parks Canada continues to establish national parks and negotiate cooperative management agreements in varying degrees of collaboration with Indigenous communities. Yet only since 2019, Parks Canada has followed a unified institutional mandate to reconciliation to manage national parks "in a manner that reflects the spirit and intent of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, advances reconciliation, and implements Section 35 rights, treaty obligations, and related commitments" by working towards "decision-making and governance … grounded in collaborative approaches that reflect both Indigenous and western conservation values and knowledge" (Parks Canada, 2019, p. 8). The Indigenous Affairs and Cultural Heritage Directorate under the Indigenous Affairs Branch support the agency's commitments to reconciliation through developing policy and resources in response to Ministerial mandates, public engagement mechanisms (e.g., Minister's Roundtable), feedback from park management field units and also responds to higher-level biodiversity commitments such as the Pathway to Canada Target 1. The agency also receives advice on cultural heritage projects from the Indigenous Cultural Heritage Advisory Council comprised of eight Indigenous representatives on cultural heritage projects (Parks Canada Agency, 2022c). At the local level, relationship-building and engagement of Indigenous communities are ultimately the responsibility of the Parks Canada superintendent, individual field units, and park managers (Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012).

2.3 Reconciliation
The recognition of Indigenous-led conservation under the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity levels, and the re-framing of cooperative management, has coincided with the overarching narrative of settler-colonial reconciliation across settler-states globally. Setter-colonialism can be defined as an ongoing process of the state's acquisition of power through control of land and resources and the active elimination of Indigenous presences (Smith, 1999; Wolfe, 1999, 2006). As summarized by former academic and current Parks Canada staffer Chance Finegan, "parks must be places of reconciliation given their historical and ongoing entanglement with settler colonialism" (Finegan, 2018, p. 2).

However, despite its common usage, reconciliation is a confounded concept (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013; Littlechild et al., 2021). Legal scholar Danika Littlechild of Neyaskweyakh/Ermineskin Cree Nation, working with other scholars (2021, p. 668), has described Parks Canada's own understanding of its approaches to reconciliation as fragmented; while it values a practice of listening to recognize the unique individual reconciliation needs of each community, through its recent commitments it has also centred itself as the agent of reconciliation within parks. With this in mind, and, given the array of historical-legal relationships between Parks Canada and Indigenous peoples, this section intends to clarify definitions, and review Indigenous concepts and critiques of reconciliation.

2.3.1 Common Conceptions of Reconciliation

In this section I provide a brief summary of certain definitions of reconciliation which are central to state-driven approaches to engaging with Indigenous peoples and in public discourse, generally, in order to frame Parks Canada's own commitments to reconciliation (Parks Canada Agency, 2022a). Since the 1980s, the Canadian government has made various gestures to advance reconciliation and redress to several minority communities, including Indigenous groups, for historical wrongs and injustices inflicted by the state (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013). Stanton (2017) explains how following the *Constitution Act,* 1982 which recognized and affirmed existing Aboriginal and treaty rights and clarified the Indigenous-state relationship, the concept of reconciliation has taken on two dominant understandings; one centres the reconciling of the existence of Aboriginal and treaty rights with Crown sovereignty, while the other centres reconciliation as an on-going relational process of healing (Smith, 2020).

The creation in 1991 of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), following the events of the Oka Crisis, its subsequent report, followed by the 1996 Statement of Reconciliation from the Canadian Department of Justice, was a landmark chain of events for the introduction of the concept of Indigenous-state reconciliation to the public sphere. The RCAP defined the concept of reconciliation in terms of a mutual nation-to-nation recognition of parallel sovereignties, rejecting *terra nullius* and the state's asserted claim to underlying title and absolute sovereignty under the Doctrine of Discovery (Asch, 2002; Stanton, 2017). The RCAP's report led, albeit delayed, to Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2008 apology to Indigenous peoples and the coinciding creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the legacy of residential schools. It should be noted that the 2008 apology and creation of the TRC was "less the product of magnanimous government", than the culmination of more than two decades of Indigenous political mobilization which included the RCAP (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013, p. 4). Indeed, Indigenous activism has played a critical role through all of these processes in bringing awareness to the issues requiring redress (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013; McGregor, 2018a; Whyte, 2018).

The TRC defined reconciliation in a "nonprescriptive and expansive manner" wherein its 94 calls to action concern processes of redress, restitution, and acknowledgement across diverse contexts (Littlechild et al., 2021, p. 667). While its mandate referred to reconciliation as a "mutual process to be engaged in by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike" to heal relationships through truth telling, acknowledgements, reparations, and addressing the underlying causes to prevent future harms (Stanton, 2017, p. 22; Turner, 2013), the final TRC report released in 2015 eventually included several recommendations for addressing the legal

relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada, including the adoption of the 2007 UNDRIP as the defining framework for reconciliation. Article 3 of UNDRIP states: "Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (United Nations, 2007). The UNDRIP was finally implemented in 2021 through Canada's *UNDRIP Act* (Canada, 2021).

Stanton has noted that the courts' definitions of reconciliation have diverged substantially from the original legal framings of the RCAP (Stanton, 2017). Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence grapples with a different conceptualization of reconciliation; that which concerns Aboriginal and treaty rights enshrined section 35 of the *Constitution Act,* 1982 and conflicting assertions of sovereignty between Indigenous peoples and the Crown (Stanton, 2017). This understanding of reconciliation first emerged in Supreme Court jurisprudence during *R v. Sparrow* (*R. v. Sparrow*, 1990) whereafter rulings have dealt mainly with interpretations of Aboriginal and treaty rights under s. 35 and rendering consistent Indigenous assertions of sovereignty with the Crown's assumption of underlying title and overriding assertions to sovereignty (Stanton, 2017) (see Section 2.2).

2.3.2 Indigenous Reconciliation
Through the work of many Indigenous scholars and leaders, various alternative discourses of reconciliation have surfaced in Canada. These discourses centre around varied facets of reconciliation such as sovereignty justice, constitutional justice, land justice, socio-political justice and decolonization (Laurila, 2019).

Indigenous leaders and scholars have called for sovereignty justice, which as the RCAP and TRC recommended, necessarily requires the rejection of *terra nullius* and the doctrine of discovery, upon which Canada's underlying assertion of sovereignty over Indigenous lands rest (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017). This can be compared to Indigenous lawyer and educator James Sa'ke'j Youngblood Henderson's constitutional reconciliation as a starting point of reconciliation, which "grounds the process of reconciliation between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state in the juridical recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights" (Youngblood Henderson, 2013, p. 115). Rather than make redress and reparation through the granting of "Canadian citizenship" and its attendant rights to Indigenous peoples, constitutional reconciliation centres Indigenous self-autonomy and is incommensurate with injustices experienced by other minorities and diasporas in Canada (Youngblood Henderson, 2013). Like other Indigenous legal theorists, such as Anishinabe legal scholar John Borrows of Chippewa of the Nawash First Nation, Youngblood Henderson further argues that the courts have failed to accurately define constitutional reconciliation for the Crown and Indigenous peoples (2013). Moreover, "the Crown's position in constitutional litigation amounts to a de facto preference for the worshipful acceptance of established conventions and practices developed in the colonial era" (Youngblood Henderson, 2013, p. 121). He argues that Indigenous-crown relationships must be dramatically re-conceptualized from non-Euro-centric worldviews for reconciliation to take place.

There is commonly no parallel for "reconciliation", in its conventional understanding, within Indigenous languages, yet there are Indigenous ceremonies and protocols "still remembered and practised in many Aboriginal communities" today that "are used to establish relationships, repair

conflicts, restore harmony and make peace" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 122; Wilson et al., 2019). Anishnaabe scholar Lana Ray likens reconciliation to the Nishnaabeg concept of *Indinawemaaganidog* – meaning "All My Relations" (Wilson et al., 2019, p. 81). She continues; "intrinsic to this understanding is responsibility. So, in this way reconciliation can be reimagined as a process in which community responsibilities are renewed" (Wilson et al., 2019, p. 81). More holistic principles of relational accountability, responsibility (to all beings and non-beings), and relationship-building are commonly associated with Indigenous worldviews and have been suggested as alternatives when contemplating reconciliation by Indigenous scholars (Daigle, 2019; Wilson et al., 2019).

According to Deborah McGregor, "one of the limitations of conventional Western conceptions of reconciliation is the underlying assumption that reconciliation applies, virtually exclusively, to relationships among peoples" (2018b, p. 223). Environmental justice scholar Kyle Whyte, of Citizen Potawatomi Nation, suggests that conservation that supports reconciliation should elevate and make visible the importance of multispecies entanglements (i.e. humans intrinsic relationship to the land and to other species), "so that indigenous and settler conservation can share responsibilities and hold each other accountable" (Whyte, 2017, p. 5). According to Whyte (2018, p. 287) , "reconciliation processes must always be associated with Indigenous territorial reclamation". He clarifies that this reclamation is not simply about "territorial control or access to cultural and economic resources that are still subject to the forces of capitalist exploitation, patriarchy, and colonial domination" but rather a reclamation that stymies the parasitic relationships that settler colonialism perpetuates, that "must attend directly to how nutrient cycles, ecological processes and flows, and biodiversity support and empower freedom, safety, consent, trust, accountability, and the potential for people to live their aspirations". In related terms, Kanien'kehá:ka author and educator Gerald Taiaiake Alfred advocates for land restitution as a pathway to justice; "Indigenous-settler relations cannot be obviously reconciled without deconstructing the institutions that were built on racism and colonial exploitation" (2009, p. 184). A transformation wherein relationships between people and the land are rejuvenated, informed by Indigenous leadership and ways knowing, begins "on the ground: Canada ceding real jurisdiction to Indigenous peoples" (Pasternak, 2017; Yellowhead Institute, 2019a, p. 8). This transformative view of reconciliation is also shared by the Indigenous Circle of Experts, whose 2018 report reads:

> …it is up to each nation to define reconciliation for itself. In this manner, reconciliation means identifying the appropriate healing process for restoring relationships: first, between Crown and Indigenous Peoples, recognizing what has not worked in the past so it is corrected moving forward in the spirit of peace and friendship; and second, between all people (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and the lands. (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018, p. 7)

2.3.3 Critiques of Reconciliation

Indigenous articulations of reconciliation are diverse (Littlechild et al., 2021). Reconciliation has been mobilized by some Indigenous organizations as a shared template for renewing and stewarding relationships with the state, and rejected by others (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013; Taiaiake Alfred, 2005). In exploring these critiques, I take heed of Mushkegowuk/Cree geographer Michelle Daigle's (2019, p. 714) cautionary advice: "the numerous and constructive critiques of reconciliation articulated by Indigenous peoples should not be blunted as or forcibly

placed into alternative framings of reconciliation". Such critiques are valid and worthy of recognition when considering the continuing settler-colonial harms imposed on Indigenous peoples through the purposeful disruption of Indigenous culture and disconnection from their lands. The attempted erasure of Indigenous legal orders has threatened our capacity to respond to the environmental threats of the day (Yellowhead Institute, 2019a).

In the Canadian context, social movements fighting for protection of Indigenous lands have criticized the federal government for using the rhetoric of reconciliation, to quote settler scholar Andrea V. Breen's words, as a "protective armour of good intentions" (Wilson et al., 2019, p. xii), all the while pursuing expansion of extractive industries and infrastructure at the expense of Indigenous livelihoods, as asserted by movements like Idle No More and *Reconciliation is Dead* (Idle No More, n.d.; Unist'ot'en Camp, n.d.). Canada's celebration of its progress towards reconciliation "has served to distract attention from those grievances that have yet to be recognized in substantive ways as well as those wrongs that are ongoing", such as the systemic components of colonial power that facilitated institutions like residential schools and Indian reservations (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013, p. 11). Similarly, Fred Guerin who likens reconciliation to colonialism, suggests that through the discursive power of reconciliation, Canada and the extractive industries enable themselves in advancing a new economic form of "resource colonialism" (Guerin, 2019). This can be compared to Henderson and Wakeham's (2013, p. 7) argument that Canada's commitments to reconciliation serve "to shore up national mythologies of Canada's dedication to pluralism and to reinforce Canada's international reputation as a peacekeeping, peace-making nation".

Other scholars have questioned the notion of reconciliation in democratic states as a process of transitional justice, as embodied in truth and reconciliation commissions, targeting the overwhelming focus on "societal healing" over serious societal re-structuring (Stanton, 2017). As Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer, and artist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson notes, dominant narratives of justice tend to benefit the colonizer (Simpson, 2016). While the TRC process emphasized the experiences of trauma and suffering of individuals, "we were unable to account for how residential schools were a strategic tool of dispossession" (Simpson, 2016, p. 21). Furthermore, the term reconciliation in the transitional justice literature has been argued to be problematic in Indigenous-settler contexts, since it implies that the parties were once whole, experienced a rift, and now must be made whole again" (Stanton, 2017, p. 40). Outside of academia, Inuit politician John Amagoalik (2016), Métis scholar and artist David Garneau (Garneau, 2012), and Anishinaabe author Jesse Wente (2021) remind us that reconciliation calls to mind a return to harmonious relationships which in many cases were never present, suggesting that conciliation is a better fitting concept by which Indigenous peoples and Canada can achieve a relationship.

Nehiyaw (Plains Cree) scholar Matthew Wildcat and others eschew ideas of "reconciliation through inclusion" within the settler-state, instead stressing the ideal of Indigenous resurgence (Wildcat et al., 2014, p. iii). Many others leaders of resurgence have similarly questioned the intentions of state-sponsored, recognition-based reconciliation initiatives (Coulthard, 2007; Simpson, 2016). In *Red Skin, White Masks*, Coulthard (2014) asserts that the power, jurisdiction, and cultural agency that always been held by Indigenous peoples, rooted in Indigenous cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies, is often co-opted through the process of seeking

affirmation and recognition by the state and that alternatives based in Indigenous intelligence systems are necessary. The notion of Indigenous cultural resurgence was voiced early in Secwépemc (Shuswap) political leader George Manuel's Fourth World: "it is the right to travel freely, not only on our road but in our vehicles" (Manuel & Posluns, 1974, p. 217). Culturally-inherent resurgence can be defined as the process by which Indigenous communities regenerate through their own cosmologies, knowledge systems, legal orders, and traditional practices, external to processes of state recognition (Artelle et al., 2019; Coulthard, 2014; Hanson, 2016; Simpson, 2016; von der Porten et al., 2019). Indeed, Indigenous peoples continue to sustain their populations through reciprocal relationships with the natural world globally through systems which have been in place for millennia and have retained their strength despite settler-colonial encroachment (Hessami et al., 2021; McGregor, 2004; Simpson, 2014). "Globally and in Canada there is strong Indigenous resilience and resurgence despite centuries of systemic prejudice and persecution rooted in colonial worldviews and practices" (M'sit No'kmaq et al., 2021, p. 842). In the words of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, resurgence is "the rebuilding of Indigenous nations according to our own political, intellectual and cultural traditions" (Simpson, 2014, p. 13). Cherokee scholar Jeff Corntassel (2008, p. 88) explains Indigenous resurgence as everyday forms of resistance to the state's "politics of distraction" where Indigenous peoples reclaim and nurture "relational, place-based existence by challenging the ongoing, destructive forces of colonization".

The concepts of reconciliation, resurgence, and decolonization are seen as overlapping processes by some Indigenous leaders and scholars (Artelle et al., 2019; Corntassel, 2012; M'sit No'kmaq et al., 2021; Sium et al., 2012). Yet, similar to reconciliation, decolonization is a contested concept (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018). K. Wayne Yang and Unangax̂ scholar Eve Tuck (2012) remind us that the uptake of decolonization "as metaphor" by settlers serves only to alleviate settler guilt and reify settler colonialism. As they and Daigle (2019, p. 706) argue, the "spectacle of reconciliation… secures, legitimates, and effectively reproduces white supremacy and settler futurity in Canada". Securing Indigenous futurities, on the other hand, "refers to the idea that members of a society ought to be able to experience that their own efforts and contributions to their society play a part in making it so that a vibrant future is possible for the coming generations and in the perceptual experiences of young people living today" (Whyte et al., 2018, p. 15). To this, Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 35) argue that decolonization is a process that needs only to be "accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity" and must be "'all about the land'". Conversely, they argue that "reconciliation is about rescuing settler normalcy, about rescuing a settler future" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 35). In this way, reconciliation that secures Indigenous futures is therefore tied to Indigenous aspirations for political self-determination which ultimately opens space for longstanding Indigenous forms of governance, knowledge systems, and legal orders rooted in indigenous cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies to flourish.

At the same time, other scholars have provided insight into the role of settlers and allyship in reconciliation. In conversation with Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson and Métis scholar and social worker Lindsay DuPré about reconciliation in practice, Andrea V. Breen describes this as a process of understanding one's own "ignorance, assumptions, actions and inactions" and understanding the ways that settlers benefit from White supremacy, colonialism and concepts reconciliation (Wilson et al., 2019, p. 54). This can be associated with processes of un-settling,

"a cognitive and emotional process of grappling with Indigenous sovereignty, one's miseducation and ignorance, guilt, one's own identity and relationship to place, and related uncomfortable topics" (Davis et al., 2017; Steinman, 2020, p. 5).

Despite the wealth of Indigenous direction on reconciliation, and while there are inherent difficulties in appropriately evaluating and monitoring progress on Canada's responses to the TRC's 94 Calls to Action, recent reports indicate that little tangible progress has been made on reconciliation, especially with regards to the necessary structural transformation that reconciliation demands (Yellowhead Institute, 2019a). The reconciliation approaches of settler nations "are more symbolic in intent and less about actually transforming the conditions that perpetuate violence, domination and denial of rights" (Whyte, 2018, p. 220). Specifically, a lack of foundational changes at the legislative level that can foster a legal pluralism environment obstructs Canada's ability to rebalance relationships. As Saulteau First Nation legal scholar, Val Napoleon (2019, p. 4), explains in her exploration of reconciliation and legal pluralism, for Indigenous-state reconciliation to happen, "the starting place must be that Indigenous societies the world over had legal orders as part of their governance". She explains that, as legal pluralism has existed in Turtle/Island Canada since settler arrival, reconciliation must therefore confront and challenge existing legal pluralist structures (Napoleon, 2019). The TRC, which highlighted that "Euro-Canadian law is central to settler colonialism in Canada and continues to trouble the prospects for decolonial legal pluralism" (Townsend, 2022, p. 202), promises some guidance in building a robust legal pluralist framework in a non-oppressive way (Napoleon, 2019). Offering an interpretation of the TRC's recommendations, Napoleon (2019, p. 6) asserts "for reconciliation to be possible, there must be an awareness of the past and the historic existence of Indigenous legal order, recognition of the causes, and action to the change behaviours so that it is possible to build an ongoing mutually constructive and respectful relationship between legal orders into the future". Settler scholar Shiri Pasternak (2017), argues that self-determination ultimately depends on jurisdiction and a fulsome recognition of the different legal systems in Canada which include not only common law but natural law, sacred law, and customary law.

2.4 Indigenous Governance

2.4.1 Indigenous Environmental Governance

This section provides a brief overview of Indigenous environmental governance and literatures that have defined and distinguished it from Western governance models. Indigenous environmental governance systems and Indigenous-led conservation are ontologically and epistemologically distinct from Western systems and predate settler-colonial incursion by millennia (McGregor et al., 2020; Whyte et al., 2018). They are rooted in a holistic worldview that centres reciprocal relationships between humans, nonhumans, and the land (Corntassel, 2008; Degai & Petrov, 2021). Whereas contemporary settler relationships to the land base are typically oriented by neoliberal notions of utility, many, if not all, Indigenous cosmologies are based in relationships, interconnectivity, and interdependence with all beings (Mazzocchi, 2020; Whyte et al., 2018). In contrast to state management, where legitimacy is drawn down from the legal authorities of the nation-state, these local level governance and management systems draw their legitimacy from the Indigenous community's tenurial institutions and practices rooted in their respective cosmologies, values, and knowledge systems (Feit, 1988; Notzke, 1995). Fikret Berkes (1999, p. 6) defined traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) or Indigenous Knowledge (IK) as "a body of knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations by cultural

transmission, about the relationship of living being (including humans) with one another and with their environments". Citizen Potawami Nation scholar Robin Wall Kimmerer (2002) and Berkes (1999) describe IK as holistic, adaptive, non-instrumental, and embedded in local culture and Indigenous principles of reciprocity and responsibility. This is in marked contrast to the supposedly objective, dualistic, and reductionist nature of Western knowledge and knowledge systems that often treat nature as separate from culture. These knowledges, according to scholar Nicholas Reo of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and others (2017, p. 62), exist throughout many facets of Indigenous culture: "intergenerational knowledge concerning subsistence skills or expertise", "collective knowledge regarding the dynamics of resources or environmental variables over time", "knowledge of ceremony and cultural protocol", "Indigenous languages", "ancient teachings or prophesies", "knowledge concerning stewardship responsibilities", "human-nonhuman relationships", and "communally held values". It is out of these Indigenous cosmologies, epistemologies, and ecologies that Indigenous governance systems physically manifest (Whyte et al., 2018). Indigenous practices of self-management are "determined at the local level by reference to community-based systems of knowledge, values and practice" (Feit, 1988, p. 74). Therefore, TEK "is not merely an accumulation of factual information, but has played, and continues to play, a much wider role in sustaining indigenous cultures and the environments on which they depend" (Doberstein & Devin, 2004, p. 3).

Many studies have highlighted the adaptive and resilient natures of traditional and contemporary Indigenous governance systems to environmental change and the encroachment of Western-science based management regimes (Davidson-Hunt, 2003; Natcher et al., 2007; Sayles & Mulrennan, 2010; Turner et al., 2003). These Indigenous governance systems have been brought to light by various anthropological studies. For example, Scott (1986) and Feit (1979) describe the social-political systems of territory leaders or *ntuuhuu uuchimaauch* (hunter bosses) and their control and custodianship over their respective hunting territories in Eeyou Istchee Cree communities on the Eastern coast of James Bay. Scott (1986) documented how variation in territorial harvest practices by the Cree was not guided by incentives relating strictly to domestic use or market production. Rather, variations in harvest practices were better accounted for by the pairing of traditional knowledge of ecological dynamics with commonly-held cultural values of the James Bay Cree, such as a "respect for the knowledge and leadership of hunting bosses and elders, anchored in these individuals' ability to make effective decisions about activities on the land" (Scott, 1986, p. 166). More recent anthropological research has brought to light how Indigenous teachings and legal orders inform conservation, more specifically, cultural landscape protection, through Indigenous jurisdiction and authority. Examples include Argan's (2022) historical account developed in collaboration with Cowichan knowledge holders of the establishment of the *Hw'teshutsun* Indigenous protected area.

2.4.2 IPCAs, ICCAs, and Territories of Life

At the time of writing, the most commonly recognized manifestations of Indigenous-led conservation are IPCAs, also referred to as ICCAs or territories of life (ICCA Consortium, 2021; Zurba et al., 2019). According to Tran et al., "the rise in number and visibility of IPCAs has been significantly influenced by Indigenous advocacy regarding the roles and rights of Indigenous People in conservation across geographic scales" (2020, p. 11). This increased attention has coincided with international and national efforts to find ethical and equitable solutions to the threats of climate crisis and biodiversity loss (Artelle et al., 2019; Tran, Ban, et al., 2020; von der

Porten et al., 2019). These protected areas are defined by three common traits: they are Indigenous-led, they imply a long-term commitment to conservation, and they elevate Indigenous rights and responsibilities (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018). While IPCAs will take the form desired by the Indigenous groups who institute them they can support an array of socio-cultural and stewardship objectives for Indigenous groups, from the creation of local economies to resurgence and reclamation of their territories (Townsend, 2022; Tran et al., 2020). Through resurgent approaches, IPCAs decentre the state's role and have opened up formal opportunities for Indigenous peoples to engage in conservation on their own terms. "IPCAs may be acts of resurgence (e.g. of cultural revitalization and self-determination), generative expressions of refusal (e.g. of state recognition or resistance to development agendas), and expressions of Indigenous governance, jurisdiction, and authority (e.g. advancing Indigenous rights and new political configurations with the state)" (Townsend, 2022, pp. 214–215). In some cases, protected area strategies have been adopted by Indigenous peoples as part of their continued re-assertion of their inherent Indigenous rights and title in a circumvention of state-recognition in matters concerning conflicts over resource use and access to land (von der Porten et al., 2019). For instance, the Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks, while addressing Western conservation objectives such as ecological preservation, have been considered as a 'projection of sovereignty' over traditional territories wherein the First Nation can implement their respective governance and management systems (Murray & King, 2012).

Chapter 3 – Methodology and Research Methods

3.1 Research Approach

Following Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (Smith, 1999, 2012) landmark treatise on decolonizing methodologies, that brought to light the historical misrepresentation and appropriation of Indigenous peoples and cultures in conventional Eurocentric research, Anishinaabe scholar Deborah B. McGregor (2018a) explains that Indigenous peoples have historically been dehumanized and treated as objects to be researched from above rather than subjects with agency with the capacity to be research leaders themselves. The ways in which Indigenous people are involved in research has thus become a central question in research ethics (Castleden et al., 2012). In my initial research proposal to the VGFN, I was explicit in my desire to collaborate with them and to co-design the research project so that it aligned with community aspirations and research priorities. My methodological choices (i.e. semi-structured interviews) also allowed for the research to take direction from the participants themselves (Castleden et al., 2012). I viewed this step to be acting in the spirit of Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate scholar Kim TallBear's notion of *standing with*: "a researcher who is willing to learn how to 'stand with' a community of subjects is willing to be altered, to revise her stakes in the knowledge to be produced" (TallBear, 2014, p. 2).

TallBear has also provided insights into approaches to ethical accountability in research, which I found very instructive for my experiences in doing remote community field work. "The goal of 'giving back' to research subjects seems to target a key symptom of a major disease in knowledge production, but not the crippling disease itself" (TallBear, 2014, p. 2). Rather, she explains, the disease is the imagined or real "binary between the researcher and the researched – between knowing inquirer and who or what are considered to be the resources or grounds for knowledge production" (TallBear, 2014, p. 2). Referencing the work of Indian urbanist and scholar Gautam Bhan and feminist scholar Donna Harraway, TallBear suggests a feminist objectivism of an intimate and grounded inquiry "based on the lives and knowledge priorities of subjects" informed by continuous and multiple forms of engagement (TallBear, 2014, p. 6). Following this direction, I focused foremost on approaching the research as a relationship-building process, and most of all to listen deeply to and learn from the voices and experiences of my participants. For example, when developing interview guides for the case study, I focused on creating a concise set of open-ended questions that elicit stories from my participants in an attempt to seek knowledge in ways that respectfully reflected the "specific ontologies, lives, and visions of the community" and nurtured "multifarious spaces for sharing and learning" outside of my explicit research goals (McGregor et al., 2018, pp. 236–237). This approach created space for the research process to be open to direction from the Indigenous participants (Castleden et al., 2012; Wilson, 2008).

Although inclusion of a community-based research effort with VGFN provides an opportunity to engage in and experience a different research paradigm, the second half of the research project has a conflicting relationship with Indigenous methodologies. In the spirit of openness, I recognize that the methodological approach of this research project converges and diverges with the principles of Indigenous, Indigenist, and decolonizing methodologies in myriad ways (Kovach, 2009; McGregor, 2018a; Wilson, 2008; Wilson et al., 2019). On a fundamental level, the research topic itself is adversarial and may not be seen to be directly conforming or

responsive to Indigenous priorities and aspirations. I also recognize that there are aspects of the research approach that do not, and possibly, cannot, meet these ambitions. In Shawn Wilson's words, "you can change some methods to be really constructive and useful from an Indigenous perspective, and some fit well within an Indigenous paradigm. Other research methods are really built on the dominant paradigms, and they are inseparable from them" (Wilson, 2001, p. 177). For example, relational accountability, a core principle in Indigenous methodologies, is not readily applicable to this project of databasing or creating typologies; an act of naming and claiming which comes into conflict with an Indigenous research paradigm (Held, 2019; Wilson, 2001; Wilson et al., 2019). Kovach (2009) reminds us that research and choices about methodology are political acts; it guides the development of policies, programs, and so forth. In this research I therefore take a modest and bounded form of unsettling as agency to effect change within the settler-colonial institutional infrastructure (Steinman, 2020) and to "challenge existing silences" (Pickerill, 2009, p. 69). In certain ways, this study itself does not purport to be explicitly decolonial; not only in the sense that it doesn't directly work towards land restitution, but that it is weaker in reciprocity (Tuck & Yang, 2012). As such, I strove to maintain consistent connection with the Indigenous-led CRP who coordinate with various Indigenous nations and organizations engaged in cooperative conservation as well as with VGFN and the community of Old Crow throughout the research process to share ideas and cross-validate the direction of the project.

3.2 Research Methods - Overview

In addition to the research methods described, in full, within Chapter 4 and 5, I will outline my general collaborative research approach and other methods that contributed to meaningful research outcomes.

3.2.1 Summary of Key Research Methods

The manuscripts presented in Chapters 4 and 5 provide detailed accounts of the key research methods used. In summary, these include:

- For Chapter 4, a comprehensive review of co-management agreements under Parks Canada and the development of a typology to build a systematic basis to recognize and reveal differences and commonalities across a range of co-management types (Hill et al., 2012; Smith, 2002). Through discussion, the findings of the typology are compared to international standards of shared governance options for protected areas identified in the literature.

- For Chapter 5, qualitative methods, specifically semi-structured interviews, undertaken with 11 participants. Semi-structured interviews allow the participant to guide the interview toward important themes I may not yet be aware of and provide "partial insights" into a complex social phenomena (Longhurst, 2010, p. 112). These elements of semi-structured interviews are consistent with principles of decolonizing research methodology for the research process to be open to direction from the Indigenous participants (Castleden et al., 2012; Wilson, 2008). Interview data was analyzed through iterative rounds of qualitative coding (Benaquisto, 2008).

3.2.2 Collaboration

During the planning and research phase of this project I had several formal and informal discussions facilitated by the CRP, with various Indigenous conservation leaders, representatives of Indigenous governments and organizations, as well as Parks Canada between September 2020 and April 2022. I presented my research progress to and received feedback from the CRP's leadership circle in November 2021. Collaboration with Indigenous leadership and community was a part of each stage of the research. Through this process, I had several conversations with Indigenous representatives and organizations who were unwilling to participate formally in the research, but whose perspectives and commentary greatly influenced the direction of the research overall. This was true for both national-level and community-based research.

As mentioned, the very undertaking of the community-based case study, including the potential for it to be of value for Indigenous peoples, was contingent on the willingness of the VGFN and its citizens to collaborate in the research process. I first contacted the VGG's Heritage Department, who approve and govern any research that concerns VGFN, in Fall of 2020 with a research proposal. Around this time, I spoke over the phone with VGG's Fish and Wildlife Director as well as the Chair of the NYRRC to better understand the community's needs. After several months and the projects final review by an independent community heritage community that includes Elders, knowledge holders, and heritage professionals, a research agreement between the researcher and VGG was signed in May 2021. The terms of the research agreement were entirely dictated by the community. This process of collaboration aligns with the principle of relational accountability in Indigenous methodologies as well as the requirements of formal ethics and research permitting institutions such as the Tri-Council's Policy Statement Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada (Canadian Institute of Health Research et al., 2022), First Nation principles of OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession)[5], and community-defined research protocols.

Through this formal process, I was able to confirm VGFN's interest in the research and its outcomes. Yet how the research was to unfold in a practical sense was left to be seen. Foremost in my ambitions was the creation of a research project that supported VGFN and did not detract from their government's capacities. From the outset, I sought to avoid conveying a colonial attitude of a southerner researcher prescribing "solutions" to complex issues in an Indigenous community. Rather, in the design of the research I aimed to support the community in projects for which they may have otherwise completed if it were not for limited capacity and budget. Through a "taking the pulse" of co-management relationships in national parks (Weitzner & Manseau, 2001), my research ultimately contributes to VGG's pursuit of establishing expectations for culturally appropriate and community-first partnered conservation and environmental monitoring approaches. Despite the relatively small scale of the community-based study, I placed a central value on meaningful research outcomes for the community, part of ethical participatory research (Mulrennan et al., 2012). This included emphasizing long form quotations to carry through community voices, engaging in oral presentations, and creating non-technical and non-academic outputs for the community.

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[5] OCAP® is a registered trademark of the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC)". See (https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/)

3.2.3 Participant Observation/Observant participant/Research Relationships
While I did not intentionally espouse ethnographic or anthropologic research methodology in this study, participant observation was a key component of the community research with VGFN in Old Crow, YT. This was understood as the practice of immersive observation within a community to better understand the lives, worldviews, and experiences of participants (Laurier, 2010). This involved multiple community visits, a commitment to maintaining a visible presence in the community, and spending time on the land (described below). On a personal level, I recognize this "research method" as merely an academic framing of a process that may be more aptly understood as relationship- and trust-building generally. In other words, while I understood myself as an outsider, I was not an outside observer but, to the contrary, I was entangled in a network of relationships which to the best of my ability, I remained observant and critical of in order to maintain awareness around the ways in which positionality and relationships affected the research approach and the interpretation of the research data. Reconceptualizing participant observation as a reflexive and observant participation, in comparison, recognizes that researchers in communities face a tension as both participants in and observers of the study phenomena they study (Adler & Adler, 1987; Campbell & Lassiter, 2014; Seim, 2021). Through this approach comes an acknowledgement that all aspects of the research are ultimately influenced in my own subjectivity and worldview; including the production of data, its interpretation, and eventual transformation into community-facing outputs (Campbell & Lassiter, 2014). With these reflections in mind, the following section recounts my visits and time spent in Old Crow to provide a more personal and relational account of the community-based research project.

My first visit coincided with the first annual community research gathering, a two-day event hosted by Vuntut Gwitchin Government where researchers were invited to present findings to community members. It was at this event that I first met many of my eventual participants in a casual setting and gained an understanding of research projects in the region. Many community leaders, women and children, active hunters, and other members were in active attendance and their keen interest in their community's research partnerships allowed me to cross-reference my research objectives. I decided to spend an extended period in the community upon my first visit as a substitute teacher at the Chief Zzeh Gittlit school. As research funding could not sustain such a prolonged community visit, this approach allowed more opportunities to familiarize myself with the community and gain a preliminary understanding of community intra-relations. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to build trust in the community through invitations to various community events, to dine at people's houses, and spend afternoons lingering at the John Tizya Centre browsing Parks Canada literature and Vuntut Gwitchin heritage project reports. Admittedly, wearing two hats as both a researcher and teacher, led to some confusion as to my presence as an outsider in the community which often required clarification during introductions – and almost always led to rich conversations about community happenings. Although many potential participants were suggested to me by the Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Committee, eventually I was actively sought out by community members who wished to have an interview. I learned that exorbitant helicopter fees precluded the possibility of a visit to Vuntut National Park itself. I was, however, able to spend a fair bit of time on Crow Mountain and Second Mountain, two peaks adjacent to Old Crow that were very active during the arrival of the Porcupine Caribou herd in Fall 2021. At this time, most of my planned interviews were set aside, as most families were out on the land harvesting caribou or at home processing and drying meat.

A second ten-day visit to the community, severely delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, was organized for Spring of 2022. This visit was largely planned to maintain a presence in the community, allow participants to review their transcripts, and to make general observations pertaining to the research. Upon my arrival, I brushed past Participant 6, the sole full-time Parks Canada staff member based in Old Crow, who was in that moment moving to a new position at a neighboring field unit. This compelling piece of news sparked many engaging conversations over the following days with my participants about Parks Canada's changing role in the community, or lack thereof. In truth, this week was spent in warm conversations over tea and bannock, helping out at the school where possible, and delivering gifts of honey from my family's apiary in Ontario to my participants and generous hosts. Finally, a third visit in February 2023, whereupon I was able to receive final community consent and a round of feedback from research participants for the publication of findings and give an oral presentation of the project's research findings to the community and its research partners at the annual Vuntut Gwitchin Government Research Round-Up.

3.3 Research Ethics

Research ethics approval was granted by Concordia University's Research Ethics Board (#30015011), by the Vuntut Gwitchin Government's Heritage Department, and through the Parks Canada Agency Research and Collection Permit system (VUN-2021-39090). As a resident of the Yukon, I was exempt from the Scientists and Explorers License from the Yukon Government.

Chapter 4 – Manuscript #1

Title: A Typology of National Park Co-management Agreements in the Era of Reconciliation in Canada[6]

Abstract
Through recent Indigenous-led collaborations, Parks Canada – in response to commitments to reconciliation - has signalled its willingness to revisit the involvement of Indigenous peoples in the co-management of national parks, national park reserves, and national marine conservation areas (NMCAs). However, co-management, the institutional arrangement on which these and other longstanding partnerships have been built, has a disputed and uneven track record in meeting the needs, interests, and aspirations of Indigenous people. Through the development of a typology of different types of co-management agreements this paper addresses the potential of co-management to serve as a vehicle for reconciliation within national parks, reserves and NMCAs. The study fills a critical gap in understanding co-management governance by undertaking a comprehensive review of 23 negotiated co-management agreements involving the state and Indigenous groups in a national park context. The resulting typology differentiates the agreements based on context and governance arrangements as a basis for exploring the potential for shared governance approaches with Parks Canada and identifying strengths and weaknesses of co-management agreements in serving reconciliation commitments. Findings suggest that despite innovative approaches to co-management and an apparent willingness to support Indigenous-led conservation efforts, Parks Canada's ability to engage in true shared governance with Indigenous groups according to international standards is limited by a demonstrated reluctance of the Canadian government to make the necessary adjustments to underlying legislation regarding the sharing of authority in national parks.

Introduction
In 2021, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau publicly acknowledged Canada's attempted genocide of Indigenous peoples (Canada, 2021a). This admission was in response to decades of Indigenous political mobilisation and the findings of transitional justice inquiries such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)(2015) and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019). The TRC defined reconciliation as a "mutual process to be engaged in by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike" to heal relationships through truth telling, acknowledgements, reparations, and addressing underlying structural causes to prevent future harms (Stanton, 2017, p. 22). While the TRC and earlier public inquiries have provided Canada with ample guidance and principles on which to build reconciliation, progress on these actions has been slow (Yellowhead Institute, 2019b). The response has wavered "from serious political and socio-economic transformation to the maintenance of the status quo" through, at times, performative actions of reconciliation and redress (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013, p. 9). Indeed, a host of Indigenous leaders and scholars have critiqued state-led reconciliation as a largely empty gesture that fails to address the underlying conditions that perpetuate the ongoing harms of colonialism (Coulthard, 2014; Daigle, 2019; Guerin, 2019; Napoleon, 2019; Taiaiake Alfred, 2009; Whyte, 2018; Wildcat et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2019).

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[6] This manuscript has not yet been submitted to any peer review journals. Candidate journals include *International Indigenous Policy*, *Environment and Planning*, or *Environmental Management*.

Yet, it is recognized that at a minimum reconciliation will demand redress, restitution, and a rebalancing of relationships across all settler institutions (Littlechild et al., 2021). One particularly fertile area for this transformation is in conservation, where growing support and recognition for Indigenous-led conservation and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) now presents a serious opportunity to advance reconciliation (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; Tran et al., 2020; Zurba et al., 2019).

This "new paradigm" of conservation, characterised by support for and recognition of Indigenous forms of stewardship, holds the promise of a transformational approach to Canadian conservation bolstered by the TRC, the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and commitments to international biodiversity targets (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; Parks Canada Agency, 2022a; Stevens, 2014). Foundational principles and guidance in support of this revised approach were put forward by the Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE) in the 2018 report "We Rise Together", as part of a mandate to create recommendations for achieving Canada's Pathway to Target 1[7] (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; Nikolakis & Hotte, 2019). The ICE advocates for the adoption of Indigenous models of engagement, such as ethical space and two-eyed seeing, to support a shift in expectations around Indigenous-state conservation partnerships (Bartlett et al., 2012; Ermine, 2007). In response, Parks Canada, the national agency responsible for national parks, national park reserves, NMCAs, and national historic sites, has signalled its commitment to advancing Indigenous-led conservation and IPCAs through a series of recent collaborative partnerships intended to support Indigenous self-determination and reconciliation (CBC, 2022b). These recent projects reflect Parks Canada's alignment with federal government commitments to reconciliation by "renewing nation-to-nation, government-to-government, and Inuit-Crown relationships based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership" (Parks Canada, 2019, p. 8).

While the creation of IPCAs has been a focal point of the revised approach, the dire need for redress, restitution, and reconciliation in existing protected areas is also called for, chiefly in national parks that were established as strategic tools of settler colonialism often involving the forceful dispossession or marginalization of Indigenous peoples from their lands (Johnston & Mason, 2020; Townsend, 2022; Youdelis, 2016). Many of these Indigenous groups continue to have strained relationships with Parks Canada, prompting Parks Canada to initiate a process of offering formal apologies to those affected by the dark history of exclusion they now openly acknowledge (Dragon Smith & Grandjambe, 2020; Finegan, 2018; Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018). Ermineskin Cree scholar Danika Littlechild and others (2021) point out that while Parks Canada acknowledges reconciliation as a unique process specific to each Indigenous community and protected area, its mandate advances a fragmented and diluted approach that places Parks Canada rather than Indigenous people at the centre of reconciliation (Littlechild et al., 2021). This is reflected in Parks Canada's sustained commitment to shared governance as a key mechanism of transformation. It raises a central question; can reconciliation be achieved through enhancing "Indigenous peoples' decision-making roles in the management of heritage places through relationship-building structures, collaborative arrangements and/or formalized

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[7] Canada Target 1, responding to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, aims to increase land conservation and marine conservation by 17% and 10%, respectively. Recently, these goals were updated to protect 30% of land and water by 2030 (Canada, 2022)

cooperative management boards" – in other terms, through co-management[8] arrangements involving the state? (Parks Canada Agency, 2022a).

Co-management as an institution of governance represented a historically significant shift in approach for Parks Canada in the 1980s, supporting a redistribution of socioeconomic benefits from national parks to Indigenous communities (Dearden & Bennett, 2016). However, it has become a target of significant scholarly critique over time, primarily for its failure to address imbalances of power-sharing, participation, and respect of knowledge systems (e.g. Nadasdy, 2003; Sandlos, 2007). Many co-management structures established in national parks are legally constrained by the provisions of comprehensive land claim agreements which have limited Indigenous authority to joint advisory bodies (Fenge, 1993; Sandlos, 2014). Not surprisingly, the limitations of co-management's past record of relationship building have led some to question its capacity to be repurposed to serve the ambitious promise of reconciliation. Chance Finegan (2018), a political scientist at the University of Toronto, Mississauga, has argued vociferously against the reliance of the new paradigm of protected areas in Canada on tools such as co-management. Likewise, in a recent paper focused on identifying better alternatives to a now ubiquitous co-management regime, Grey and Kuokkanen (2020, p. 920) argued that co-management "cannot be 'tweaked to provide better outcomes for Indigenous peoples, nor can it provide a stepping stone to their self-determination".

According to historian Mark Spence (1999), national parks are in many ways reflections of the legal and political circumstances of Indigenous peoples at the time they were created. The complex, piecemeal evolution of Parks Canada's implementation of co-management of national parks, documented in detail by several scholars (Dearden & Bennett, 2016; Langdon et al., 2010; Sandlos, 2014), invites scepticism around co-management as an equitable and sustainable institutional arrangement for national park governance. For example, inconsistencies and tensions in Parks Canada's approaches to Indigenous engagement and collaboration have been raised in relation to politics of scale (Dearden & Bennett, 2016; Timko & Satterfield, 2008), inequitable policy approaches (Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012), power and epistemic imbalances (Langdon et al., 2010; Lemelin & Bennett, 2010; Sandlos, 2014), conflicts between Indigenous and state conservation approaches (Doberstein & Devin, 2004; Notzke, 1995; Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012), and lack of meaningful participation (Johnston & Mason, 2020; Youdelis, 2016). At a broader level, scholarship and policy literature indicate that Parks Canada has failed to meet the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) standards for shared governance with Indigenous communities (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013; Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012).

Indigenous peoples around the world, including in other settler-state settings, are increasingly advancing conservation approaches that intently depart from collaborative approaches with the state (Townsend, 2022). Contrary to this trend, the ICE, alongside scholars deeply involved in Indigenous conservation collaborations in Canada, such as biologist Kyle Artelle at the University of Victoria, have recommended co-management as an approach for Indigenous groups that "could in turn support their agency and the resurgence of practices that have

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[8] Co-management, or according to Parks Canada, "cooperatively management" or joint management, refers to a diverse array of co-management approaches denoting "the sharing of power, responsibility, knowledge and decision-making" (Dearden & Bennett, 2016, p. 11)

supported sustained interactions between people and places for millennia" (Artelle et al., 2019, p. 4; Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018). Yet sustainable and equitable conservation partnerships must ultimately reconcile power imbalances and respectfully engage different worldviews and identities (Dietsch et al., 2021; Moola & Roth, 2019). In this sense co-management can only support reconciliation if it enables Indigenous self-governance and self-determination through nation-to-nation relationships that go beyond mere recognition of Indigenous peoples or incorporation of Indigenous worldviews and knowledges.

Various pathways have been suggested by which co-management arrangements might evolve towards a rebalancing of power. One alternative partnership may be through co-governance or co-jurisdiction, implying shared control and decision-making, which is increasingly discussed in the northern and western Canadian co-management contexts (Clark & Joe-Strack, 2017; Martin, 2016; Ottawa, 1992; Simms et al., 2016). Co-jurisdiction was also an original recommendation of the RCAP for environmental management (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996, p. 6). Sandlos (2014) suggests a more radical approach to co-management that involves a devolution of power to local Indigenous stewardship regimes. These and related alternatives support what Temagami First Nation scholar of Indigenous politics Dale Turner refers to as constitutional and political justice, whereby Indigenous laws and culture can stand on their own (D. Turner, 2013).

Following Townsend (2022), whose recent research has explored various pathways to reconciliation through IPCAs, I argue that the extent to which co-management can support Indigenous governance and self-determination – through power-sharing arrangements – is critical to its capacity to fulfill commitments to reconciliation (Reed et al., 2021; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Despite the attention given to power inequities, most critiques of co-management are informed by case-study analysis rather than a more comprehensive examination of a fuller range of co-management experiences, each of which is "influenced by the history and legacy of the older systems, its power relations and conflict levels" (Petursson & Kristofersson, 2021, p. 4). To address this, this paper aims to recognise and reveal differences and commonalities across a range of distinct co-management types. I use a typology approach based on a comprehensive review of negotiated co-management agreements between Indigenous groups and Parks Canada focussing on contextual and governance dimensions. This not only helps unpack and understand the possibilities that co-management, as a broad category of governance institution, presents, but it also provides a descriptive account and a lens for a deeper exploration of mechanisms (e.g. board composition, dispute resolution) within those types for their potential to support renewed relationships and reconciliation (Hill et al., 2012).

According to the Canadian National Parks Act (2000), co-management is achievable only through negotiated agreements and contracts, but is not guaranteed to Indigenous groups (Dearden & Bennett, 2016). As there is no published literature on these particular agreements, the research objective is to establish a comprehensive understanding of the spectrum of co-management agreements as a governance institution in national parks, national park reserves, and NMCAs[9]. Comparative assessments of national park co-management agreements in the literature

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[9] While there are a small number of examples of co-management agreements in National Historic Sites, some of which cover substantial land bases (e.g. Saoyú-?ehdacho NHS), they are excluded from this study. This is largely

are few and have been based solely upon individual or sample-based case studies (e.g. Martin, 2016; Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012; Timko & Satterfield, 2008). These studies have established that claims-based management in the north and west has generally defined Indigenous roles for planning and management and that parks in the south lag behind in power-sharing but have failed to systematically describe and contrast differences between arrangements on a systemic level. Finally, many of these studies are outdated as a result of Parks Canada's evolved commitments to engaging with Indigenous peoples and recent park establishment. This study therefore addresses these knowledge gaps and builds upon a preliminary typology effort by Milko (2020) and an internal policy review of co-management agreements of Parks Canada's (2018).

The paper begins with a literature review focussed on the evolution of perspectives and expectations around co-management. It then describes the methods used to review co-management agreements across the national park, national park reserve, and NMCA network[10] and develop a typology of co-management agreements. Based on the resulting typology, I examine how co-management agreement types relate to the IUCN's shared governance standards using a typology of governance options developed by Milko (2020), building from the co-management typologies of Hill et al. (2012) and Lyver et al. (2014). The paper concludes with a general discussion addressing the contribution of my findings to scholarship, and implications for reconciliation.

Table 1: Four Shared Governance Options for National Parks According to Power-Sharing Dimensions (Milko, 2020)

	State Governed and Managed	State Governed and Managed with an Indigenous advisory body to advise on /participate in management	State Governed and Managed with an Indigenous advisory body to advise on governance and management	Jointly Governed, Jointly Managed
Power Sharing				
Decision making level and control	Decision-making agency controlled; Indigenous input may be provided through consultation	Decision-making Agency controlled; Indigenous input may be provided on a local scale	Decision-making Agency controlled; Indigenous input may be provided via agreed structures	Decision making defined by both Indigenous law and culture, and partner requirements - codified in jointly developed agreement or legislation.
Rules Definition	Rules defined by agency and constrained only by legally enforced Indigenous rights	Rules defined by Agency as constrained by legislative and policy recognition of Indigenous rights	Rules defined by Agency as constrained by constitutional, legislative, and policy recognition of Indigenous Rights	Rules defined by Agency and Indigenous peoples.

Literature Review

Two challenges characterise the literature on co-management: wavering adoption by government and a longstanding academic debate (Clark & Joe-Strack, 2017). This review focusses on key studies addressing the changing roles and assessment of co-management institutions over time. I privilege case studies and collaborative research done with Indigenous communities across

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due to the disparate nature of the Historic Sites and Monuments Act (1985) relative to the Canadian National Parks and National Marine Conservation Area Acts.

[10] While the focus of the study concerns these three protected area types, I frequently use national parks in a conventional sense to refer to all types.

Indigenous Canada/Turtle Island and other settler states such as across Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australia. Additionally, I provide a general overview of approaches to understanding the governance elements of co-management and power-sharing arrangements in governance.

Co-Management and Evolving Expectations for Collaboration in Conservation
Since the 1970s, attitudes towards and understandings of co-management have evolved significantly. Despite cloudy definitions and a contested assessment, co-management has become ubiquitous across environmental management contexts and government policy, especially in northern Canada (Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020). There are various top-down and community-driven factors behind co-management (Notzke, 1995). Comprehensive land claims or modern treaties, which drove the establishment of several northern national parks, introduced a new driver for co-management arrangements (Atkinson, 2001; Notzke, 1995). Co-management was introduced as a compromise under land claims negotiations when local Indigenous jurisdiction conflicted with the demands of the state (Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020; Pasternak, 2017; Mulrennan and Scott, 2005). Twenty years ago when examples of co-management were limited, co-management under constitutionally-protected land claims was described as a "permanent, institutionalized relationship" between Indigenous groups and the state (Mulrennan & Scott, 2005; Usher, 1996, p. 1). Co-management was wielded as an "instrument of public government", often presented as the sole alternative to Indigenous groups, in contexts of state-sanctioned resource development (Mulrennan & Scott, 2005; Usher, 1993, p. 6). However, as co-management became more ubiquitous, researchers began to document the strategic uptake of co-management by Indigenous communities as a mechanism for their engagement with the state (Berkes, 2009; Diver, 2016; Hill et al., 2012; Lyver et al., 2014; Martin, 2016; Mulrennan & Scott, 2005; Zurba et al., 2012). Yet**,** as case studies have indicated, the state and Indigenous communities often interpret the purpose of co-management differently, and in many cases, Indigenous communities sought arrangements closer to co-jurisdiction or co-governance while the state focused on consultative arrangements (Martin, 2016; Parsons et al., 2021). Scholars observed that the strategic uptake of co-management by Indigenous governments as a tool of engagement with the state and its attendant outcomes, are dependent upon the legal and constitutional tools available to Indigenous groups at the time (Mulrennan & Scott, 2005). In Canada, the framework for the recognition of Indigenous rights under *Constitution Act,* 1982 s. 35 has led to a tangled web of jurisprudence that creates unequal opportunities for Indigenous groups to engage in co-management (Nikolakis & Hotte, 2019). Furthermore, the courts have tended to avoid interpretations of Indigenous rights that conflict with Canada's underlying assertion of sovereignty and title over Indigenous territories, therefore limiting the prospect of co-jurisdiction (Borrows, 2015).

Amidst changing attitudes towards co-management by Indigenous and state governments, co-management has also been subject to a conflicted academic debate. In its early form, it was viewed as a top-down policy solution to devolve and share power and responsibilities to local level management systems (Berkes, 1987; Feit, 1988; Usher, 1993). As a governance mechanism of the Canadian state, early studies through the 1980s to 2000s focused on power asymmetries and co-management's tendency to co-opt and displace Indigenous governance and knowledge systems, the very dynamics it also purported to remediate (Berkes et al., 1991; Nadasdy, 2003; Stevenson, 2006). Case studies in this era indicated that co-management institutions had little to offer Indigenous communities with respect to self-determination (Rodon, 1998). As opinions shifted during the 2000s, co-management scholars began to re-consider co-management as a

step-wise relationship-building process through which more equitable levels of power-sharing, participation, and knowledge integration were achieved (Berkes, 2009; Carlsson & Berkes, 2005; Natcher et al., 2005). Feit (2005), informed by Cree perspectives, showed that co-management regimes may in fact enable co-governance and Indigenous autonomy despite possibly contradictory intentions of the state. Yet for more than two decades, scholars have suggested that co-management should be remodelled. For instance, Indigenous models, like the two-row wampum, could be introduced to re-structure co-management arrangements and integrate knowledge systems (McGregor, 2002; Stevenson, 2006). Other critiques have suggested co-management be re-tooled to centre community objectives and focus on reconciliation and redress (Armitage et al., 2020; Jacobson et al., 2016). Despite these calls for change, power imbalances in co-management arrangements are still evident in Canada (Sandlos, 2014; White, 2018; Youdelis et al., 2020).

Following more recent and targeted calls from both Indigenous and non-indigenous researchers and practitioners for solutions to the limitations of co-management, Indigenous engagement models such as ethical space (Ermine, 2007), Two-Eyed Seeing/Etuaptmumk (Bartlett et al., 2012), or two-row wampum/Kaswentha (McGregor, 2002) have encouraged renewed expectations and attitudes around Indigenous-state relationships across various contexts including conservation governance (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; Laurila, 2019; Littlechild & Sutherland, 2021; Nikolakis & Hotte, 2021; Zurba et al., 2021). These changing expectations are bolstered by the impetus set by conservation organizations at various scales who have defined principles and guidance for restructuring conservation approaches in line with Canada's acknowledgement of Indigenous rights to self-determination and self-government and the renewal of relationships (Moola & Roth, 2019; M'sɨt No'kmaq et al., 2021). In addition to 2018 ICE report, the United Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Canada first endorsed in 2016 as a response to the TRC and implemented in 2021, affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to the conservation, stewardship, and productive capacity of their lands and territories (M'sɨt No'kmaq et al., 2021; United Nations, 2007). Similar calls for Indigenous leadership have been included across international sustainability agreements since as early as the 1987 *Brundtland Report* (Higgins, 1998).

While these frameworks promise enhancements of co-management towards meeting Indigenous priorities and needs, there remains a challenge of measuring the track-record of co-management for meeting such objectives due to its numerous variants and the diversity of contexts in which these are rooted (Clark and Joe-Strack, 2017). Various governance analysis frameworks and typologies have been developed to foster understanding of the diversity of power-sharing arrangements in co-management. Frameworks for studying governance structures exist that consider the various dynamics and interplay between scale, context, institutions, actors, and actions (Ostrom, 2005; Petursson & Kristofersson, 2021; Schröter et al., 2014; Young, 2002). Typologies have been used to analyze collaborative management of protected areas, wildlife, and natural resources along spectrums of power-sharing and participation using diverse sets of parameters and metrics among which agreements may be a parameter themselves (Hill et al., 2012; Hughey et al., 2017; Plummer & Fitzgibbon, 2004; Puley & Charles, 2022; Sen & Nielsen, 1996; Wyatt et al., 2013). This includes two typology studies of co-management within national parks in settler state settings, neither of which addressed the Canadian context (Lyver et al., 2014; Martin, 2016). Typology approaches are typically based in either or both rational choice

institutionalism and sociological institutionalism (Hill et al., 2012; Plummer & Fitzgibbon, 2004). The former, which assumes "that actors behave as utility maximizers to rank their priorities within institutional constraints" (Hill et al., 2012, p. 23) is often complemented by the latter, which assumes social and political contexts influence actors' calculations of utility and considers the extent to which institutions "enable and empower, provide licenses, and create opportunities" (Jentoft et al., 1998, p. 427).

Methods

Identifying Agreement Cases

The creation of the co-management agreement typology involved several iterative stages of data collection and analysis. As a first step, I identified relevant agreements in order to prepare a database; that is, negotiated agreements which included an expressed goal to establish cooperative approaches to national park, national park reserve, or NMCA management between an Indigenous group and Parks Canada. As such, contribution agreements and pre-park establishment agreements were excluded. The objective of the study was to review the total population of agreements as opposed to a sample or case-study approach, with a specific focus on the incorporation from agreements from the south and Atlantic regions and historic treaty contexts. To identify existing agreements, I reviewed journal articles, plans, reports, media releases, and news articles. I identified 27 individual national parks and 4 NMCAs where Indigenous peoples have entered into cooperative management agreements. Direct contact was made with Indigenous governments and park managers by email and phone to request access to the agreements. Ultimately, I reviewed 23 cooperative agreements across the national parks and NMCA system[11] published between 1984 and 2022, two of which are reviewed based on data extracted from secondary sources (i.e., journal articles, reports, media releases, published plans, or web pages). These agreements correspond to cooperative management arrangements of 21 national parks and 3 NMCAs. Additional relevant agreements identified in the review were excluded from the study for diverse reasons: inaccessibility either due to confidentiality issues, difficulties encountered in contacting park representatives, or lack of secondary data. Table 2 presents a list of agreements and contextual data ordered by the year of agreement. "Assignments" of agreements to the agreement typology, explained in the following section, are best understood as alignments, as agreements may have been amended since their date of origin.

Table 2: List of agreements, year of agreement, year of park establishment, province/territory of park, Indigenous representation, legal/jurisdictional context, ordered by year of agreement.

Agreement	Agreement Year	Park Est.	Province/ Territory	Indigenous Groups	Legal Context	Type 12
The Inuvialuit Final Agreement (Ivvavik NP)	*1984*	*1984*	YT	Inuvialuit	Inuvialuit Final Agreement (1984)	CMB
KFN Final Agreement, CAFN Final Agreement (Kluane NP and NPR)	*1993, 2004*	*1976*	YT	Kluane First Nation and Champagne and Aishihik First Nation	Kluane First Nation Final Agreement (2004), Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Final Agreement (1995), Umbrella Final Agreement (1990)	CMB
An Agreement for the Establishment of a	*1992*	*1992*	N.W.T.	Inuvialuit	Inuvialuit Final Agreement (1984)	CMB

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[11] Secondary sources used for Torngat NP Inuit IBA and Thaidene Nëné NPR Establishment Agreement

[12] See *Table 3* for agreement types: Relationship-Building Agreement (RBA), Interest-based Advisory Body Agreement (ABA), Co-management Board Agreement (CMB), Consensus Management Agreement (CMA)

National Park on Banks Island (Aulavik NP)						
Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement (Vuntut NP)	1992	1993	YT	Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation	Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement (1992), Umbrella Final Agreement (1990)	CMB
Gwaii Haanas Agreement, (Gwaii Haanas Marine Agreement*) (Gwaii Haanas NPR and NMCA)	1993 (2010)	1993 (1988)	B.C.	Haida Nation	Active Claim, Court Decisions (Haida Nation v. British Columbia (2004))	CMA
Federal-Provincial Memorandum of Agreement for Wapusk National Park	1996	1996	MB	Fox Lake First Nation and York Factory First Nation	Treaty 5 (1875), Northern Flood Agreement (1997)	CMB
Agreement to Establish a National Park in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region Near Paulatuk, NWT, (IBA for Park Expansion) (Tuktut Nogait NP)	1998 (2005)	1998	N.W.T.	Inuvialuit (Inuvialuit Game Council, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Paulatuk Community Corporation, Paulatuk Hunters and Trappers Committee)	Inuvialuit Final Agreement (1984), Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim (1994), Treaty 11 (1921)	CMB
Terms of Agreement for Senior Management Forum (Riding Mountain NP)	1998	1933	MB	Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation	Treaty 2 (1871), Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation Specific Claim (2004)	ABA
Inuit IBA for Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq and Sirmilik National Parks	1999	1972	NT	Qikiqtani Inuit Association	Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1993)	CMB
Nahanni National Park Reserve Interim Park Management Arrangement	2003 (2009)	1976	N.W.T.	Dehcho First Nations (represented by Deh Cho First Nations Grand Chief)	Treaty 11 (1921), Treaty 8 (1900), Deh Cho Self-Governance Framework	CMB
An Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement for Ukkusiksalik National Park of Canada	2001	2003 (2014)	NT	Kivalliq Inuit Association representing the Inuit of Nunavut Settlement Area	Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1993)	CMB
Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement for Tongait KakKasuangita SilakKijapvinga/Torngat Mountains NPR	2005	2008	N.L.	Inuit Labrador (Labrador Inuit Association) and Nunavik Inuit (Makivik Corporation)	Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (2005), Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (2008)	CMB
Riding Mountain Forum Agreement (Terms of Agreement)	2006	1933	MB	Coalition representing Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation, Ebb and Flow First Nation, Waywayseecappo First Nation, Rolling River First Nation, Tootinaowaziibeeng First Nation, Gambler First Nation, and Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation	Treaty 2 (1871), Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation Specific Claims	ABA
Agreement for the cooperation in the planning and management of Pacific Rim National Park Reserve (to become Maa-nulth Treaty Side Agreement)	2006 (2012)	1970	B.C.	Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Toquaht Nation, Uchuckleshaht Tribe, and Ucluelet First Nation	Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement (not ratified until 2011)	CMB
Memorandum of Cooperation between Caldwell First Nation and Walpole Island First Nation and Point Pelee National Park	2011	1918	ON	Caldwell First Nation and Walpole Island First Nation	Southern Ontario Treaties (1764-1862) (Treaty 2, 1790)	RBA
Terms of Reference for Point Pelee Nation Park First Nations Advisory Circle	2011	1918	ON	Caldwell First Nation and Walpole Island First Nation	Southern Ontario Treaties (1764-1862) (Treaty 2, 1790)	ABA
PC Interim Arrangement (Kejimkujik and Cape Bretons Highlands NP)	2012 (2017)	1967	N.S.	Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia as represented by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs (13 at time of signing, but may fluctuate)	Peace and Friendship Treaties (1725-1779), TOR for a Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Consultation Process	RBA
Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement for Qausuittuq NP	2015	2015	NT	Qikiqtani Inuit Association representing the Inuit of Qikiqtani region and of Resolute, NT in particular	Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1993)	CMB

Establishment Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (Thaidene Nëné NPR)	*2019*	*2019*	N.W.T.	Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation	Treaty #8 (1899), Land Claims and self-Governance negotiations for both Akaitcho Dene First Nations and Northwest Territory Métis Nation	CMA
Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement	*2019*	*TBD*	NT	Qikiqtani Inuit Association	Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1993)	CMA
Memorandum of Understanding - PCA and Saugeen Ojibway First Nation (Bruce NP and Fathom Five NMA)	*2021*	*1987*	ON	Saugeen Ojibway First Nation	Southern Ontario Treaties (1764-1862) (Treaty 72, 1854), R. v. Jones and Nadjiwon (1993), On-going legal claims on treaty and title	RBA
Ndahecho gondié gháádé Agreement (Nah?ą Dehé/Nahanni NPR)	*2022*	*1976*	N.W.T.	Nah?ą Dehé Dene Band and Dehcho First Nations	Treaty 11 (1921), Treaty 8 (1899), Deh Cho Self-Governance Framework	CMA

*Gwaii Haanas Agreement and the Gwaii Haanas Marine Agreement are herein considered as one agreement as the latter primarily extends the roles and responsibilities of the former to the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area

Agreement Database

As a second step, I scanned the content of agreements to create a database which involved coding each agreement according to a set of parameters. For the initial agreement scan, these were selected based on parameters applied in established governance typologies that were potentially relevant to negotiated agreements (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996; Bowie, 2013; Boyd & Lorefice, 2018; Hill et al., 2012; Hughey et al., 2017; Lyver et al., 2014; Sen & Nielsen, 1996; Wyatt et al., 2013). Contextual dimensions were also deemed important for supporting comparisons between negotiated agreements in environmental and resource management between Indigenous groups and the state (Caine & Krogman, 2010; O'Faircheallaigh et al., 2003; Petursson & Kristofersson, 2021). Therefore, the initial databasing of agreements included the following parameter, among others: history of park establishment; treaty context; transparency; legal enforceability; Indigenous involvement and representation; harvest rights; capacity-building; funding; economic opportunities; governance structures; time-scale; respect and control of Indigenous Knowledge(s), language, and heritage; principles of Indigenous governance; and intercultural purpose.

Typology

The third step, to create a governance typology of the co-management agreements, involved narrowing parameters from the agreement database to a common set of differentiable dimensions and subparameters relating to context and governance. Following Mitchell and Shortell (2000), this selection method took an iterative approach to categorization and revision, which involved revisiting agreements to validate certain subparameters, and then adjusting subparameters to fit the database, and so forth. This process was necessary as the initial set of parameters of the agreement database covered a wide array of themes that in many cases exceeded the scope of content provided by the negotiated agreements and in other cases did not produce meaningful results. For example, despite the relevance of parameters addressing provisions relating to Indigenous governance, Indigenous worldviews, Indigenous knowledges, or cultural values in co-management, the diversity and complexity of these considerations, both between agreements and within agreement types, limited any meaningful analysis. The practice of redacting politically and culturally sensitive material from public agreements further limited the use of this type of parameter. Given these constraints, including the impossibility of determining which agreements had been redacted, I opted to focus more narrowly on contextual governance parameters which were available for all agreements. While this permitted the creation of a

typology, the excluded parameters limit the potential of the study in accounting for certain aspects of agreements that are more reflective of Indigenous interests. The final iteration of the typology employs four co-management agreement types under Parks Canada, distinguished by two primary dimensions of context and governance which correspond to the following contextual and governance subparameters.

1. Context: Time of agreement implementation relative to park establishment date (proxy for early involvement of Indigenous peoples) (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018; Reo et al., 2017; Sen & Nielsen, 1996); reason for Indigenous involvement (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018); legal context (Wyatt et al., 2013), geographical context (Petursson & Kristofersson, 2021)
2. Governance: legal strength (Hughey et al., 2017), Indigenous representation (Hughey et al., 2017; Petursson & Kristofersson, 2021); governance body composition, mandate, and decision-making processes (Gibson et al., 2020; Hughey et al., 2017; Wyatt et al., 2013); processes of adaptation (Hughey et al., 2017)

Borrowing from Parks Canada's own nomenclature[13] for co-management arrangements (2018), these are referred to herein as: relationship-building agreements (RBA), interest-based advisory body agreements (ABA), cooperative management agreements (CMB), and consensus management agreements (CMA). Key differences across context and governance dimensions between agreements are presented in Table 3. In combination with the agreements reviewed, I explore key differences and illustrative examples between agreement types along the context and governance dimensions established in the typology, presented in Tables 4 and 5.

It is important to recognise that the focus on power-sharing elements of agreements ignores other faces of co-management which may be mechanisms to support certain processes of reconciliation, such as those illuminated by Finegan (2018), including employment, capacity-building, and stewardship programs. Although not a focus of this study, the typology suggests that certain agreements, for example RBAs and ABAs, may serve an important role in renewing relationships, as they are negotiated, in part or in full, with this as their primary intent and are typically more flexible and adaptable to evolving Indigenous priorities.

There are other limitations to the typology approach which I choose to bring to light in order to clarify the rationale behind the relatively narrow scope of the study. Simply, the typology does not reflect the full story of negotiated agreements as a governance institution across the national park system. For one, agreements are difficult to procure. Confidentiality clauses in agreements often limit public distribution or may omit sensitive information in public facing versions. Access to some agreements is limited to the negotiating parties alone. As well, the narrow focus on agreements excluded co-management arrangements like the Jasper Indigenous Forum that is not protected by any agreement but serves the same role as the forums and advisory circles reviewed in this study (Johnston and Mason, 2020).

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[13] Parks Canada has described three types of co-management agreements: Relationship-Building Body, Cooperative Management Board, and Consensus Management Body. I separate the first agreement type into two types: relationship-building agreement (i.e., one that creates no advisory body structure) and an interest-based advisory body agreement.

Moreover, the typology fails to account for various parameters that affect governance arrangements. Typologies are a flawed approach to governance analysis due to their inherent theoretical assumption that co-management institutions can be classified through a valid and reliable system (Smith, 2002). For example, there was considerable variation in the granularity and clarity of processes concerning Ministerial involvement, especially between earlier agreements (Vuntut NP) and later agreements (Qausuittuq NP). Perhaps most evident was the lack of attention to the use of Indigenous Knowledges in decision-making. However, there was little consistency within agreements to make meaningful comparisons between agreement types and, as Finegan (2018, p. 11) argues, Indigenous Knowledge integration could be part of reconciliation processes but "it does not resolve underlying settler-colonial power structures".

A final limitation of the focus on negotiated agreements is the discounting of the dynamic and adaptive relationship-building elements of co-management and how they affect, and are affected by, existing power structures (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005; Fischer et al., 2014). Co-management may encourage Indigenous autonomy and co-governance in unanticipated ways (Feit, 2005). As well, the same co-management agreement may have different implementation outcomes depending on the influence of legal and constitutional tools available to, and the capacity of, Indigenous groups across different contexts (Mulrennan & Scott, 2005; Papillon, 2008). Similarly, the agency of Indigenous communities and their expectations relative to Parks Canada's around co-management negotiation is not captured (Clark & Joe-Strack, 2017; Parsons et al., 2021). This study calls for attention to narratives of co-management in national parks to better understand how these drivers have evolved over time. The typology offers a tool to track the proliferation of shared governance approaches more accurately across the diverse contexts where national parks and NMCA exist. This will be especially important as Canada continues towards its commitments to expand the national park, national park reserve and NMCA network in full collaboration with Indigenous partners (Canada, 2021b).

Table 3: Summary of Key Differences Across Four Co-Management Agreement Types distinguished by context and governance parameters

			Agreement Type			
			Relationship-Building (RBA) (n=3)	Interest-based Advisory Body (ABA) (n = 3)	Cooperative Management Board (CMB) (n = 12)	Consensus Management (CMA) (n = 5)
		Agreement Examples	Memorandum of Cooperation, MOU	Forum, MOU, TOR	Establishment Agreements, IIBAs, Modern Treaties	Establishment Agreements, IBAs
Context	Indigenous Involvement	Park Establishment			✓	✓
		Post- Park Establishment	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Reason for Involvement	Renewing Relationships	✓	✓		✓
		Legal Requirements			✓	✓
	Legal Context	Historic Treaty	✓	✓		✓
		Asserted Claims	✓	✓		✓
		Settled Claim or Self-Governance Agreements			✓	✓
	Geographical Context	General region; remoteness	South/Atlantic; Park near urban centres	South/Atlantic; Park near urban centres	North/Pacific Coast; Park is remote	North/Pacific Coast; Park is remote
Governance	Number of Indigenous groups represented	Static	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Allows for withdrawal alone			✓	
		Flexible Indigenous representation	✓	✓		
	Legal Strength	Legally-Binding		✓/✗	✓	✓
	Governance Body Composition	Not Defined	✓	✓	✓	
		Parks Canada/Crown government outnumber Indigenous appointees			✓	
		Indigenous outnumber Parks Canada/Crown appointees		✓	✓	
		Equal or Greater Indigenous Representation with Independent Chair or non-voting senior representative			✓	✓
	Role of Appointees/ Members	To represent interests of parties	✓	✓	✓	✓
		To represent public interest			✓	✓
	Governance Body Mandate	Recommendations based on discussion between parties provided to Minister		✓		
		Recommendations by majority rule *and/or* consensus between parties provided to Minister		✓	✓	
		Recommendations based on consensus discussion between parties provided to Minister and Indigenous Leadership			✓	✓
	Disagreement, Issue, Dispute Resolution	Undefined	✓	✓		
		Mediation Processes		✓	✓	✓
		Arbitration Processes			✓	✓
		By consensus, only Minister's authorities retained		✓	✓	
		By consensus, authorities of all parties retained				✓
	Amendment Provisions	Via Mutual written Consent between parties	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Via external mechanisms			✓	
	Termination of Agreement	Undefined			✓	
		Unilateral	✓			✓
		By Mutual Agreement		✓	✓	✓
		Cyclical		✓	✓/✗	✓
	Implementation Review	Undefined	✓		✓	
		Included	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Agreement Review	Undefined	✓		✓	
		Frequent (i.e. annual)	✓			

Less Frequent (i.e. 5-10 years)	✓	✓

A Typology of Co-Management Agreement Types Under Parks Canada as Distinguished By Their Context And Governance Arrangements

The Four Types of Co-Management Agreements

The four types of co-management agreements identified in the agreement scan based on their power-sharing structures, can be described as follows:

1. Relationship-Building Agreements (RBAs) do not create co-management structures but establish mutual commitments to collaborate in management. Examples agreements include Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Cooperation.

2. Interest-based Advisory Body Agreements (ABAs) create formal advisory structures (e.g., forums, advisory circles) to facilitate interest-based engagement of Indigenous groups. Examples include MOUs or Terms of Reference (TORs).

3. Cooperative Management Board Agreements (CMBs) create cooperative management boards with Indigenous groups which provide management recommendations to the Minister. Examples include establishment agreements, land claims and associated agreements (e.g., Impact and Benefit Agreements (IBAs[14])).

4. Consensus Management Boards (CMAs) refer to a cooperative management board where delegated authority allows decisions of the governance body to be considered as recommendations to both authorities who can then enact decisions. Examples include establishment agreements, IBAs, and shared governance agreements.

Key Differences Across Context and Governance Dimensions between Agreement Types

Context

The agreement types reveal a strict correlation to contextual parameters, as opposed to a spectrum, where RBAs and ABAs are implemented in southern parks in, often disputed, historic treaty contexts and where Indigenous peoples were not engaged or were displaced in the establishment of the park, to CMBs and CMAs implemented along the West Coast and North under the provisions of land claims and self-governance negotiations and settlements which may apply to both existing parks and parks co-established with Indigenous partners. *Table 4* presents key illustrative examples of agreements across contextual parameters. While all agreements have been implemented in post-agreement contexts, similarities and differences in early involvement are distinguished through comparison of ABA agreements in Riding Mountain NP[15], with examples of CMBs in both establishment and post-establishment contexts (Vuntut NP and Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq and Sirmilik NPs), and CMAs implemented post-park establishment in Nahʔą Dehé/Nahanni NPR (2022). The contrast of agreements in historic treaty contexts in the north and south is illustrated by Bruce Peninsula NP (2021) and Thaidene Nëné NPR (2019).

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[14] While Impact and Benefit Agreements refer to much broader set of agreements typically signed between Indigenous groups like the Dene, Cree, Métis, and Inuit and private industry, according to Inuit land claims, Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreements (IIBAs) are to be negotiated for the establishment of national parks.

[15] For clarity of results, agreements are generally referred to herein by the associated national park or NMCA.

The diversity of legal contexts for CMAs is demonstrated by Gwaii Haanas NPR (1993), and Thaidene Nëné NPR (2019). While CMB agreements predominantly exist in comprehensive land claim contexts, exceptions occur where specific claims have been settled by court decisions as in Wapusk NP (1996) or in Pacific Rim NPR where co-management was established through a cooperative agreement (2006) prior to the ratification of the Maa-nulth Final Agreement in 2011. Similar relationships between geographical context, specifically in terms of region and remoteness, and agreement type are illustrated through two extreme cases of AMAs and CMBs (Point Pelee NP and Tuktut Nogait NP).

Table 4: Illustrative examples of differences between agreements according to the context parameters of the typology

Context Parameter	Difference	Illustrative Example
Early Involvement and Reasons	ABA: Agreement Negotiated post-park establishment	Riding Mountain NP was established in 1933. The Senior Officials Forum Agreement 1996 was implemented in recognition of past disharmony and mistrust. Keeseekoowenin First Nation was evicted in land expropriation in 1935 (Indian Claims Commission, 2005)
	CMB: Agreement negotiated for park establishment	Vuntut NP was established through the VGFN Final Agreement in 1993. Agreement preamble recognizes shared objectives for the establishment and management of park.
	CMB: Agreement negotiated post-park establishment	The IIBA for Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq and Sirmilik National Parks (1999) subsumed Baffin Island National Park Reserve into the NLCA (becoming Auyuittuq National Park)
	CMA: Agreement negotiated post- park establishment	Nahanni NPR was established in 1976 without consent of local First Nations. The Ndahecho Gondié Gháádé Agreement (2022) was signed in 2022 in recognition of lack of involvement of local First Nations in establishment and management of park.
Legal Context	RBA: Historic Treaty and Asserted Claims	Bruce NP is within Southern Ontario treaty region (1974-1892). There are two on-going legal claims on SON's behalf relating to treaty and title
	CMB: Historic Treaty and Asserted Claims	Wapusk NP Establishment Agreement (1996) recognizes Fox Lakes' active specific claim at the time and is based in Treaty 5
	CMA: Asserted Claims and Court Decisions	The Haida Nation and Canada have "agreed to disagree" regarding unresolved title and divergent views of sovereignty (1993).
	CMA: Self-Governance Negotiations and Historic Treaty	Thaidene Nëné is based in historic treaty context where self-governance negotiations are underway through the Akaitcho Process. The Thaidene Nëné Agreements are described as an implementation mechanism of the Treaty #8 (1899) (Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation, 2020).
Geographical Context	AMA: South/Atlantic; Park near populated zone	Point Pelee NP is bordered by several communities including Leamington, ON (pop. 27,595 (2016)) and roughly 65km from Detroit, MI or 350km from Toronto, ON.
	CMB: North/West; remote location	Tuktut Nogait NP's nearest community is Paulatuk (pop. 265) which is serviced by only one airline from Inuvik, NWT where the Parks Canada field unit is based.

Governance

The spectrum from limited power sharing in RBA agreements to significant power sharing in CMA agreements reflects differences in governance subparameters relating to Indigenous representation, legal strength of agreements, governance body composition and mandates, and processes for dispute resolution and adaptation. The typology suggests that CMBs have a high degree of variability across certain governance parameters, which is captured in *Table 5* along with other key illustrative examples of agreements across governance parameters.

I use Riding Mountain NP, Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq and Sirmilik NPs, and Pacific Rim NPR to illustrate the greater flexibility of Indigenous membership in RBA and ABA agreements than those observed in CMBs and CMAs. These illustrations are fundamentally tied to the legal strength of agreements (either non-binding in RBAs and some ABAs or binding in CMBs and CMAs) which is captured by examples from Bruce NP (RBA), Ivvavik NP (CMB), and Thaidene Nëné NPR (CMA).

The spectrum of Indigenous to Crown representation across governance bodies ranges from undefined to equal or greater Indigenous representation. RBAs, like the Mi'kmaq Interim

Arrangement (2017), do not establish governance structures, whereas ABAs create advisory structures (e.g. forums) resembling cooperative management boards, where Indigenous representation may outnumber state government representation, as illustrated in the Point Pelee NP First Nation Advisory Circle (2011). The inconsistency in governance body composition and Indigenous representation in cooperative management boards of CMBs is highlighted through contrasting examples from Vuntut NP, Wapusk NP, Tongait KakKasuangita SilakKijapvinga/Torngat Mountains NPR, and Kluane NP and NPR. Appointees to advisory bodies may act in the public interest or in the interests of parties depending on agreement type, as highlighted by the Riding Mountain Forum (2006) (ABA) and Nahʔą Dehé/Nahanni NPR (2022) (CMA). Additionally, I note that neither CMBs nor CMAs are categorically "politically independent bodies", according to the scan. The advisory bodies of CMAs and CMBs may require the joint appointment of an independent chair or non-voting senior representatives (i.e., Chief and Superintendent). In other CMBs, the park superintendent is an ex-officio member of the governance body as a nonvoting observer, such as in Kluane NP and NPR which contrasts with the other CMBs of Tuktut Nogait NPR and CMAs like Thaidene Nëné Establish Agreement which elect a jointly appointed chair, and CMAs such as those of Gwaii Haanas NPR and Nahʔą Dehé/Nahanni NPR, where both the FUS and Indigenous leader (e.g., Chief) are present as nonvoting observers.

For the majority of CMAs, ABAs, and CMBs, "decisions" made between parties are deemed as advice recommended to the Minister for final approval. The Minister then chooses to accept, vary, or set aside and replace recommendations. The decisions of CMB boards are made by simple majority vote or in some cases consensus, as shown in the Wapusk NP example (1996). ABAs may also stipulate how advice or decisions are to be produced through consensus discussions between parties, as exemplified in the TOR for Point Pelee NP's First Nation Advisory Circle (2011). Similarly, CMAs are distinguished through their stated or implied governance authorities which are enabled through consensus models which allow for parties to make and implement decisions without Ministerial involvement (Gwaii Haanas Agreement, 1993). In special cases of CMBs, the cooperative management board may refer recommendations about select operation and management matters advice to both the Superintendent and Indigenous leadership allowing decision-making to occur at the park level if parties agree to implement a resolution. The only example of this identified was in Tongait KakKasuangita SilakKijapvinga/Torngat Mountains NPR, where only disputes or decisions affecting Inuit rights are necessarily provided to the Minister (Youdelis, 2023).

Across the spectrum of agreements, dispute resolution mechanisms range from wholly absent to defined consensus resolution protocols backed by legal resolution mechanisms. ABAs may or may not include protocols for dispute resolution, as illustrated by Riding Mountain NP and Point Pelee NP agreement examples. Qausuittuq NP is used as a key example of step-wise dispute resolution process under CMBs which typically finalize in legal arbitration (2015) which is contrasted with the inability of Maa-nulth First Nations to enter into legal arbitration through the Maa-Nulth Side Treaty (2012). These processes are compared to those of CMAs where issues are typically put into abeyance, involve an escalation of consensus-based discussions between senior representatives (e.g. Chief and Minister) which may involve the assistance of an agreed upon third-party mediator or arbitrator (e.g. Ndahecho Gondié Gháádé Agreement, 2022).

Processes for adaptation revealed the greatest variability across agreements and within agreements, especially CMBs and CMAs. For example, RBAs such as in Bruce NP (2021) provide significant flexibility to parties to amend or terminate the agreement and require frequent agreement reviews, as a more or less a consistent characteristic. However, Gwaii Haanas NPR, Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA, and Nahʔą Dehé/Nahanni NPR agreement examples illustrate the differences within the CMA type. Within the CMB agreement type, amendments can be made through written consent between parties or require additional steps through external claims-based mechanisms, as illustrated by Vuntut NP (1993) and the Inuit IBAs, and may or may not include periodic agreement reviews as illustrated by Ukkusiksalik NP and Vuntut NP. Likewise, presence of provisions for termination of the agreement varies between CMBs, as contrasted by Pacific Rim NPR and Qausuittuq NP.

Table 5: Illustrative examples of differences between agreements according to governance parameters of the typology

Governance Parameter	Difference	Illustrative Example
# of Indigenous Groups Represented	ABA: Flexible Indigenous representation	The Riding Mountain Forum (2006) comprises of a Coalition of seven First Nations from Treaty 2, 4, and 1 represented by respective Chiefs but recognizes that member First Nations may fluctuate
	CMB: Static	The IIBA (1999) for Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq, and Sirmilik NPs (1999) is between the Nunavut Inuit as represented by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA). No provisions to withdraw or terminate agreement.
	CMB: Member Withdrawal	The Maa-nulth Side Treaty (2012) allows individual Maa-nulth First Nations to withdraw.
Legal Strength	RBA: Not legally binding	The MOU for Bruce NP (2021) is not a legally-binding contract but instead represents a mutual commitment to cooperation.
	CMB: Legally binding	Ivvavik NP is cooperatively managed according to the legal requirements of provisions in the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (1984), similar to many other CMBs.
	CMA: Legally binding	The Thaidene Nëné Establishment Agreement is a legal contractual agreement where the park will remain under "reserve" status until Akaitcho self-governance negotiations and land claims with Northwest Territory Métis Nation are settled (Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation, 2020; Parks Canada, 2020)
Governance Body Composition	RBA: No advisory body	The Mi'kmaq-Parks Canada Interim Arrangement (2017), among other objectives, requires Parks Canada to consult with 13 Mi'kmaq Chiefs and Councils, and commits to negotiation of terms of reference for a future advisory committee
	ABA: Indigenous appointees outnumber Parks Canada's	The Point Pelee NP TOR (2011) requires First Nation representation of up to 3 appointees from both Walpole Island First Nation and Caldwell First Nation. Parks Canada representatives: the Superintendent and two others designated by the superintendent.
	CMB: No Defined Body Composition	VFGN Final Agreement (1993) lists parties to be involved in cooperative management but does not define an advisory body structure
	CMB: Parks Canada appointees outnumber Indigenous appointees	The Wapusk NP cooperative management board consists of 10 members: 2 from Canada (including Superintendent who will have non-voting powers); 2 from Manitoba's provincial government; 2 from both Fox Lake and York Factory First Nations appointed by Federal Minister upon FN's recommendation; and 2 from Churchill's local government district (Federal-Provincial Memorandum of Agreement for Wapusk National Park, 1996)
	CMB: Indigenous appointees outnumber Parks Canada's	In Tongait KakKasuangita SilakKijapvinga/Torngat Mountains NPR, agreements are stipulated in a way that has allowed the cooperative management board to be entirely seated by Indigenous appointees representing both Parks Canada and the Indigenous government (Youdelis, 2023). In contrast, Kluane NP and NPR is cooperatively managed by a board, which according to the overlapping final agreements of CAFN (1993) and KFN (2004), is seated by 2 appointees from each First Nation and only 2 from Parks Canada where the superintendent is an additional non-voting 3rd member.
	CMB: Greater or equal Indigenous representation with independent chair or non-voting senior official(s)	The cooperative management board of Tuktut Nogait NP is equally appointed with a fifth jointly appointed chair (Tuktut Nogait Agreement, 1996)
	CMA: Greater or equal Indigenous representation with independent chair or non-voting senior official(s)	The Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłti (operational management board) has an equal ratio of Lutsel K'e Dene appointees to jointly appointed members by GNWT and Parks Canada, and a seventh independent chair jointly appointed by all parties (Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation, 2020, p. 12; Youdelis, 2023) The Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team is comprised of 4 Indigenous representatives (representing the two Indigenous parties) and 3 individuals appointed by Parks Canada. The Chief of NDDB, the Grand Chief of DFN, and the Park Superintendent are ex-officio non-voting members (Ndahecho Gondié Gháádé Agreement, 2022)
Role of Appointees/ Members	ABA: to Represent Interest of Parties	Riding Mountain Forum (2006) is specifically designed to represent the interests of all First Nations
	CMA: to represent public interest	Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team appointees are to act in the best interests of the park (Ndahecho Gondié Gháádé Agreement, 2022)

Mandate	ABA: Recommendations based on consensus discussion provided to Minister	The TOR for Point Pelee's First Nations Advisory Circle (2011) requires that a consensus approach that respects Indigenous cultural practices be taken. Decisions of the board are ultimately deemed as advice to the Minister for approval.
	CMB: Recommendations based on simple vote or consensus provided to Minister	The cooperative management board of Wapusk NP makes its decisions through simple majority vote (Federal-Provincial Memorandum of Agreement for Wapusk National Park, 1996)
	CMB: Recommendations based on consensus are provided to Indigenous Leadership and Minister	The cooperative management board refers all matters of Tongait KakKasuangita SilakKijapvinga/Torngat Mountains NPR management, asides those that concern Inuit rights, to Indigenous and Parks Canada authorities who enact day-to-day operational decisions (Youdelis, 2023)
	CMA: Recommendations based on consensus provided to Indigenous leadership and Minister	The Gwaii Haanas Archipelago Management Board "will strive in a constructive and co-operative manner to achieve a consensus decision of the members, which will be deemed recommendation both to the Government of Canada and the Council of the Haida Nation" (Gwaii Haanas Agreement, 1993, p. 4)
Dispute Resolution	ABA: Dispute resolution through consensus process	The Riding Mountain Forum (2006) requires the Superintendent and Chief representing the Coalition to enter into discussions as a first stage of dispute resolution, and if a resolution cannot be found a mutually decided facilitator or mediator must be engaged for the second stage. A final third stage requires discussion between senior representatives of the parties before a mutual decision is made to continue the agreement or dissolve the agreement by mutual decision. In contrast, the TOR for Point Pelee's First Nations Advisory Circle (2011) does not include any direction for dispute resolution.
	CMB: Legal Dispute Resolution Mechanisms	The IIBA for Qausuittuq NP (2015) requires parties to discuss disputes in good faith, then through mediation or legal arbitration in case of continued disagreement. Legal external recourse is not precluded. In contrast, under the Maa-nulth Side Treaty (2012), disputes concerning Pacific Rim NPR cannot be resolved by arbitration under land claim provisions but are limited to a lower stage of "collaborative negotiations" based on the expressed desires to resolve issues through discussion.
	CMA: Dispute resolution through consensus process	Ndahecho Gondié Gháádé Agreement (2022) distinguishes between disputes which must go through standard conduits of mediation and arbitration, and issues, which are to be formally raised and resolved through good faith discussion between parties. If parties fail to resolve issue, it will be held in abeyance and will be referred to Nahʔą Dehé Chief, Grand Chief of Dehcho First Nations and the Minister for good faith discussions. Final disagreements do not affect existing rights, jurisdiction or final authorities of any party.
Processes for Adaptation	RBA: Amendments made through mutual written consent, option to unilaterally terminate agreement, frequent agreement review	The MOU in Bruce NP and Fathom Five NMP (2021) can be amended with mutual consent at any time. Either party may withdraw from the agreement with prior written notice. The agreement has a yearly progress review between Parties.
	CMB: Inconsistent processes for amendments, termination, review, and implementation monitoring	Under the VGFN final agreement, parties must make amendments to the agreement through the UFA's amendment process which involves Canada represented by Governor in Council and the Yukon Assembly of First Nations. In contrast, parties to IIBAs under the NLCA may amend occur directly through written consent of the parties, like in Aulavik NP (An Agreement for the Establishment of a National Park on Banks Island, 1992)

The Maa-nulth Side Agreement (2012) allows for any party to terminate or withdraw from the agreement. In contrast, the IIBA for Qausuittuq NP (2015) does not provide provisions for termination or terms for withdrawal.

IIBA for Ukkusiksalik NP (2001) requires an annual implementation review, and a five-year interval Agreement review. Meanwhile the IFA does not have a provision for reviewing agreement or implementation in Ivvavik NP (1982). |
| | CMA: Inconsistent processes for amendments, termination, review, and implementation monitoring | The Gwaii Haanas Agreement (1993) is to continue in perpetuity but may be dissolved by request of either party upon 6 months written notice, whereas the IIBA for Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA (2019) must renegotiate a successor IIBA every seven years, unless it is terminated by mutual written consent. The Ndahecho Gondié Gháádé Agreement (2022) does not include any provisions for termination of agreement. |

Implications for Shared Governance

Using the key differences of context and governance arrangements between various co-management agreement types identified by the agreement typology, we can explore how these agreements compare to international standards of shared governance options presented in *Table 1* (Milko, 2020). Co-management must be understood as a governance institution operating at both constitutional and management levels (Petursson & Kristofersson, 2021). This first requires clarification around Canadian national parks legislation and policy. Foremost, the Minister responsible for national parks and NMCAs is not able to fetter their authorities in entering into

cooperative agreements (Langdon et al., 2010). According to the CNPA (2000)[16,17], without agreements with Indigenous governments, decision making powers and responsibilities for administration and management of a national park revert to the Minister's discretion. Furthermore, while the CNPA is not to derogate or abrogate from Aboriginal or treaty rights as protected by the *Constitution Act*, 1982, the Minister is entitled to make regulations regarding harvesting and permitting.

With this in mind, the state retains governance powers across the majority of national parks and NMCAs according to the scope and proportion of agreement types. It could even be argued that advisory bodies for management do not influence governance approaches in any significant degree, as Parks Canada has a legal duty to consult Indigenous groups on planning and management in all protected areas according to both the Act (CNPA 12 (1)) and Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence of the early 2000s that has clarified this fiduciary duty of the Crown, such as *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests) (2004)* (Brideau, 2019). Of course, co-management institutions under constitutionally protected land claims imply a more fulsome recognition of Indigenous rights in park management (RNAANC, 2014). In exceptional cases of CMBs, Indigenous advisory bodies advise on governance and facilitate, to some degree, joint decision-making depending on the structures by which Indigenous authorities are to be engaged in receiving and approving recommendations from the cooperative management boards (e.g., Tongait KakKasuangita SilakKijapvinga/Torngat Mountains NPR). It is possible as well that the presence of amendment and review processes offer opportunities for CMBs to be altered towards more equitable shared governance arrangements.

The typology indicates that consensus-based management agreements are supportive of joint governance and joint management arrangements but remain constrained by Canadian law. Indeed, no agreements have reflected the approach taken by the Haida Nation and Parks Canada to "agree to disagree" on the issues of sovereignty, jurisdiction, and title over Gwaii Haanas (Gwaii Haanas Agreement, 1993). Thus, Indigenous jurisdiction within national parks and national park reserves is recognized insofar as it is recognized in land claims. Only through Aboriginal claims and treaty processes have Indigenous groups been able to negotiate and enter into cooperative management agreements that do not limit the rights, jurisdiction, authority, obligations, or responsibilities of *both* parties (Gwaii Haanas Agreement, 1993). It is therefore reassuring that these principles are reinforced by rigorous dispute resolution mechanisms involving both legal recourse and consensus resolution between senior authority.

Co-Management for IPCA Establishment: A New Type of Co-Management Agreement?
It is important to note that shared governance typology excludes all possible variants of Indigenous-led shared governance types described in Lyver et al. (2014) (e.g., Indigenous governed, jointly managed). Given the current legislative paradigm, all national parks – in Canada's view – are state governed. One key exception may be Thaidene Nëné, where LKDFN

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[16] s. 8 (1), "the Minister is responsible for the administration, management and control of parks."
s. 10 (1), "the Minister may enter into agreements with federal and provincial ministers and agencies, local and aboriginal governments, bodies established under land claims agreements and other persons and organizations for carrying out the purposes of this Act."
[17] the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act (S.C. 2000, c. 18) mirrors the subsections of the CNPA referred to herein.

designated Thaidene Nëné as an Indigenous Protected Area using Dene laws but opted to use an array of state legislation to protect certain portions of the overall area. However, the typology fails to capture the complexity of Indigenous-led, multi-tiered governance structures like those in Thaidene Nëné where certain governance and management matters are under the shared responsibility of the xá dá yáłtı and a separate regional consensus-based management board seated by appointees from other neighboring First Nations, Parks Canada, and the territorial government (established through a separate TOR) (LKDFN & NWT, 2019). As this is the only current example of such an arrangement, it is unclear whether this represents a new type in our agreement typology because, while the Establishment Agreement between LKDFN and Parks Canada remains confidential, there is no reason to assume that the portion of the area under national park reserve status is exempt from the Canadian National Parks Act. For example, the establishment agreement implies that, while decision-making will be led by xá dá yáłtı, on which Parks Canada will have an appointed member, another separate management board will be established for the NPR itself (LKDFN & NWT, 2019). Indeed, the tension between Indigenous and Parks Canada governance approaches is acknowledged in the one of the protected area's establishment agreements which states that the parties will "seek to manage Thaidene Nëné in a manner that is consistent with the management of the National Park Reserve while respecting the differences between the National Park Reserve and Thaidene Nëné" (LKDFN & NWT, 2019, p. 15). Furthermore, new territorial legislation allows for the NWT government to enter into governance and management agreements with Indigenous governments and organizations – opening up unique collaborative options for Indigenous-led conservation currently unseen in other jurisdictions (NWT, 2019), which may suggest these sort of collaborations will continue to create governance inequities across the national park system. While it would be perhaps premature to make conclusions about the significance of Thaidene Nëné for Parks Canada's co-management environment, it is apparent that such agreements are not an immaterial effort in re-purposing existing tools towards the support of Indigenous-led conservation.

Discussion
The disaggregation of co-management agreements according to the parameters of the typology developed above provides a nuanced description of co-management as an institution of governance within the context of national parks. The typology provides a framework based on a comprehensive database that supports comparative analysis of negotiated agreements. It reveals for example, how Canada's constitutionally-protected Indigenous rights framework creates an unequal playing field for Indigenous groups who engage co-management (Nikolakis & Hotte, 2019). Indeed, the established roles in governance and management afforded to northern and western Indigenous groups through co-management agreements have not yet been seen in eastern and southern experiences. This inequity is only compounded by the disparity across processes for adaptation which may allow for re-structuring towards strong power-sharing arrangements in certain parks only.

The typology also facilitates a deeper comparative exploration of mechanisms (e.g., board composition, dispute resolution) within and between agreement types for their potential to enable Indigenous governance and self-determination. On the one hand, the typology indicates that negotiated agreements alone do not create secure power-sharing arrangements that enable Indigenous governance or self-determination in southern parks and in southern treaty contexts (Dearden & Bennett, 2016). While Wapusk NP (CMB) and Thaidene Nëné NPR (CMA) are both

situated in historic treaty areas**,** there were active claims or ongoing rights negotiations during the establishment of the parks. On the other hand, examples of consensus models imply that co-management need not categorically undermine Indigenous governance and self-determination (Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020). Rather, these agreements suggest that national park or NMCA designation may support Indigenous self-determination and resurgence under the right conditions (Artelle et al., 2019; Zurba et al., 2019). As Smith (2020) asserts, co-management relationships must be rooted in self-determination or true nation-to-nation relationships to enable shared governance and serve as a vehicle to support reconciliation. In modern treaty or self-governance contexts where Indigenous jurisdictions are recognized, co-management may be supportive of constitutional or political reconciliation and create a platform for engaging Indigenous laws and value systems (Martin, 2016; Turner, 2013). For better or for worse, a cursory chronological assessment of the typology suggests that consensus governance models are increasingly common, likely inspired and shaped by the governance institutions created in earlier agreements, and may be replacing more typical cooperative management boards in modern treaty contexts (e.g. Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA) (Petursson & Kristofersson, 2021; Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012).

While co-management may support processes of reconciling Indigenous and non-Indigenous interests and worldviews and building mutual respect (Nesbitt, 2016), co-management institutions alone do not address underlying settler-colonial power structures (Finegan, 2018). According to Clark and Joe-Strack, even "at its fullest expression, co-management is still only a part of what's required to realize the vision of self-determination that claim agreements were intended to move society towards" (2017, p. 73). More importantly, emergent governance models like that of Thaidene Nëné that are supportive of Indigenous self-determination and self-governance appear to be more reflective of the capacity of Indigenous nations themselves (e.g. Thaidene Nëné), as opposed to the state's willingness to devolve its authority (Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation, 2020; Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012). In a similar way, while Gwaii Haanas NPR and Pacific Rim NPR agreements were established without settled claims, their negotiations were resemblant to those of land-claims, and therefore required a sustained and significant negotiating capacity on the part of the Indigenous groups involved (Alcantara, 2013; Timko & Satterfield, 2008). Moreover, Parks Canada's ability to honour these legal commitments, especially in southern parks, is dependent upon overarching treaty processes, as the typology confirms by highlighting the influence of contextual parameters (i.e., treaty and geographical context) and temporal patterns across agreement types (Thomlinson and Crouch, 2012; Langdon et al., 2010). On a policy level, the CNPA has not yet enshrined co-management power-sharing principles and therefore a singular approach to work with Indigenous groups in a consistent and equal fashion does not yet exist (Sandlos, 2014; Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012), although a Ministerial commitment indicates an Indigenous stewardship policy may be forthcoming to address this issue (Parks Canada Agency, 2021). The recent policy on NMCA establishment and management, which places a central focus on the role of Indigenous communities in stewardship, may be early evidence of changes to come (Parks Canada Agency, 2022b). In any case, the advancement of state commitments to develop new national parks without adjustments to Canadian legislation, and a clear and intentional policy framework for Parks Canada to engage in shared governance across all national parks and NMCAs, may fetter Canada's ability to realize their vision of reconciliation.

An alternative perspective offered by Nesbitt (2016) asserts that amending legislation or claims may not be necessary since consensus-based shared decision making and typical advisory CMBs are not mutually exclusive so long as there is an adequate and meaningful presence of Indigenous and state authority at the table. Likewise, Snook et al. (2018, p. 68) argue that, when contemplating the intent of co-management agreements, "the focus should not be placed on meeting the minimum legal requirements laid out in the original land claims documents; rather, these documents can be viewed as the minimum baseline from which to build all future decisions and actions". These claims are not without support. For example, decisions of advisory co-management boards are rarely referred to or overturned by the Minister (Nesbitt, 2016; Youdelis, 2023). In this way, the exhaustive protocols for decision-making and dispute resolution observed in more recent co-management agreements may serve in bringing clarity to the issue of Ministerial authority. While not captured by the above typology, there is precedence within co-management agreements for recommendations regarding an appointee to a cooperative management board to be based on their connection to the land and role in the community which has led to an all-Indigenous cooperative management board in Tongait KakKasuangita SilakKijapvinga/Torngat Mountains NPR and Thaidene Nëné's Xá Dá Yáłtı (Youdelis, 2023). However, this type of de-facto self-governance is at least partly enabled by the higher proportions of Indigenous peoples in the North, a condition that is unlikely to arise in southern contexts with more diverse demographics and stakeholder interests (Atkinson, 2001). Another possible limitation to this approach may be that according to the agreement, board members are required to act in the best interests of the land, as opposed to representing their appointing parties. While this approach may better reflect a shared vision for land stewardship, board independence has historically been a source of conflict within boards and between boards and federal government (White, 2018).

Conclusion
While the typology approach fails to consider parameters that reflect Indigenous interests and priorities, the study confirms that co-management agreements are strongly connected to contextual factors such as treaty context. The spatial and temporal patterns of agreement distribution revealed by the typology suggest Parks Canada has advanced co-management agreements according to contextual factors (i.e., legal and policy constraints), which may suggest Parks Canada is constrained in their ability to respond to the full diversity of Indigenous demands by external factors. Invariably, this approach to Indigenous engagement has created inequities across national parks in the degrees to which Indigenous groups are involved in governance, as only certain co-management agreement types create the conditions for Indigenous groups to meaningfully engage in decision-making according to their own legal orders and knowledge systems, such as through consensus-based management bodies.

Indigenous leaders and scholars have argued that making space for Indigenous forms of conservation rooted in imperatives derived from Indigenous systems of governance, legal orders, and knowledge systems will ultimately require a fundamental restructuring or (re)-Indigenization of the current conservation paradigm (Hessami et al., 2021; M'sɨt No'kmaq et al., 2021). The extent to which emergent and revised models of co-management – identified in the typology – particularly when paired with engagement models, such as ethical space and two-eyed seeing can support such a renovation is as yet unknown.

While the emergence of IPCA-supportive and consensus co-management models promise a new era for Indigenous involvement in national park governance and management, there is a risk of settling for an improved set of Indigenous-state relationships as measured against the low bar of comparison to historical reference points (Sandlos, 2014). I instead echo calls for attention to the ongoing reluctance of the Canadian government to make more fundamental adjustments to underlying legislation in support of true Indigenous authority and jurisdiction in national park governance (Sandlos, 2014). While each Indigenous community has its own respective needs and desires for reconciliation in the context of conservation, the degree to which Parks Canada is responsive to the diversity of Indigenous priorities and aspirations as they evolve will depend on its ability to enable true shared governance arrangements which in turn ultimately hinges upon Canada's willingness to reconcile with its own claims to sovereignty.

Chapter 5 – Manuscript #2

Title: Co-management as an ethical space of engagement: exploring the potential for reconciliation in Vuntut National Park[18]

Abstract

Parks Canada's commitments to reconciliation signal a shifting paradigm in national park governance away from colonial frameworks towards models that respect and elevate Indigenous forms of governance and knowledge systems. However, the extent to which a land claims-based co-management model, as the dominant mechanism of governance and engagement employed by Parks Canada, can serve as a vehicle for reconciliation is a topic of much debate. The purpose of the study is to better understand the relational elements of co-management to gain insight into their potential to advance reconciliation in national park contexts. The concept of "ethical space" is explored as a way to re-envision Indigenous-state relationships and create sustainable and equitable conservation governance arrangements. Using the lens of ethical space, I identify enabling and constraining factors for relationship-building between Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Parks Canada for the co-management of Vuntut National Park. Drawing on insights from semi-structured interviews with 11 community members and park managers in 2021, the need was identified for this mature northern national park co-management relationship to re-orientate itself in order to deepen community engagement and support the strengthening of community relationships to the land. Attending to these needs is challenged by issues of scale in national park management, funding, and capacity limitations. While ethical space holds some promise as a lens and process for renewing relationships in national parks, various structural limitations to operationalizing an ethical space of engagement supportive of Indigenous-state reconciliation are identified. The implications of the study are discussed in light of scholarship on adaptive co-management, ethical space, and Indigenous environmental governance.

Introduction

It is increasingly recognized that fulfilling global conservation goals will be impossible without supporting Indigenous rights and responsibilities and creating the conditions for meaningful collaborative engagements between Indigenous peoples and the state (Artelle et al., 2019; Gavin et al., 2018; Zurba et al., 2019). This trend towards recognition of Indigenous stewardship in biodiversity conservation is reflected in recent commitments to reconciliation undertaken by Parks Canada, the federal agency mandated to protect examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage. These are intended to support the Government of Canada's commitment to build renewed nation-to-nation, government-to-government, and Inuit-Crown relationships with Indigenous peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership (Parks Canada Agency, 2022a). More specifically, Parks Canada has promised that "new and revised legislation, policy, guidance and tools will be developed that respect Indigenous rights and worldviews, and enable implementation of shared stewardship at heritage places" (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; Parks Canada, 2019).

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[18] This manuscript has not yet been submitted to any peer reviewed journals. Candidate journals include *Arctic* (alternative: *Environmental Management*)

Parks Canada faces significant challenges in fulfilling these commitments. Most glaringly, the objective of renewing relationships is overshadowed by a lack of trust between Parks Canada and Indigenous communities, especially those impacted by forced physical, cultural, and spiritual dislocation from their homelands (Binnema & Niemi, 2006; Dearden & Bennett, 2016; Johnston & Mason, 2020; Langdon et al., 2010; Moola & Roth, 2019; Sandlos, 2014). This history of exclusion continues to inform and undermine Indigenous-state relationships in national parks (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; Johnston & Mason, 2021), compounded by conventional management structures that further marginalize and constrain Indigenous approaches to stewardship (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2014; Milko, 2020, p. 4; Sandlos, 2014). The extent to which current commitments will succeed in advancing reconciliation remains to be seen, particularly given Parks Canada's on-going reliance on co-management[19] - or shared stewardship - a tool originally developed for purposes other than reconciliation and legally constrained by the provisions of land claim negotiations (Alcantara, 2013; Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020; Mulrennan & Scott, 2005; Notzke, 1995; Pasternak, 2017).

While many definitions of reconciliation exist, in this analysis I choose to adopt Neyaskweyahk (Ermineskin Cree Nation) scholar Danika Littlechild's transformative view of reconciliation that centers the restoration of relationships between people and between all people and the land: "recognizing and reinforcing Indigenous ties to land, culture, and knowledge; directly supporting Indigenous communities' aspirations; and rebalancing relationships not only among people but between the human and nonhuman worlds (2021, p. 669)". This idea of reconciliation is also shared by the Indigenous Circle of Experts (2018). In light of the challenges Parks Canada faces in restoring such relationships in existing protected areas and a longstanding debate over the potential of co-management to enable power sharing, bridge knowledge systems, and advance self-determination (Berkes, 2009; Clark & Joe-Strack, 2017; Dietsch et al., 2021; Parsons et al., 2021; Plummer & Armitage, 2007), there is an urgent need for closer scrutiny of the capacity of co-management to advance reconciliation in national parks. Kyle Artelle and colleagues suggest that co-management offers a valuable tool for supporting Indigenous-led conservation which "could in turn support [Indigenous] agency and the resurgence of practices that have supported sustained interactions between people and places for millennia" (Artelle et al., 2019, p. 4; Moola & Roth, 2019). Co-management arrangements have also been endorsed for relationship-building in existing parks by the Indigenous Circle of Expert's 2018 *We Rise Together* report that has made recommendations to the Canadian government for supporting Indigenous-led conservation in line with Canada Pathway to Target 1[20] (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018). Such positive assessments are at odds with those of others who suggest that co-management serves to advance Western legal conceptions of reconciliation through recognition-based politics (Coulthard, 2014), rather than responding to demands from Indigenous peoples for self-determination and nation-to-nation relationships (Nesbitt, 2016; Smith, 2020). More extreme positions argue that co-management fails altogether to support reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination by co-opting the interests of Indigenous communities (Finegan, 2018; Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020). State imposed tools, such as co-management, are seen as inadequate in both their capacity to

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[19] Co-management, broadly defined as a spectrum of power sharing arrangements between the State and local or community level resource users (Berkes, 2009).

[20] Canada's response to the 2010 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Canada Pathway To Target 1: "By 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial areas and inland water, and 10% of marine and coastal areas of Canada are conserved through networks of protected areas and other effective area-based measures" (2020)

affirm Indigenous rights and jurisdiction, and to advance reconciliation or providing redress (Finegan, 2018; Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020; Smith, 2020).

Indigenous leaders, conservation practitioners, and scholars have called for new approaches to re-imagine Indigenous-state relationships in conservation (Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership et al., 2020; Dietsch et al., 2021; Dietz et al., 2021; Ermine, 2007; Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; Laurila, 2019; M'sɨt No'kmaq et al., 2021). In response I ask whether co-management has the capacity to serve as an effective relationship-building mechanism in support of renewed relationships and reconciliation in national parks. I approach the research question with an exploratory analysis of co-management through the lens of "ethical space" (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005; Hill et al., 2012; Natcher et al., 2005). "Ethical space[21]", introduced by Sturgeon Lake First Nation scholar Willie Ermine in 2007, is conceptualized as a neutral space to reconcile worldviews at the "intersection of Indigenous law and Western legal systems" and re-imagine "archaic ways of interaction" (Ermine, 2007, p. 194). According to M'sɨt No'kmaq et al., "ethical space can be envisioned as the safe, middle space that respects the strengths and limitations of two people, their cultures and communities" (2021, p. 856). It is both "the process of and actions involved in listening to and understanding each other" (Greenwood et al., 2017, p. 184). While to my knowledge ethical space has not yet been applied in the context of co-management, Nikolakis and Hotte (2021) argue that ethical space provides a "lens and process" to deliver on governance vitality, or the ability of a co-management arrangement to adapt and learn-through-doing to create sustainable and equitable conservation partnerships (Borrini-Feyerabend & Hill, 2015; Nikolakis & Hotte, 2021). This also resonates with the recommendations of the ICE Report that endorse Indigenous government- Crown government partnerships as potential IPCA models and recommended ethical space as a framework to advance honest dialogue, discussion, and actions supportive of reconciliation and reflective of Indigenous aspirations for their role in decision-making and management in existing national parks (2018, p. 45).

Following Curran who asserted that "reconciliation is an ongoing and adaptive negotiation process that is place- and community-specific" (2018, p. 820)", I take a case study approach in examining the history of relationship-building between and in collaboration with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (VGFN) and Parks Canada in the community-based co-management of Vuntut National Park. This case study is instructive in two key ways: 1) established in 1993 under the VGFN Final Agreement, VNP is the among the earliest of co-managed national parks in Canada; and 2) VGFN is a community renowned for its leadership in collaborative approaches to land stewardship (Sherry and Myers, 2002; Wolfe et al., 2011). Furthermore, an Old Crow-based study on traditional ecological knowledge and management systems by Sherry and Myers (2002, p. 356) argued early on that mutual respect be the basis for co-management and that the "role of the state must be redefined to support and complement, rather than replace, local or regional self-management systems". This notion of localized or community-based co-management is increasingly prevalent in studies on the maturation of co-management arrangements over time, contemporary research on community-centered conservation governance, and critiques of paternalized state-led co-management (Akonwi Nebasifu & Cuogo, 2021; Armitage et al., 2020; Jacobson et al., 2016).

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[21] This presentation of ethical space is adapted from Roger Poole's "Towards Deep Subjectivity" (1972)

I explore the stories and experiences of relationship-building between VGFN and Parks Canada in a functional and mature co-management relationship through the lens of an ethical space framework developed by Nikolakis and Hotte (2021). The framework (*Figure 1*) views ethical space as comprised of engagement guided by dialogic processes and principles and that promote introspection and reflection; where dialogic processes are understood as both formal and informal face-to-face interactions that foster co-learning and trust-building, and where principles, including, among others, respect, kindness, generosity, and reciprocity, are to "underpin engagement in an adaptive way, reflecting the dynamic nature of principles and values" (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; Nikolakis & Hotte, 2021, p. 10).
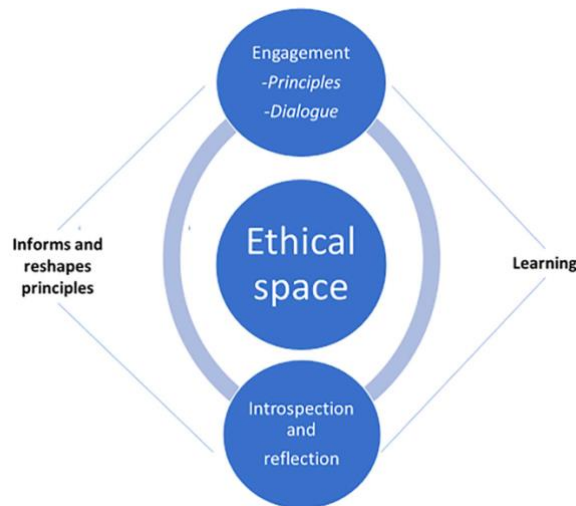

Figure 1:Engagement based in principles and dialogic processes support learning through introspection and reflection. Original figure from Nikolakis and Hotte (2021)

My analysis focuses on community-based perspectives on engagement, dialogic processes, and three key current community-based principles for co-management identified through participant perspectives: 1) respect for equal partnership; 2) respect for Indigenous Knowledges; and 3) people-land relationships. I examine to what extent each has been honoured in the co-management arrangement through specific examples of trust-building and co-learning processes, or limited through lack thereof, or by other constraining factors (e.g., technical, financial).

This approach illuminates the degree to which VNP's co-management has evolved from a perfunctory undertaking of the VGFN Final Agreement, to that of an adaptive and community-first co-management relationship. The findings provide deeper insight into the "ingredients", existent or desired, that support the existence of an ethical space where something "new" may transpire – in this case, a resilient and sustainable co-management arrangement that fits VGFN's vision for the future of VNP (Laurila, 2019). It is hoped that this study has practical contributions for the community's land stewardship priorities and scholarly contributions to the growing literature on ethical space and its application in conservation contexts (Greenwood et al., 2017; Laurila, 2019; Littlechild & Sutherland, 2021; Nikolakis & Hotte, 2021).

The paper begins with a review of key literature addressing co-management, reconciliation, and ethical space. This is followed by a description of the case study of co-management in VNP. Methods and results are then detailed, followed by an analysis of findings and a discussion of

their implications for ethical space in co-management and for reconciliation in national parks broadly.

Literature Review

I first outline key concepts and literature surrounding reconciliation as it has manifested in the conservation sector. This is followed by a review of key co-management literatures and is concluded through a review of intersecting scholarship concerning collaborative conservation approaches and current understandings of co-management as a mechanism for reconciliation.

Reconciliation in Conservation

Reconciliation, generally, concerns the healing of broken relationships between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian setter-state and redress for the continuing harms of colonisation (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013). However, the term's usage has been stretched to refer to anything "from serious political and socio-economic transformation to the maintenance of the status quo" (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013, p. 9). According to Indigenous Watchdog (2022), despite its claims to significant progress on its reconciliation commitments, Canada has been slow to advance meaningful acknowledgement, reparations, and redress towards reconciliation following the 94 Calls to Action for Truth and Reconciliation Commission which brought forward the testimonies of residential school survivors and the legacy of Canada's attempted genocide against Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, while reconciliation is often mobilized as a shared template for renewing relationships, there have been claims that reconciliation has fragmented and divided understandings across both settler and Indigenous communities (Littlechild et al., 2021; Townsend, 2022). Many Indigenous leaders are calling for more than "hollow performances" and see reconciliation requiring structural rebalancing through, among other pathways, Indigenous self-autonomy, land restitution, and the restoration of human-land relationships (Daigle, 2019; McGregor, 2018b; Whyte, 2018; Youngblood Henderson, 2013). Others have eschewed the proposition of reconciliation altogether (Unist'ot'en Camp, n.d.; Wente, 2021).

The conservation sector is one settler institution in desperate need of reconciliation (Townsend, 2022). As already elucidated, there is reason for healthy scepticism around Canada's ability to move past mere recognition of Indigenous peoples and the incorporation of their knowledges and perspectives into Euro-centric conservation frameworks, towards adoption of approaches supportive of reconciliation imperatives (Hessami et al., 2021; Littlechild et al., 2021; Smith, 2020). Many scholars argue that reconciliation in conservation governance and management is about structural transformations that elevate Indigenous rights and responsibilities and create space for Indigenous jurisdiction, legal orders, and knowledge systems to flourish (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; Littlechild et al., 2021; M'sɨt No'kmaq et al., 2021). Guidelines and principles for such approaches have been described by various authorities. For example, the ICE report outlined various recommendations for reconciliation through conservation by advancing Indigenous stewardship through their own governance, knowledge and legal systems which predate those of Canada (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018). As well, Indigenous rights-based approaches to conservation have gained traction through the United Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Canada first endorsed in 2016 and implemented in 2021, affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to the conservation and stewardship of their own lands (Government of Canada, 2020; United Nations, 2007). However, approaches to reconciliation

through conservation are varied and, in some cases, oppositional, especially when contrasting those taken by state and Indigenous authorities. Globally, many Indigenous communities have implemented and are implementing Indigenous-led conservation projects, such as Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (ICCA Consortium, 2021). In some cases, these projects have been intentionally implemented without formal state recognition, while others, according to Indigenous and state authorities, have been negotiated in spirit of reconciliation such as Łutsel K'e Dene's partnership with Parks Canada for the establishment of Thaidene Nëné (CBC, 2022; Thaidene Nëné: Land of the Ancestors, n.d., CRP et al. 2020 Townsend, 2022; Tran et al., 2020).

The Imbalances of Co-Management

Co-management is a contested concept, linked to longstanding issues of trust, power and identity, especially with respect to Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems (Dietsch et al., 2021). These issues have been explored in-depth through theoretical and case studies from across Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South America, and the United States. In its earliest iterations, it was viewed as an instrument of public policy designed to bridge two disparate management systems under which Indigenous partners participate from a role of basic informing or consultation to an institutionalized, partnered joint-decision making arrangement – a wide range of arrangements often obscured under common heading of co-management (Berkes et al., 1991; Feit, 1988; Martin, 2016). Yet early research was concerned with the limitations of the advisory roles to which Indigenous peoples were ultimately confined through co-management (Nadasdy, 2003). As it is well known today, the majority[22] of these co-management arrangements were borne from a "state response to successful land claims challenges from Indigenous nations" which offered a "way for states to resolve Native title issues short of Indigenous self-determination" (Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020, p. 924; Pasternak, 2017). In other words, the original impetus for co-management agreements were never the rights and aspirations of Indigenous peoples (Mulrennan & Scott, 2005). Indeed, early case studies in wildlife co-management in the North clearly revealed Canada's unwillingness to relinquish decision-making power (Rodon, 1998). Early co-management opponents argued through tacit acceptance of co-management's Eurocentric assumptions, Indigenous peoples and their governance and knowledge systems were pressured to conform to bureaucratic and scientific standards and processes (Howitt & Suchet-Pearson, 2006 ; Nadasdy, 2003). During this era, co-management scholarship was seen as fundamentally challenged with bridging two worldviews based in distinct and opposing knowledge systems (Feit, 1988; Rodon, 1998). As Notzke (1995, p. 190) wrote, these two solitudes "commonly have failed to acknowledge the other as having any legitimacy", thus the "managerial dominance" of the state ultimately marginalizes Indigenous knowledge and knowledge systems (Berkes, 1994; Nadasdy, 2005; Doberstein and Devin, 2004). Such power imbalances were argued to result in "extractions" of Indigenous Knowledge that ignore the reciprocal and relational systems of understandings to which Indigenous Knowledges belong (Kimmerer, 2002).

Evolving Understandings of Co-Management

While co-management has continued to be critiqued along earlier lines of argument around sharing power and respectfully engaging Indigenous knowledge systems (Martinez-Reyes, 2014; Pinkerton, 2019; Sandlos, 2014; Watson, 2013; White, 2018; Youdelis, 2016), more recent

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[22] See Notzke (1995) for a summary of the various motivations behind co-management regimes.

scholarship suggests that earlier criticisms are perhaps undue. Researchers have documented the strategic implementation of co-management by various Indigenous peoples in pursuit of self-determination and other goals, the adoption of co-management as a primary engagement tool with the state, and evidence that many co-management arrangements are considered positive systems by communities (Diver, 2016; Feit, 1989; Lyver et al., 2014; Notzke, 1995; Reo et al., 2017; Zurba et al., 2012). In response to earlier critiques, Clark and Joe-Strack (2017, p. 71) warn that portraying co-management as "merely another method to co-opt Indigenous Peoples … breeds cynicism among those who will one day participate in or even run these systems". As first suggested more than 20 years ago "co-management presupposes that parties have, to some extent, agreed on an arrangement, but the actual arrangement often evolves; it is a process rather than a fixed state" (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005, p. 67). By adaptive processes, or, "learning through doing", co-management arrangements can mature towards higher degrees of "power sharing, shifts in world view, rules and norms, [and] the building of trust" (Berkes, 2009, p. 1699; Fischer et al., 2014). In this way, co-management has become a question of managing relationships between people and fostering multi-cultural interaction through supportive social, organizational, and institutional mechanisms (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005; Goetze, 2005; Natcher et al., 2005; Olsson et al., 2004; Plummer et al., 2012). Zurba et al. (2012, p. 1140), in their study with Girrungun Aboriginal Corporation in Australia, define this relationship-building process as a cycle of involving the building of respect and rapport, the sorting of responsibilities, practical engagement of traditional resource "owners", and capacity-building.

Co-Management for Reconciliation

Emerging theory around collaborative conservation approaches aligns with the idea of reconciliation in conservation, especially in northern protected areas. Through understanding conservation governance as a "cultural expression" of multiple actors, collaborative conservation partnerships that learn and adapt to socio-ecological change can be built (Borrini-Feyerabend & Hill, 2015). As Pinkerton (2019) suggests, legitimacy in the eyes of the local community is an indispensable ingredient for any successful co-management arrangement. Furthermore, conservation partnerships that account for community cultural values have potential to strengthen cultural institutions which may have been weakened over time, particular in northern remote Indigenous communities that face rapid rates of socio-ecological change (Infield et al., 2018). Building deep relationships with the community is identified as a key approach to sustaining ethical partnerships (Akonwi Nebasifu & Cuogo, 2021; Carthew, 2007; Jacobson et al., 2016; Nikolakis & Hotte, 2021). Importantly, respect for Indigenous Knowledges, which are understood here as an expansive set of knowledges particular to each Indigenous people, and Indigenous control over knowledge mobilization, have been identified as necessary conditions for Indigenous engagement in collaborative environmental management (Dietz et al., 2021; Reo et al., 2017). This respect can likewise be achieved through frameworks similar to ethical space, like two-eyed seeing or *Etuaptmumk,* defined by Albert Marshall as "learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to using both these eyes together, for the benefit of all" (Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 335). Similarly inspired by two-eyed seeing, Zurba et al. (2021) suggest a two-row model for Indigenous-state collaborations in environmental governance which facilitates a cross-cultural transformational process to enable community-based natural resource governance.

More directly, recent scholarship, along with the ICE's 2018 *We Rise Together* report[23], suggests that co-management may be supportive of a "new paradigm" in conservation that elevates Indigenous rights and responsibilities and promises broad socio-cultural, ecological, and economic outcomes (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; Moola & Roth, 2019; Stevens, 2014). However, Smith (2020) argues that co-management arrangements supportive of reconciliation must go beyond mere recognition-based approaches (Coulthard, 2014), to become models that centre self-determination and nation-to-nation relationships. Yet few studies confront these intersections in practical terms. Scholar of political science Chance Finegan (2018, p. 11), concerned by Canada's steadfast dependency on co-management, argued that "co-management is not a vehicle for Indigenous Peoples to reclaim authority over their traditional territories, nor does it identify truth, acknowledge harm, or provide restorative justice". Similarly, Grey and Kuokkanen argue co-management "cannot be 'tweaked' to provide better outcomes, nor can it provide a stepping stone to their self-determination" (Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020, p. 920). With regards to Canadian conservation, Finegan (2018, p. 2) cautions that "parks are not selectively entwined with settler-colonial structures; rather, they are part-and-parcel of broader efforts to create and maintain settler-colonial regimes". Other concerns focus on Parks Canada's fragmented approaches to reconciliation including a disconnect between its headquarters and its individual parks, which limits the achievement of socially just and effective national park management (Carter, 2010; Dearden & Bennett, 2016; Johnston & Mason, 2020; Littlechild et al., 2021; Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012).

One interpretation of these conflicting literatures is that while protected areas are places well deserving of reconciliation in Canada, it is unclear whether Parks Canada is well positioned to respond to the evolving diversity of Indigenous needs and interests in ways that support the imperatives of reconciliation. Indeed, while Indigenous groups may contemplate collaborative Indigenous-led conservation approaches with Parks Canada in pursuit self-determination and self-governance, it is unclear whether co-management is an adequate institution to support these objectives given its potential to create or reify power imbalances and its attachment to land claim agreements. Conversely, the notion of co-management as a mechanism to support the renewal of relationships is enabled by scholarly perspectives that see it as an adaptive, learning process that promotes relationship-building and the development of effective conservation partnerships which may further benefit from the introduction of Indigenous frameworks like ethical space and two-eyed seeing. This paper seeks to bring clarity to these tensions through an in-depth exploration of one story of relationship-building in national park co-management through a lens of ethical space.

Case Study

Co-management in Vuntut National Park

The Van Tat Gwich'in or Vuntut Gwitchin, one of 15 communities that comprise the Gwich'in Nation, is a self-governing First Nation based in the remote community of Old Crow on the Yukon North Slope (Gwich'in Social & Cultural Institute, 2015). Vuntut National Park, part of a package of regional protected areas, was established in 1995 under the provisions of the VGFN Final Agreement (1993) (Dearden & Bennett, 2016). Located 150km north of the fly-in

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[23] Alongside many other recommendations to state governments for supporting IPCA-creation, "6.2 ICE calls on federal, provincial and territorial governments to develop collaborative governance and management arrangements for existing federal, provincial and territorial parks and protected areas." (2018)

community of Old Crow, VNP protects 4,345 km² of the northern third of the Crow Flats, which, at the time of the Final Agreement's ratification in 1994, was under threat by oil and gas exploration (see *Figure 2)*. VNP was established to protect a key region of the Porcupine Caribou herd's migratory route, on which VGFN depend for harvesting, as well areas of cultural and archeological significance. The park recognizes and protects VGFN rights, including the continued traditional use of lands and waters and harvest practices within the park (Parks Canada, 2010). The agreement provides various socio-economic benefits associated with park management, such as a 50% VGFN hiring quota, tourism opportunities, and recognition of oral history as a valid form of research.
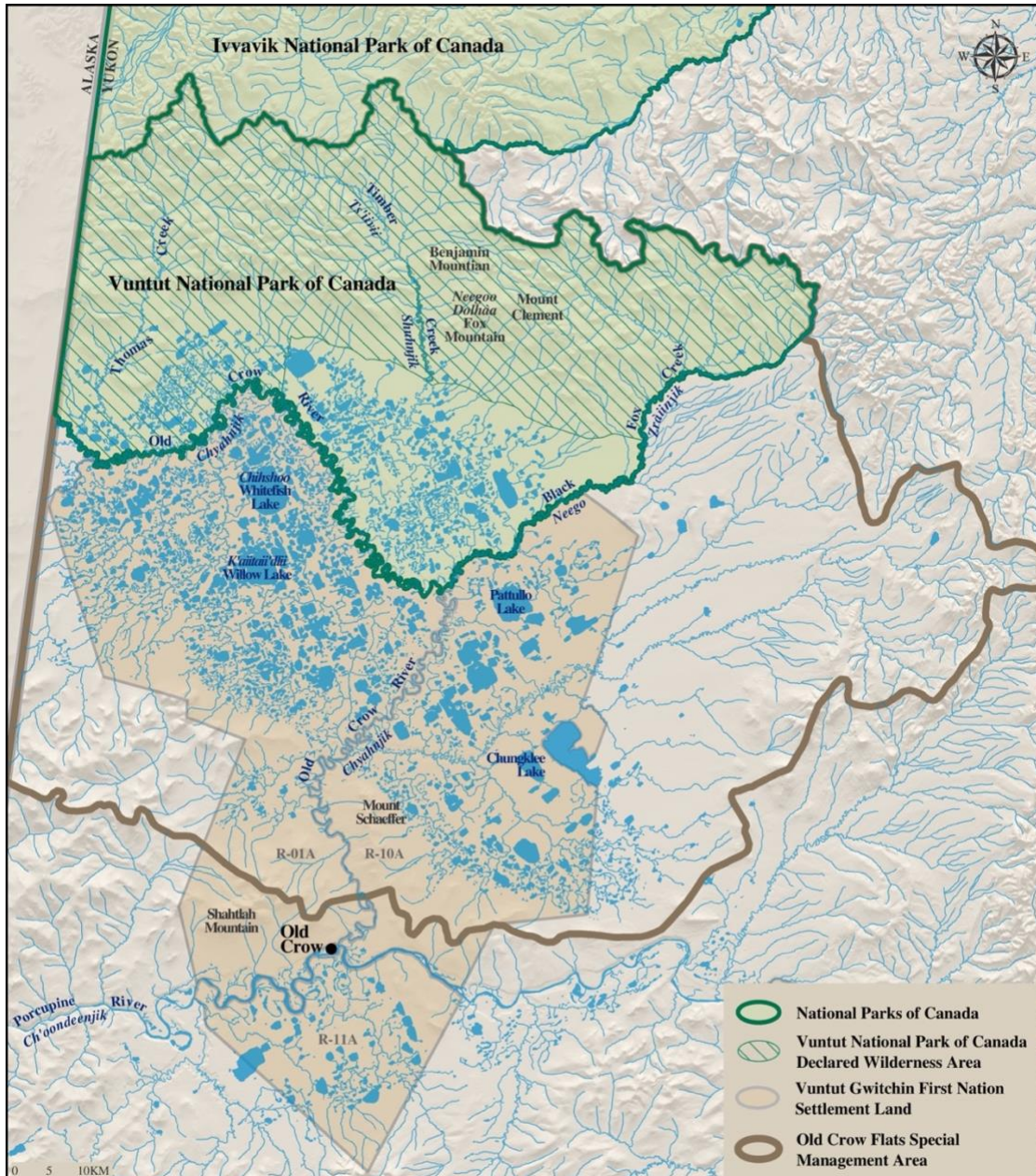

Figure 2: Map of VGFN Settlement Land, Vuntut National Park, and other protected areas in the Crow Flats and Porcupine River area (Parks Canada 2017)

VNP is cooperatively managed through a tripartite arrangement between Vuntut Gwitchin Government (VGG), North Yukon Renewable Resource Council[24] (NYRRC), and Parks Canada. Unlike subsequent modern treaties, the VGFN Final Agreement did not prescribe a structured cooperative management board with operational protocols. This has created a challenge in problem-solving for partners to establish a mutually-beneficial relationship. Notably, VGFN's role was formally undefined until a later agreement clarified Parks Canada and VGFN as the decision-making partners, "providing approvals in their respective jurisdictions", while the RRC maintains an advisory role (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation et al., 2005). The 2010 Management Plan incorporates VGFN priorities including support for the continuance of traditional lifestyles, intergenerational knowledge transfer, shared ecological stewardship, tourism development, and cultural resource protection (Dearden & Bennett, 2016). Today, the region is undergoing great socio-ecological change triggered by climate change which has resulted in VGFN's response to advance greater ecological monitoring through community-centred and partnered approaches to adaptation and building resiliency (The Firelight Group & Vuntut Gwitchin Government, 2018).

It is well known that the outcomes of land claim negotiations and implementation have varied across Indigenous communities due to socio-cultural and political factors (Alcantara, 2013). However, while the results reflect the specificities of one national park in one territorial governance system, it may offer practical guidance for mature co-management arrangements in other northern national parks under similar organizational and governance structures. The VGFN Final Agreement does not include specific provisions for a co-management board (i.e., board composition). However, Vuntut National Park is managed by staff based in Old Crow and by a field unit in Whitehorse and according to the agreement should be comprised of 50% Vuntut Gwitchin employees. At the time of writing, four of six positions are to be Old Crow based according to the organizational structure (presented in *Figure 3*). Those actors participating in similar arrangements may benefit from community-based research around enabling and constraining factors for operationalizing ethical space which may be beneficial to practitioners in mature co-management arrangements to ensure that relationships are passed down and maintain continuity.

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[24] RRCs were created as the primary instrument for local renewable resources management through individual Final Agreements across the Yukon and often advise on national park management (Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, 2022)
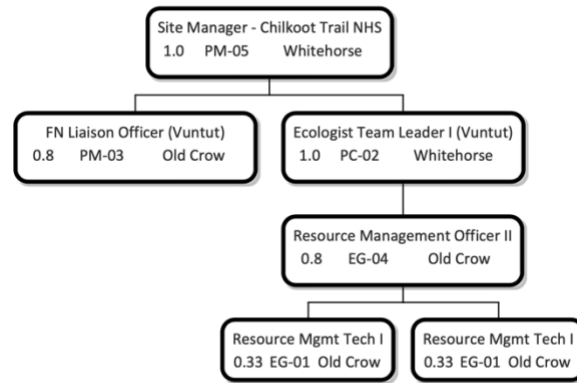
Figure 3: Vuntut National Park Organizational Structure (Parks Canada, 2022)

Methods

I undertook this project under guidance of decolonizing and Indigenist research methodologies, namely to foreground reciprocity throughout the research process and to focus on understanding research as relationship (McGregor, 2018a; Smith, 1999). I approached this research as a settler-scholar attending to my own relationships, responsibilities, and accountability to the people of Old Crow and the lands on which I was, in certain ways, uninvited. The very undertaking of this research and the capacity for it to be of value was made possible by VGFN's willingness to collaborate throughout the research process. A research agreement and community ethics protocol dictated by VGFN's Heritage Committee, was signed in Spring 2021. Three visits were made to the community to communicate research progress and validate results throughout the research project.

I prioritized the use of qualitative research methods that respected oral traditions, namely semi-structured interviews, which allow for the voices and stories of Indigenous peoples to be heard and create "spaces for sharing and learning" (McGregor et al., 2018, pp. 236–237) (Castleden et al., 2012; Kovach, 2009; McGregor, 2018a; Mulrennan et al., 2012). Since ethical space is a novel framework in terms of Parks Canada's management approach, the question guide focused on open questions that would elicit tangible stories and examples of relationship-building and was designed using language that would be accessible to all participants. Questions included:

1. How would you describe the relationship between Parks Canada and VGFN?
2. How has the relationship changed over time? And why?
3. How would you describe the relationship between Parks Canada and the community?
4. What are the signs of a strong relationship between Parks Canada and VGFN?
5. How are challenges met and resolved between partners? Specific Examples?
6. What are your aspirations for the VNP management relationship?
7. How can Parks Canada better listen to community values and aspirations for the Park?
8. What value do you see Parks Canada bringing to the community today versus before?

9. Do you consider VGFN as a full and equal participant in decision making of VNP?
10. To what extent does VGFN ways of knowing and doing inform Park management?
11. In what ways do you see Parks Canada supporting in reconciliation or strengthening nation-to-nation relationships?

Participants were identified through the assistance of the VGG Heritage Committee, through network opportunities at community-held research gatherings, and by word of mouth. Care was taken to hear from a diversity of community members, including women, youth, and/or active hunters. Given the small population of the community, many participants belonged to multiple categories. Nearly all interviewees are, or were once, in positions of leadership in the community or Parks Canada. NYRCC were not available for interviews. Participant biographies are presented in *Table 1*.

I conducted a total of 11 individual conversational interviews in Fall of 2021. Interviews lasted between 30 and 120 minutes and occurred face-to-face in Old Crow and virtually where necessary. Limited time in Old Crow did not allow for a formalized process for engaging community members in the analysis stage. However, two subsequent visits to the community in May 2022 and January 2023 allowed for follow-up conversations with individual participants to discuss themes and validate preliminary findings. During these visits, participants were also given opportunities to edit or redact their transcripts. In honour of the research relationship and VGG's ownership of the research as per the research protocol, community consent to publish the results was obtained from the VGFN Heritage Department following final one-on-one reviews of individual contributions and overall findings with each individual participant and concluded by an oral presentation open to the community.

I first reviewed the transcriptions to identify general themes as a preliminary lens of analysis and then followed by an iterative process of coding following the ethical space framework (Benaquisto, 2008) These codes included: community engagement, respect of Indigenous Knowledges, decision-making , human-land connections, dialogic processes, and constraints to relationship building. Certain findings are woven together through a narrative approach, emphasizing intact quotations, to avoid decontextualizing statements and honour the voices and stories shared by the participants, while others are presented conventionally in discrete themes where appropriate (Castleden et al., 2017; Clandinin, 2006).

Specifically, the analysis is my interpretation of participant perspectives on forms of engagement, dialogic processes and three community-based principles of engagement: 1) respect for equal partnership; 2) respect for Indigenous Knowledges; and 3) people-land relationships. The analysis explores what extent these mechanisms and principles have been encouraged through co-management through specific examples of trust-building and co-learning processes, or constrained by other structural, attitudinal, economic, or other factors.

This study does not purport to ameliorate an ethical space framework, rather it explores its application in the context of co-management as a practical exercise. I recognize that at both field unit and national levels, efforts to address the concerns identified in this study may be ongoing; at minimum, this study provides some preliminary insight into the compatibility of ethical space and claims-based co-management. The study confronts only one part of the ethical space

framework identified in the literature, as introspection and reflection were deemed less measurable and provided fewer tangible constructs to study from the onset. There was little focus on cultural sensitivity training which other studies on ethical space have brought to attention for their significance in building ethical space (Greenwood et al., 2017).

Results were delivered orally to members of Chief and Council, community members, and other partnered research at community-hosted research gathering in Old Crow in February of 2023.

Table 6: Participant Biographies

Mary-Jane Moses	**Tetlit Gwich'in Elder based in Old Crow. Now retired, Mary-Jane worked 20 years as the Heritage Coordinator for VGG and has worked as a filmmaker, researcher, and translator. She received an honorary Bachelor of Northern Heritage and Culture studies in 2022 from Yukon University, YT.**
Esau Schafer	Vuntut Gwitchin Elder. Previously worked as First Nations Liaison Officer at VNP in the mid-2000s. Served as councillor (2003-2010, 2016-2018) and district representative in territorial government (1996)
Sophia Flather	Vuntut Gwitchin. Language Coordinator in VG Heritage and participant in park patrols as a VG summer student.
Jeffrey Peter	Vuntut Gwitchin. Worked for VNP as a seasonal patrol, resource management officer (formerly referred to as Park Warden), and First Nation Liaison from 2004 to 2015. Continued to work for Kluane National Park Reserve for a number of years.
Roger Kyikavichik	Vuntut Gwitchin Elder. Previous Chief of VGFN (1988-1992, 2014-2016). Served as councillor (1988-2010).
William Josie	Vuntut Gwitchin. Government Services Director for VGG. Director of Natural Resources for VGG during establishment of VNP. Served as councillor (1994-1996, 1998-2006).
Brenda Frost	Vuntut Gwitchin. Current First Nation Liaison Officer for VNP. Served as councillor (1992-1994)
Colton Schafer	Vuntut Gwitchin Youth. Grade 12 student at Chief Zzeh Gittlit school in Old Crow.
Megan Williams	Old Crow/Whitehorse-based. Heritage Manager for VGG since 1998.
Jacqueline Menzies	Old Crow-based Resource Management Officer for VNP (2019-2022).
Ian McDonald	Whitehorse-based Ecologist Team Leader I for VNP since 2007. Began his career with Parks Canada in 1999 (Inuvik).

Results

The following analysis of co-management as an ethical space of engagement is broken into three parts. The first and second parts explore participant perspectives on enabling and constraining factors for engagement and dialogic processes, respectively, between Parks Canada and VGFN. The third identified community-based principles for engagement based on participant perspectives and explores the alignments and constraints of the co-management arrangement in supporting them.

Engagement

Participants suggest that engagement occurs both internally (i.e., through management structures) and externally to formal structures (i.e., casual engagement with community members). On the former, Elder Roger Kyikavichik says "they [Parks Canada] always send good people up here. Just about every park warden that we have here communicates well with the people… The relationship is good and that's what needs to happen" (R. Kyikavichik, personal communication, November 4, 2021). Ian McDonald, based in Whitehorse as the Ecologist Team Lead for 14 years, explains that it's hard to make progress without these relationships, which, to maintain, require frequent visits throughout the year:

> If I was spread a bit thinner, I wouldn't be up there as much and I wouldn't have the personal relationships that I do with people… It's nice to go up in the winter. You know, the field season is good, but it's not a good time to talk with people. You're just so busy… So, it really speaks to the need for people to commit to a place and commit to a relationship and to give it time. (I. McDonald, personal communication, November 16, 2021)

However, many participants suggested that the ephemerality of Parks Canada's presence in the community due to VNP's organization structure imposes a strain on maintaining co-manager relationships over time. For example, the management team in Whitehorse has a high turnover rate which means that VGG is forced to continually rebuild relationships and trust with new staff (M. Williams, personal communication, November 19, 2021). Other participants suggest that Parks Canada's propensity to engage with VGFN is further constrained by the relationship between Vuntut National Park and Whitehorse's Yukon Field Unit which manages both VNP and the well-frequented Chilkoot National Historic Site. As Peter explains,

> if no one is holding you to the flame … not much seems to happen … There are resources in Whitehorse that Parks [Canada] has, but they're often put to other places like Kluane [National Park and Park Reserve] or Chilkoot [National Historic Site] that have a much higher profile. (personal communication, November 18, 2021.

While Parks Canada faces its own limitations to engagement, many participants also alluded to broader political issues in the community that strain VGG's capacity to reciprocate engagement with Parks Canada. "You know, for several years now, our community… we're going through really tough times" (E. Schafer, personal communication, November 3, 2021). The VGG has limited capacity and much "bigger fish to fry", often leaving engagement with Parks Canada pushed aside (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021). "It's not a good use of the First Nation's time when there's so much going on to try and engage or try to elicit more out of Parks Canada" (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021). In Peter's opinion, community expectations for Parks Canada have evolved. Parks Canada originally had a large presence attributable to its newness in the community, but today "Parks isn't seen as the type of organization that's ever going to be a big presence in Old Crow" (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021). Some participants suggested this may be a result of its remoteness which overtime resulted in some commitments within the Final Agreement, such as tourism, being regarded as unviable. While the Final Agreement included various provisions for economic development involving the Park, including tourism businesses, there have been very few outsiders who have ever visited the Park since its establishment (E. Schafer, personal communication, November 3, 2021). "It's not made for tourists, it's not made for walking, and it's not made for hiking" (E. Schafer, personal communication, November 3, 2021). While some community members, like Elder Mary-Jane Moses, believe that the Park wasn't intended for tourism in the first place, since its original intention was to protect various sacred areas, these are commitments within the agreement that have not been met.

There was a strong focus among participants on the importance of a deeper community engagement from Parks Canada. Participants Kyikavichik, E. Schafer, and McDonald agreed that communications about land and ecological changes to the community are a vital part of Parks Canada's role and presence in Old Crow. Others such as Josie, Frost, and Peter spoke of the importance of Parks Canada's interpretive centre, school visits, and community meetings and events in supporting deeper connection with the broader community. Staff who can go further to engage with the community outside of the Parks Canada context can also make a large difference in building trust, according to Peter, recalling a well-regarded Parks Canada staffer who often fiddled for community dances (personal communication, November 4, 2021).

This level of engagement, which requires regular face-to-face interactions, has been similarly challenged by Parks Canada's organizational structure. There are two additional factors which

limit continuous interaction with Parks Canada staff in Old Crow: one of the two full-time (0.8 time) community-based positions requires technically trained personnel who often come from outside the community; and two of the four community-based positions are only seasonal. Moses has noticed decrease communication in the winter months when seasonal employee hours are reduced, which happens to be when key communications, such as training opportunities, are most pressing (M.-J. Moses, personal communication, October 28, 2021). As Williams explains, "Parks can go underground when they're beleaguered, when they don't have people in positions and they're trying to re-staff... You just kind of forget they're there" (M. Williams, personal communication, November 19, 2021). Many participants noted a general decrease in communications and outreach in recent years, which was attributed to COVID-19 restrictions and the federal budget cuts in 2012.

> There's no involvement. No highlights of all that has gone on over the years. They used to give updates to the community but ever since I left… I haven't heard of anything given back to the community on what they find. (E. Schafer, personal communication, November 3, 2021)

Many participants agreed Parks Canada could focus on re-establishing clear and regular communication to improve relationships and collaboration with community members. For example, some participants suggest Parks Canada should focus on its presence in the school. "We have to make available more info on the Park … we need a better way to tell the story of what's out there in curriculum" (W. Josie, personal communication, November 4, 2021). For example, meaningful presence in the school can contribute to a broader trust-building between Parks Canada and community. Recalling his past visits to the community's one school in his Parks Canada uniform, Esau Schafer tells, "they [the children] sat right beside me and they'd want to know if it was really me!". It is during such opportunities where youth can learn that Parks Canada is about "protecting your community, protecting your future, or your younger people" (E. Schafer, personal communication, November 3, 2021).

Dialogic Processes
Participants suggested that trust and respect between Parks Canada and VGFN has been supported by continuous dialogue through formal and informal interactions over time. Since NYRRC and Parks Canada offices share the same hallway in the John Tizya building, directly across the street from the VGG offices, "you almost know what's going on every day, what they're doing" (R. Kyikavichik, personal communication, November 4, 2021). Parks Canada often attends RRC meetings, consults VGG Heritage Department on their projects, and regularly consults with VGG (J. Menzies, personal communication, November 1, 2021). "It's sometimes over the top", but "with the right intention – out of respect" (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021). As McDonald explains, VNP's management team has long followed a community-first approach. "Where we [Parks] have fallen short, we've been kind of prodded, you know, in a respectful manner" (I. McDonald, personal communication, November 16, 2021). "It doesn't mean that we always agree on everything. But … when there are disagreements or different points of view, I find these get expressed in a positive and constructive manner" (I. McDonald, personal communication, November 16, 2021). These face-to-face interactions, which require Parks Canada's presence in the community, occur as often at the co-op or waiting at the airport as they do in the board room which create spaces for people to discuss issues on their own terms (I. McDonald, personal communication, November 16, 2021).

Participants discussed several examples of where co-management has fostered an attitude of co-learning and trust-building through dialogic processes. For example, once the park was established, dialogue between co-managers and the community was a vital element in defining Parks Canada's role in the community. Specifically, open dialogue was a key component in co-development of VNP's ecological monitoring program which respects and complements local Indigenous Knowledges. "When [Parks Canada] first started there wasn't that much patrol because they really didn't know what we wanted them to do" (R. Kyikavichik, personal communication, November 4, 2021). Following the 2007-08 International Polar Year (IPY) brought various ecological research projects to the territory, many of which, upon request by VGG and the NYRRC, Parks Canada's agreed to carry on support for and continue to fill a lead logistical role in the permafrost and lake monitoring programs (I. McDonald, personal communication, November 16, 2021). This aligned with VNP's management objectives to carefully "design a program that is guided by the land claim and that stays true to the reasons for creating the park in the first place" (I. McDonald, personal communication, November 16, 2021). Menzies believes that Parks Canada has demonstrated their ability to actively listen to the VGFN and their knowledge of the land through this program (personal communication, November 1, 2021). Conversely, Kyikavichik hopes that this program has been instructive for Canada in respecting Indigenous Knowledges "maybe the information that they're getting is starting to open their eyes and say, yeah... Indigenous people are correct about some of the changes and what's happening around us" (personal communication, November 4, 2021).

According to some participants, open dialogue has also been an important tool to resolve conflicts between VGFN and Parks Canada's ways of doing and knowing. In one case, Parks Canada authorities objected to youth participation on park excursions for liability concerns which was met with staunch resistance from the community. Williams recalls this as being a learning moment where the Parks Canada superintendent at the time had to look past Parks Canada culture and recognize the importance of intergenerational involvement for VGFN. "…and that was the end of that. He was educated by the people around the table" (M. Williams, personal communication, November 19, 2021).

The need for more regular and intentional dialogue in building collaborative approaches for supporting the community's connection to Crow Flats was underlined by some participants. Moses recommends that Parks Canada's relationship with the community "could be built up stronger, so we have more young people interested in working for Parks, our own people, on the land as monitors or something out in the park" (personal communication, October 28, 2021). "The cooperation has been good, but I'd like to see more… They could make suggestions too; 'Gee, would Heritage be interested in working together, maybe we could have a big camp in Crow Flats in the springtime? Can we both come together and work on this, and get some of our community members out? I'd like to hear that and see that and see the end product too" (M.-J. Moses, personal communication, October 28, 2021). Both Moses and Kyikavichik regret that the community's youth have not been getting out on the land through Parks Canada (e.g., patrols) as they used to. Moses also wants to encourage her community to initiate dialogue with Parks Canada and ask for support in these opportunities. "They know the land … so they're needed out there" (M.-J. Moses, personal communication, October 28, 2021). Participants Moses, Flather, and Kyikavichik underlined that these projects must bring together people from the community including Elders, youth, and women involved at all stages of planning and operations.

Principles of Co-Management as an Ethical Space of Engagement
A summary of key alignments and constraints between co-management and community-based principles of engagement is presented in *Table 2*.

   1. Respect of Equal Partnership
All participants underlined the importance of respect for VGFN as a full and equal partner in co-management which has been honoured in many ways through co-management. Many participants referred to the importance of the Final Agreement in providing a basis for the relationship. "It will work if they follow it. Right in the headlines is your partnership with VGG. You know who to point at right away" (E. Schafer, personal communication, November 3, 2021). Yet while the Final Agreement did establish a legal relationship for co-managers, it did not in fact define an explicit role for VGG in terms of VNP's management, which demanded a process of co-learning and trust-building between co-managers. "Parks Canada really had to make sure that they were linking in with VGG. So, you know, early staff started doing that and that continued. So those conduits are there, but it wasn't officially in the land claim" (M. Williams, personal communication, November 19, 2021). Director of NR, William Josie, agreed that the decision-making relationship lacked definition originally. "You know, we had to rely on each other to manage the park." This was a process of learning-by-doing that took place "on the ground … by taking Parks Canada staff out there" (W. Josie, personal communication, November 4, 2021). The eventual drafting of the first management plan which involved several rounds of community workshops was a key stage in relationship-building and building a shared vision for the park that also improved VGG's understanding of how the management of VNP would fit with federal policy (W. Josie, personal communication, November 4, 2021). Signalling this respect between partners, Parks Canada has never made a decision concerning the park's management without the approval of VGG (R. Kyikavichik, personal communication, November 4, 2021). In Kyikavichik's words "it wouldn't go down right".

Underpinning this form of respect is respect for the VGFN's jurisdiction – essential for ethical engagement as it recognizes VGFN rights and responsibilities over the access and continued use of the Crow Flats. This respect is based in provisions of the Final Agreement. During land claims negotiations in the 1980s, when national park legislation was introduced by federal negotiators as a response to increased demands for Category A[25] protection from the community, the foreign concept of a "national park' was met with resistance from the community:

> We really didn't know what it meant at the time. But you know, we talked about it and the Elders asked all their questions: 'Can we still go in there and hunt? Can we still go in there and trap? (R. Kyikavichik, personal communication, November 4, 2021)

Over time, and through discussion, VGFN was able to negotiate an agreement that fit their community's desired relationship with the state. "Canada listened" (R. Kyikavichik, personal communication, November 4, 2021) and VGFN was satisfied by the agreement that was signed. "The Elders, that longer exists with us, they wanted to protect the Crow Flats because Crow Flats is one of the main sources of harvesting, you know?" (E. Schafer, personal communication, November 3, 2021). "Parks was supportive of our people at that time. It's not to tell us that we can't do these things. More or less, it was protection of this very important area for life. So, we're

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[25] Category A is settlement land which includes surface and mineral rights, whereas Category B is settlement land where the First Nation retains surface rights only.

happy with that." (R. Kyikavichik, personal communication, November 4, 2021). "Some VGFN families still visit camps that are in the park in the spring – "they just use it as they've always used it" (M.-J. Moses, personal communication, October 28, 2021). This significance of this mutual respect is further reflected by one participant's perspective that the Parks Canada uniform not only represents a symbol of protection and enforcement, but a symbol that grants the wearers the right to travel within the Park (R. Kyikavichik, personal communication, November 4, 2021). Everything that's going on out there, we are aware of" (R. Kyikavichik, personal communication, November 4, 2021).

However, both community members and Parks Canada staff identified a greater need for honest dialogue around the changes necessary to address Parks Canada's colonial legacy wherein there exists underlying tensions for shared decision-making in the community (J. Menzies, personal communication, November 1, 2021). As Peter notes, "one of the good things [about Parks Canada] is that each park gets to work out its own relationships, but at the same time, the national body still has an overarching bureaucratic framework." Similarly, Flather spoke of some underlying concern that she had for Parks Canada's presence on VGFN homeland and the implications for reconciliation. "These Parks become part of the Canadian identity… so, when you start claiming things as Canadian, it takes away from Indigenous people" (S. Flather, personal communication, March 3, 2022). While Flather agrees the protection is valuable, especially in light of continued oil and gas exploration in the region, she says:

> There's a lot of strings attached and there's a lot of rules there for us to get protections. So, I don't see it at all as reconciliation… if they wanted reconciliation, they would just put that land in our name again and then see how they could help out. (S. Flather, personal communication, March 3, 2022)

Other participants were alert to more practical and immediate implications of these power dynamics. For example, VNP management's duties to the federal agency requires them to follow top-down mandates or policies that may at time conflict with mutual respectful practices. Policy amendments to Parks Canada's Management Planning process following budget cuts in 2012 effectively removed the tangible "workplan" component of the Management Plan, a vital component of the Management Plan that the community and partners will now have to develop through their own resources (M. Williams, personal communication, November 19, 2021). Moreover, as described earlier in the example of youth involvement in park visits, top-down Parks Canada policy imposes red tape on operations in the community. As Menzies explains, Parks Canada's policy framework and conservation approach, designed for southern parks and thus ignoring or complicating the special needs of northern remote national parks, requires a re-invention (personal communication, Nov 1, 2021). "You figure out your own way of doing it, because it doesn't work here" (J. Menzies, personal communication, November 1, 2021).

2. Respect for Indigenous Knowledges

The second community-based principle for engagement was respect for Indigenous ways of knowing. The main loci for where respect for Indigenous Knowledges is fostered has been the joint excursions on the land that combine VGFN and Parks Canada stewardship practices while engaging all levels of the community from youth to Elders. Flather and Moses both agreed that these visits are an important service provided by Parks Canada that strengthen Vuntut Gwitchin cultural values and builds respect across knowledge systems. Flather emphasizes that the true benefit of these park visits "is just having people out there more, which is really good

monitoring." (S. Flather, personal communication, March 3, 2022). She continues, "I don't like to call it science because science misses a lot of stuff – but I like that kind of monitoring where you're keeping cultural skills going and keeping people trapping" (S. Flather, personal communication, March 3, 2022).

Several participants suggest that stewardship positions for community members are a key mechanism for building respect across knowledge systems and offer a generative potential for cross-cultural engagement. For example, the First Nation Liaison Officer or VGFN Park Wardens. A Liaison Officer who is competent and aware of safety concerns in the bush is instrumental in having land-based trips go ahead and can create important venues for community engagement (S. Flather, personal communication, March 3, 2022). Reflecting on how Wardens help bridge Parks Canada's and Vuntut Gwitchin's knowledge systems, Moses explains, "they already have their traditional knowledge. They came with their traditional knowledge of the land, and Parks Canada trained them on specifics on what they had to do in the Park". Peter recollects many cross-cultural learning experiences during his former employment at Parks Canada. Various collaborative projects enabled him, as both VGFN and Parks Canada staff, "to step outside of the Parks [Canada] world" (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021). Furthermore, "Parks has the power and the resources to give people opportunities to get their foot in the door and get some background experience" (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021). Various VGFN citizens who worked with Parks Canada as summer students through VGG or who held positions in the park as Resource Management Technicians and First Nation Liaison Officers who have continued successful careers in both First Nation and Crown government contexts.

Yet working equitably between VGFN and Parks Canada knowledge systems through co-management has had challenges. Under VNP management's divided organizational structure, Parks Canada's operations in the community are effectively limited to ecological monitoring without adequate and consistent employment of VGFN members (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021). Other challenges are more circumstantial; previous employees of VNP such as Menzies and Peter bemoaned a lack of fit for Parks Canada's bureaucratic management systems in the community that depend on reliable internet which does not yet exist in Old Crow.

Another significant tension for respecting Indigenous Knowledges raised by several participants is in Parks Canada's "tunnel vision" around the park itself as a locus for community engagement. "The park, being at the northern extent of the Crow Flats, is not visited very frequently anymore… so, the relevance is kind of going away" (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021). In acknowledging the cost of park visits, Peter suggests "the real meaning [of VNP], it's in Old Crow" (personal communication, November 18, 2021). He suggests Parks Canada, rather than focus on the park itself, "can do something more affordably with less resources in the community that's promoting Vuntut Gwitchin culture" and engages a broader audience (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021). On this point, Esau Schafer also suggests that "Parks should work with the community and children again. Sewing, beading, crafting… lots to do". This could also take place through established conduits. For example, Parks Canada funded the VGG's Heritage Branch for one major multi-year oral history project from 1999 to 2004 which included taking Elders out on the land for interviews (M. Williams,

personal communication, November 19, 2021). Williams says that this part of the final agreement has been upheld over time, despite decreased financial contributions. "Parks Canada goes through the same process that any researcher would go through to access oral history. And they've also been really supportive of helping the community to document and to have that information" (M. Williams, personal communication, November 19, 2021). Liaison Officer Frost sees more frequent community gatherings that celebrate Vuntut Gwitchin culture, such as Caribou Days, encourages understandings between cultures and contributes to relationship-building (B. Frost, personal communication, November 11, 2021).

While bridging knowledge systems was a focus of interviews, participants also highlighted the benefits of dividing roles in building respect between knowledge systems and creating an adaptive co-management arrangement. Specifically, several participants saw Parks Canada's ecological monitoring program as providing an adaptive capacity for community-based climate change responses. In youth Colton Schafer's words: "Parks Canada and Vuntut National Park – it's their job to monitor the park, the land, and see the changes … climate change has a big impact on our community and our land because we're so up North" (C. Schafer, personal communication, November 4, 2021). This is challenged somewhat by Parks Canada's siloed approach to ecological monitoring, which has resulted in limited VNP management's ability to respond to adapting community priorities, such as recent interest in salmon monitoring which would involve monitoring outside of park boundaries (J. Menzies, personal communication, November 1, 2022). But, William Josie, while recognizing the limitations of their bureaucratic approach, sees Parks Canada as well positioned to bring in information about environmental change to the community. Similarly, as Kyikavichik explains, Vuntut Gwitchin spend a lot of time on the land in the wintertime and spring, but Parks Canada is able to complement Vuntut Gwitchin knowledge by being on the land during other times such as summer: "That's a benefit to us. They bring good, first-hand information … It's helped me to be confident that if anything changes, somebody is going to know, quickly" (R. Kyikavichik, personal communication, November 4, 2021). Furthermore, Parks Canada gives the community access to other government partnerships, networks, and agencies to pursue responses to such changes (W. Josie, personal communication, November 4, 2021).

3. People-Land Relationships

Lastly, participant perspectives highlight the central importance of supporting the strengthening of community relationships with the land. Peter spoke of the growing disconnect between his people and the land and fears that only "talking about how things used to be" may render the Crow Flats an abstract concept. "I think the most meaningful thing is getting people out to the park" (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021). Overwhelmingly, participants spoke of the gradual cultural shift in the community and unprecedented rates of ecological and geomorphological change that has contributed to less interaction with the Park and the Crow Flats, leaving many in the community concerned for youth and community connection to land. The community coordinates with various organizations and researchers to manage and monitor the Porcupine Caribou herd which has been arriving later each year, fish populations in the rivers, and landslide events on the increasingly drier Crow River which limits access to the Crow Flats and the Park (The Firelight Group & Vuntut Gwitchin Government, 2018). Esau Schafer sees the well-being of his community as being foremost about the land:

People – you know, when I say people, I include myself because we're all in the same boat together – are having tough time with each other. But how are you going to fix that? The well-being is where you gotta start from. From out there on the land. (E. Schafer, personal communication, November 3, 2021)

Having people on the land is not only vital for community well-being but for the land itself through fulfilling responsibilities. "Most people have said that Crow Flats are really lonesome right now. Because it doesn't see people, people don't go out much. They need to bring it back to life again, just by their presence out there" (M.-J. Moses, personal communication, October 28, 2021). This is where collaborative projects that keep people on the land can provide benefits that extend far beyond mere park management. "I feel that our engagement with that area has gone down… but that's not necessarily because of parks. It's because of a lot of different things. But Parks could definitely help in that area" (S. Flather, personal communication, March 3, 2022). In Jeffrey Peter's view, Parks Canada can play a significant role in supporting this re-connection:

By getting people to the park, you're rebuilding their connection with the land and rebuilding Parks Canada's connection with the community and breaking down those systems that were in place to break people's connections with culture and language. (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021)

Kyikavichik also sees the park as a place that helps to educate on and heal from the harms that colonialism has imposed on his community. "I could tell them what took place," but in the Crow Flats "is where you can heal… Nobody can't touch you. If you're Vuntut Gwitchin nobody can tell you anything, you just go there and you stay there. It's your right. Nobody can take it away from you" (R. Kyikavichik, personal communication, November 4, 2021).

While there are simple technical constraints in undertaking park visits (i.e., helicopter fuel expenses), and previous superintendents have demonstrated their ability to listen and adapt to community values, Flather sees Parks Canada's red tape as a significant restriction on the ability for VGFN to practice their own culture on VNP. For example, harvesting on Parks Canada-supported excursions is only allowable in emergencies which contradicts VGFN rights in the park (S. Flather, personal communication, March 3, 2022). Other participants returned to similar contradictions stemming from bureaucratic roadblocks, such as Parks Canada's hesitancy to include youth on a park excursion due to liability or contradictory regulations regarding VGFN's firearm usage during Park visits. Peter, speaking from his own lived experience, believes that "Parks [Canada] can have a big impact on people's lives if they're taking the lead and getting people out on the land, but there are often more roadblocks in place than there is support" (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021). Due to these inadequacies, Flather suggests that community members prefer to participate in Crow Flats visits through their own government, in this way "they don't have to go by the same rules … and they're able to do things that they've been able to do their whole life" (personal communication, March 3, 2022). As a result, some participants suggested that other governance structures set out in the FA, such as the VG Heritage Department, have overshadowed the roles that Parks Canada may have otherwise assumed. "VG employs a lot more people, has a way bigger budget, and has way more projects going on … projects that people can actually participate in" (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021). In other words, there seems to be a diminishing expectation regarding the extent to which Parks Canada should involve itself in supporting the strengthening of community relationships to land.

Table 7: Summary of Key Alignments and Tensions between Co-Management and Ethical Space Principles

	Alignment	Tensions
Respect for Equal Partnership	-Final Agreement set a mutually defined basis for the legal relationship (i.e., defined jurisdiction) -there is a mutual, grounded understanding that decision-making powers are equal	-Parks Canada's top-down bureaucratic framework affects management (i.e., policies are imposed without community input, red tape)
Respect for Indigenous Knowledges	-visits to the park have respected VGFN and Parks Canada stewardship approaches -employment and stewardship opportunities for community members builds trust and bridges knowledge systems -oral histories and data sovereignty respected by Parks Canada under Final Agreement -ecological monitoring program is built upon and fosters mutual respect between knowledge systems	-Parks Canada's management approach has "tunnel vision" around operations and community-projects within the park itself which limits opportunities for respecting IK that could take place in the community -Parks Canada's template approach to management conflicts with Indigenous ways of knowing
People-Land Relationships	- joint excursions in the past that have engaged Elders, youth, women, active hunters, supports social and ecological well-being	-bureaucratic frameworks and red-tape limits potential for Parks Canada operations to respect Indigenous ways of being and doing on the land which may contribute to decrease in community expectations towards Parks Canada

Discussion

Analyzing co-management through an ethical space framework provides a window to escape from the standard critiques of co-management. Through defining and exploring participant perspectives on engagement based in dialogic processes and community-based principles of co-management, it was possible to identify enabling and constraining factors that contribute to the governance vitality of northern national park co-management.

I preface this discussion with a reminder that ethical space is not something that arises organically, rather "it is a conscious decision to move into this space; to be open to learning new knowledge systems of knowing, being, seeing and doing" (Laurila, 2019, p. 94). According to Blackfoot Elder and former Chief of Piikuni First Nation Reg Crowshoe, the decision to enter ethical space requires the participation of all involved and is a "call to order, expressed through Indigenous and non-Indigenous systems" (Littlechild & Sutherland, 2021, p. 24).

Notwithstanding the importance of intentionality, there is value to subjecting existing co-management arrangements to a lens of ethical space. Indeed, while ethical space has not explicitly guided VNP management, results suggest that Parks Canada and VGFN have already achieved, and have further potential to achieve, a high degree of "governance vitality" through a problem-solving process involving many of the same principles and processes – past, current, and desired – of ethical space as found in the literature (Borrini-Feyerabend & Hill, 2015). As socio-ecological systems are in a constant state of flux, conservation approaches must therefore be dynamic (Gavin et al., 2018). "The learning-by-doing that is necessary for adaptive governance will require developing indicators and an appropriate evidence base" (Gavin et al., 2018, p. 8). Therefore, the study provides some insight into social and organizational indicators for one park, and in doing so, contributes to the understanding of how ethical space may be applied in northern remote national park contexts where relationships between co-managers and the community are ephemeral. For example, a necessary condition for relationship-building in the co-management of VNP is Parks Canada's active presence and continuous face-to-face interactions in the community which is limited by various factors such as the national park's organizational structure and funding limitations.

In this study, a lens of ethical space served to better understand the evolution of localized processes and principles of engagement overtime and how these have enabled or constrained relationships between Parks Canada and VGFN. For example, the strong focus on deep community engagement resonates with earlier research by Jacobson et al. (2016) who found that a mature and successful co-management arrangement for northern national parks requires deep community engagement and, ultimately, a shift in the loci for management away from the park, towards the community. Since deep community engagement is not inherent to the Final Agreement nor apparent in management practices according to current perspectives, this may suggest a continued misunderstanding of the role of co-management between VGFN and Parks Canada, as elucidated by earlier research in northern national parks (Fenge, 1993). Using the model presented in Zurba et al. (2012), the ongoing process necessary for building and stewarding relationships through co-management may be inhibited by a tenuous engagement of the local community[26], possibly explained by VNP's organizational structure and employee retention.

While the Final Agreement and subsequent Cooperative Agreement have served as touchstones for the continued protection of VNP and the legal relationship for its cooperative management, VGFN and Parks Canada were obliged to co-develop a mutually satisfying decision-making relationship. Rather than a reduction of power from Indigenous peoples through advisory boards (Nadasdy, 2005; Sandlos, 2014), participants' responses point to a sharing of *de facto* decision-making power on the ground and a sense of community-ownership over VNP. This lends weight to Nesbitt's (2016) argument that advisory co-management boards under land claims do not preclude the possibility for consensus-based decision making that value Indigenous governance and legal systems. For example, that the ecological monitoring program was community-initiated starkly contrasts with earlier examples of co-management in the North where Canada imposed unilateral decision-making (Rodon, 1998). In contrast, the findings also suggest that successful and equitable co-management arrangements may not appear wholly symmetrical in day-to-day operations – parties may be better suited and interested in performing and contributing to certain roles and responsibilities (George et al., 2004; Ross et al., 2009). Indeed, the co-management relationship is partially of a strategic exchange-based nature through VGFN's acquisition of ecological monitoring capacity, as well as one of joint organization, as reflected by the decision-making arrangement (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005).

Conversely, the case study also shows that while power-sharing in co-management may evolve (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005), its rarely to the extent of joint policy-making (Pinkerton, 2019). Strengthening VGFN's ties to the park must be supported by addressing the associated bureaucratic and structural limitations which are possibly acting to dissuade VGFN from engagement with Parks Canada. Furthermore, results indicate a stagnation in Parks Canada's policy approaches to the management of northern national parks. A 2000 report highlighted problems concerning the development of cooperative management in northern national park management (Canada, 2001). Chief among these were funding, capacity limitations, and a lack of understanding among Parks Canada appointees that Indigenous partners considered themselves as full and equal participants in the decision-making process (Canada, 2001). While

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[26] Recent national park co-management agreements include contributions and capacity-building support for Indigenous Guardian programs. See *Ndahecho Gondié Gháádé* (2022).

this study and others (White, 2020) suggests the issue of power-sharing may be mitigated to some degree in mature co-management relationships, Ministerial powers have not yet been adjusted in legislature and funding and capacity limitations are still present, as earlier noted (Sandlos, 2014).

With regards to respect for Indigenous Knowledges, the study reveals an interesting finding that bridging actors (i.e., community employees) have generative potential in building trust across differences between the community and Parks Canada. Research suggests that the presence of bridging actors "helps overcome scepticisms, builds credibility, and develops shared understanding among heterogeneous actor groups" (Lakshmisha & Thiel, 2022, p. 16). The recognition of bridging actors also illuminates the importance of a two-eyed seeing approach to national park co-management (Bartlett et al., 2012). In contrast, without community engagement, indications that Parks Canada will default to a primarily Western scientific approach to ecological monitoring directed by distant managers who live outside of the community does not appear to mesh, at least superficially, with ethical space which should ensure "one knowledge system does not subsume the other" or two-eyed seeing (Nikolakis & Hotte, 2021, p. 4). As such, the community's disengagement with Parks Canada could have cascading impacts on the balance of co-management that could in turn undermine Parks Canada's broader commitment to stewardship practices based in shared knowledge systems.

The common themes reflected in the community-based perspectives also indicate that VGFN consider "how the park might contribute to their community, rather than how they might contribute to the park" (Jacobson et al., 2016, p. 17). The prominent focus on strengthening the community's relationships to the Crow Flats confirms the importance of a cultural values-based approach as described by Dietsch et al. (2021) that recognizes inherent jurisdiction and Indigenous rights in collaborative conservation practice. Engaging with cultural values and relationships of the community to land can improve resonance and relevance of conservation with the community (Infield et al., 2018). However conservation agencies, including Parks Canada, often lack funding and capacity to undertake deep engagement and communicate consistently to engage community members (Infield et al., 2018). Furthermore, "there are challenges in including non-Indigenous governments in partnerships—while they can bring funding to partnerships, they can also bring political complexity and 'red tape'" (Nikolakis & Hotte, 2021, p. 6).

Indeed, while adaptive co-management often implies a positive direction, this study indicates that there are aspects of the co-management arrangement, namely Parks Canada's governance framework and VNP's bureaucratic management structure, that have encouraged a negative shift in interrelationships (i.e., interaction with the community). Thus, it is reasonable to assume the park-field unit dynamic is a problem as much as local-national tensions in national park management structures are for Indigenous engagement (Carter, 2010; Johnston & Mason, 2020; Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012). One alternative explanation for this disconnect is perhaps due to VGFN's active engagement in other co-management arrangements like the Porcupine Caribou Management Board (PCMB) on issues surrounding future management of the herd in light of drastic changes in its migratory patterns (PCMB, 2022). The observed lessening in community expectations for Parks Canada, whose co-management institutions were never intended for crisis resolution as others were (Notzke, 1995), is perhaps indicative that engaging with Parks Canada

is a low-ranking priority for a community in the face of complex socio-environmental crises such as those dealt with by the PCMB.

Conclusion

As Indigenous thought leaders and scholars have argued, ethical space is only one step towards the re-Indigenization of biodiversity conservation that promises "meaningful reconciliation and reestablishment of reciprocal relationships with 'all our relations', M'sɨt No'kmaq" (M'sɨt No'kmaq et al., 2021, p. 860). While the VGFN Final Agreement may be reflective of a historical understanding of Indigenous rights, researching Indigenous-state relationships through an ethical space lens reveals the learning potential for co-management arrangements to move beyond patriarchal, Eurocentric approaches. This study suggests claims-based co-management agreements, old and new, may provide an adequate foundation for ethical space engagement, as process, under the appropriate conditions. In Mi'kmaq Elder Albert A. Marshall's words, ethical space in research provides an opportunity to reflect on "how we got here, but what's missing, and what needs to be included if everyone will be moving in the future" (M'sɨt No'kmaq et al., 2021).

The ephemerality of relationships between co-managers and the community observed in the study critically challenges the notion of co-management as an ethical space of engagement supportive of reconciliation which demands a dynamic and continuous engagement, according to Danika Littlechild (Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership et al., 2020). Returning to Littlechild's definition of reconciliation, while the findings suggest that claims-based co-management may provide a firm footing for the rebalancing of relationships in existing national parks through the building of governance and management approaches from community-based principles, they reveal that ethical space in the context of co-management which supports Indigenous-state reconciliation will ultimately demand something "new" of Parks Canada (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018; Laurila, 2019).

Operationalizing ethical space across the national park system will ultimately require systemic institutional and policy change at multiple scales and a re-interpretation of northern national park governance (Littlechild & Sutherland, 2021, p. 5). Revisiting Littlechild's understanding of reconciliation, the VNP story tells us that these changes should facilitate deep community engagement and the strengthening and re-balancing of human-nature relationships in existing co-managed national parks. By doing so, claims-based national park co-management agreements can play an important role in maintaining the vitality of Indigenous stewardship in Northern remote regions amidst increasing effects from climate change (Berkes & Armitage, 2011; Infield et al., 2018) and may provide one pathway in "recognizing settler responsibilities to honour Indigenous ways of being and to restore reciprocal relations between people and the land" (M'sɨt No'kmaq et al., 2021, p. 860).

Chapter 6 – Thesis Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Findings

The new paradigm of conservation bears great promise for elevating and protecting the rights and responsibilities of Indigenous peoples, cultural inherent resurgence, and Indigenous forms of governance and knowledge in conservation (Artelle et al., 2019; Moola & Roth, 2019; Stevens, 2014; Zurba et al., 2019). Through collaborative partnerships with state governments, it may also galvanize Indigenous self-governance and self-determination in a meaningful way, supportive of reconciliation. However, under Canada's current legislative structure, the tool of co-management in national parks, national park reserves, and NMCAs faces fundamental challenges in fulfilling the imperatives of reconciliation (Finegan, 2018; Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020). Common criticisms of co-management include power imbalances and limited Indigenous participation (Martin, 2016; Martinez-Reyes, 2014; Nadasdy, 2006; Pickerill, 2009; Sandlos, 2007; White, 2018), concern regarding the marginalization and co-optation of Indigenous Knowledges (Doberstein & Devin, 2004; Houde, 2007; Jacobson et al., 2016; Nadasdy, 2006; Timoti et al., 2017; Youdelis, 2016), and the potential for co-management to displace Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty (Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020; Rodon, 1998). Furthermore, the renewal of Indigenous-state relationships is overshadowed by Parks Canada's colonial legacy of exclusionary and racist conservation approaches (Johnston & Mason, 2020; Youdelis, 2016).

However, these condemnations of co-management are not unanimously held even by Indigenous thought leaders and practitioners. Various Indigenous models for collaboration such as ethical space (Ermine, 2007), two-eyed seeing (Bartlett et al., 2012), and two-row wampum (McGregor, 2002) now provide guidance and principles for re-imagining Indigenous-state relationships in the conversation sector and beyond. For more than two decades, scholarship has indicated the capacity for co-management arrangements to support learning-by-doing and to shift towards higher levels of trust, power-sharing and knowledge integration (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005; Goetze, 2005; Natcher et al., 2005; Plummer et al., 2012). As well, researchers have documented various examples of strategic negotiation by Indigenous communities of co-management in pursuit of self-determination and other priorities (Diver, 2016; Feit, 1989; Zurba et al., 2012), positive community assessments of local co-management (Lokken et al., 2019; Nesbitt, 2016), and ways by which Indigenous autonomy and self-governance has been unintentionally enhanced through co-management (Feit, 2005).

I identified a lack of scholarship on the role of negotiated co-management agreements and how these have served Indigenous priorities and aspirations. In response, my research took a two-pronged approach. Chapter 4, using a typology approach, disaggregated co-management agreements in national parks and NMCAs into four main types: relationship-building agreements, interest-based advisory body agreements, cooperative management board agreements, and consensus-based management agreements. Each type was distinguished by context and governance dimensions. The spectrum of co-management arrangements under Canada suggests that opportunities for shared governance are unequal and are tied largely to historical and legal contexts. A proliferation of more progressive models of consensus-based management indicates a shift towards joint governance and joint management approaches in national parks, yet this is largely constrained by an apparent reluctance on Parks Canada to adjust Ministerial authorities and related legislation, as argued by earlier critics (Sandlos, 2014).

Chapter 5 took a community-based research approach to better understand the relationship-building qualities of a co-operative management agreement through the lens of ethical space. The study combines the aspirations, experiences, and perspectives of one First Nation, VGFN, and Parks Canada representatives in the co-management of the remote Vuntut National Park. Using a lens of ethical space, the study indicates that, while agreements and the dynamic processes of co-management may serve an important role in defining relationships and creating a functional co-management arrangement, state policy approaches and the structure of northern national park co-management may erode relationships and trust-building with Indigenous partners over time. The principles of engagement identified through interviews suggests a fundamental difference in expectations for co-management between Indigenous communities and Parks Canada. This difference is manifest in the participants' recommendations for Parks Canada to provide renewed support of community aspirations; namely, the strengthening of people-land relationships and VGFN culture, while Parks Canada's scope of operations remains largely limited to ecological monitoring within Vuntut National Park. The findings of Chapter 5 illuminate the potential of co-management as an ethical space of engagement for northern national park conservation governance and the underlying structural issues that must be addressed by Parks Canada. These structural issues primarily concern national-local tensions, for example, Parks Canada's policies that continue to fail to reflect the livelihoods and cultures of northern Indigenous communities, or bureaucratic organizational structures (i.e., national-field unit-park) that constrain meaningful engagement between Parks Canada and communities.

Together, these studies confirm a potential for co-management of national parks to serve as a mechanism for Indigenous-state reconciliation and renewing relationships. In particular, Indigenous self-determination and self-governance may be supported by certain types of co-management agreements that, for example, allow for consensus-based decision making and create the conditions for decision-making to occur at the park level (i.e., between the Minister's delegate and Indigenous authorities). However, while the case of Thaidene Nëné suggests a re-purposing of national park legislation to support Indigenous-led conservation efforts through IPCAs, Indigenous self-determination and self-governance continues to be undermined through co-management agreements as current federal legislation upholds the ultimate authority of the Minister over national parks. Thus, Parks Canada's ability to be truly responsive to the breadth and diversity of Indigenous priorities and aspirations remains limited and, in this way, may fall short of a reconciliation that rebalances Indigenous-settler relationships.

Despite these constraints, it would appear from Chapter 4 that the co-management agreement types identified in the scan (i.e., relationship-building agreements), while not altering governance structures, could be effective tools for establishing or renewing formal relationships between Indigenous groups and Parks Canada. Furthermore, agreements like these may establish mutual commitments and expectations for things such as respectful use of Indigenous Knowledges, a critical factor for Indigenous engagement in co-management that was omitted from my scan (Reo et al., 2017). However, I echo earlier studies in asserting that these agreements cannot be considered as an end point if co-management is to serve as a mechanism to support reconciliation, but as a "minimum baseline from which to build all future decisions and actions" (Snook et al., 2018, p. 68). While on the ground these arrangements may not represent an end point for relationships and may even evolve towards greater levels of de facto power-sharing

(Nesbitt, 2016), the results of the agreement typology do not suggest that the scaffolding of co-management agreements towards formalized power-sharing relationships is a possibility under the current paradigm. Rather, as agreement types are largely tied to the negotiation and settlement of modern treaties and self-governance agreements, more equitable levels of shared governance (as presented in Chapter 4) are presently unattainable for many Indigenous communities who negotiate with Parks Canada in historic treaty contexts.

The case study presented in Chapter 5 of co-management as a relational process reveals various potential enabling and constraining mechanisms for reconciliation in existing claims-based co-management board agreements – a type of agreement which comprises the majority of co-management arrangements under Parks Canada, according to my review of agreements presented in Chapter 4. Such agreements reflect shared objectives for conservation and create constitutionally-protected power-sharing arrangements. The case study demonstrates that there is a balance to be struck in designing a co-management agreement that is rigid enough to create an equitable and effective partnership in which Indigenous partners can play a significant role in decision-making yet sufficiently flexible to support an adaptive and evolving relationship under conditions that ensure Parks Canada's accountability in responding to their demands and aspirations in the long term. As the case of Vuntut National Park Parks shows, while Parks Canada may bring significant benefits to northern communities (e.g., capacity for ecological monitoring), Canada's failure to respond to evolving community priorities, such as strengthening human-land relationships, suggests that Parks Canada remains, to an extent, institutionally bound to engrained Euro-centric approaches to land relationships. In fairness, it should also be noted that Vuntut National Park management team's responsivity to meeting community needs is also limited by financial and capacity constraints outside of its control (i.e., funding community-based positions).

Together, these tensions beg a fundamental question around the purpose of Parks Canada's continued presence in northern communities today: to what extent is Parks Canada intent on developing capacity for engaging in Western conservation practices as opposed to supporting the capacity of Indigenous communities and strengthening of Indigenous society? In the words of VGFN language coordinator Sophia Flather: "if [Parks Canada] wanted reconciliation, they could put that land in our name again and then see how they could help out" (S. Flather, personal communication, March 3, 2022). VGFN's in-community capacity to engage in co-management with Parks Canada is evidently limited. Meanwhile, it is a community actively responding to climate change in partnership with various other partnerships with environmental organizations and governments (The Firelight Group & Vuntut Gwitchin Government, 2018). While VGFN may have better found more effective alternatives for supporting their community's connections with their lands and waters, there appears to be a missed opportunity for Indigenous communities in existing co-management arrangements. Communities like VGFN, with greater aspirations for reconnecting with the lands within the park through Parks Canada's support, stand on a different footing than Indigenous groups who have benefited from signing recent agreements such as the Ndahecho Gondié Gháádé Agreement and Thaidene Nëné Agreements that have promised unprecedented contributions towards Indigenous stewardship programs and funding for Elder-youth camps. Addressing these inequities across co-managed national parks, especially those that were established without reconciliation in mind, should be a central focus of Parks Canada's reconciliation action plan. To again quote Jeffrey Peter from Old Crow:

By getting people to the park, you're rebuilding their connection with the land and rebuilding Parks Canada's connection with the community and breaking down those systems that were in place to break people's connections with culture and language" (J. Peter, personal communication, November 18, 2021).

This study provides some insights into these far-reaching questions and points to ways in which Parks Canada's legislative, organizational, funding, and capacity constraints could be harnessed in order to strengthen co-management agreements as a mechanism for reconciliation and renewing relationships in national parks and other heritage sites. At the legal and political levels this may include federal legislative amendments to enable true Indigenous or shared authority in national park governance and management, codifying co-governance principles into federal protected area legislation, and developing a unified policy for working with Indigenous groups in the joint protected area establishment, governance, and management. At the operational level, changes could include making available and communicating novel opportunities for Indigenous stewardship (i.e., Guardians programs), renewing funding agreements to existing land-based programs, or amending organizational structures towards improving community employment opportunities to support relationship-building. Above all, and as stated by the Indigenous Circle of Experts, approaches to reconciliation within parks must begin with listening to the needs of individual nations in identifying the appropriate healing process for rebalancing relationships between people and between people and the land (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018).

6.2 Limitations and Future Research
The case study represents a narrative account of the experience of one self-governing First Nation, VGFN in co-managing a remote national park under one territorial governance system. While the findings may resonate with experiences in similar remote northern communities engaged in co-management of protected areas, they can't be easily generalized nor assumed to apply. I also caution that these findings cannot be extended to National Historic Sites (NHS). While these are under the administration and management of the same Minister responsible for national parks and NMCAs, the NHS Act is different from the Canadian National Parks and NMCA Acts. I wish to acknowledge the presence of cooperative management arrangements at the Wrecks of Erebus and Terror NHS, Saoyú–Ɂehdacho NHS, Batoche NHS, and Obadjiwan– Fort Témiscamingue NHS – all of which cover significant land bases. The unique co-management structures of NHS are certainly worthwhile topics of research, as are the cooperative approaches that are emerging from external negotiating tables such as the Reconciliation and Rights Agreement between Canada and Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation (Parks Canada, 2022), as well as other initiatives such as the recent example of land restitution in Batoche NHS between Métis Nation of Saskatchewan and Parks Canada) (CBC, 2022a).

There were various limitations encountered in the development and undertaking of both research projects. My positionality as an outsider to Old Crow undoubtedly affected who was willing to participate and the content that was ultimately shared. As a Yukon resident, I was able to maintain informal connections with certain community members but generally my ability to build relationships and trust was confined by the narrow window of my field visits and the time spent substitute teaching at Chief Zzeh Gittlit School and assisting with other community youth projects. However, I never found myself very far from my research relationships as a resident of

Whitehorse. Whitehorse is the administrative centre for certain VGG offices where many VGFN citizens reside, including many youths who attend secondary school in the city. In any case, throughout the research process, I have casually encountered my research participants and their families on various occasions. Notwithstanding that, more time spent in the community would have supported the construction of a more robust research project reflective of a greater diversity of perspectives.

Being a member of a decolonial research partnership provided various opportunities to engage with Indigenous leadership and develop a research project aligned with wider objectives for Indigenous-led conservation strategies and knowledge mobilization across Turtle Island/Canada. Yet I would like to acknowledge the serious tensions I encountered in fulfilling the diverse expectations and priorities of the CRP, a northern Indigenous community, and Parks Canada, for these tensions altered my approach to the research at all stages. For example, the concept of reconciliation was not on the front of minds among the majority of people I spoke with in Old Crow. While I am not denying the reality of the harms that colonialism has had on the community, nor the value of community-based research, it was a challenge to communicate the broader and perhaps more significant external outcomes of the research that are relevant to federal legislation, for example. This misalignment demanded self-reflection of my own assumptions and beliefs around the motivations and significance of this research project, and furthermore conflicted with my own methodological comforts such as "studying-up" the colonizer (Nader, 1972) or "standing with" a community (TallBear, 2014).

These tensions contributed in many ways to my ultimate growth as a junior settler-scholar. For instance, collaboration with the CRP was an invite to what I then perceived as a network of established relationships between Indigenous leaders, communities and scholars and academia under which I could grow "safely" as a master's student. However, with the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, I decided to negotiate a research agreement with Parks Canada (facilitated by the CRP) and independently develop an original community-based research project in the Yukon (where pandemic restrictions were less severe) thus cutting my ties to many of the webs of relationships that originally drew me towards the research. Undertaking an original community-based project was a profoundly challenging and instructive experience. Firstly, I came to understand the reality that the research relationship can never be truly "passed down" from a research advisor or research organization and that the trust, accountability, and responsibilities for a new researcher in an Indigenous community was always to be a deeply personal engagement. Ultimately, I had to set aside my "protective armor of good intentions" and learn how to work in humility and honesty with my Indigenous collaborators (Wilson et al., 2019). I learned many lessons in balancing the various emotional and technical challenges of research in a remote northern community without the direct support of a research advisor or research lab, all while working towards providing meaningful capacity through research to VGFN. Of course, I was constantly aware of how my own circumstances, in many ways, resembled those of Parks Canada's in meeting community expectations for engagement. Ultimately, as a resident of Whitehorse where I work regularly with Indigenous youth and Elders as an educator and come into frequent contact with people of Old Crow in other contexts, limiting my relationships to the context of my research felt unnatural. As a response to these tensions, I chose to concentrate as much as possible on the alternative ways that one can attend to

one's relationships and responsibilities as a settler that extend beyond the subject and scope of the research project itself and into one's personal and professional life.

6.3 Contributions (practical and scholarly)

This thesis offers an in-depth study of co-management agreements under Parks Canada from both a governance system analysis and grounded case study approach. The findings serve to expand and refine the existing scholarship on national park co-management in two key areas: negotiated agreements and their potential as a mechanism of reconciliation and co-management as an ethical space of engagement.

The scan of negotiated cooperative management agreements under Parks Canada draws attention to various issues that prevent the equitable establishment of shared governance approaches across national parks and NMCAs. The study reduces the potential for misunderstandings when discussing and comparing co-management or "cooperative management" approaches across national park and NMCAs through establishing a typology of existing agreements. The typology provided a useful instrument to identify the specific components of these agreements (e.g., governance structure, dispute resolution) and how they enable Indigenous authorities in shared governance approaches and contribute towards political reconciliation.

The in-depth case study of claims-based co-management with one First Nation's experiences and expectations of meaningful community-based co-management with Parks Canada through a lens of ethical space contributes to the nascent field of applied studies of ethical space in conservation. Practically, it provides VGFN with an independent community assessment of co-management in the community and captures current aspirations and priorities for VNP's management. I delivered a poster summarizing key findings and an oral presentation to the community in February 2023. Through collaboration with Parks Canada Field Unit staff, I will develop a community report which could be used to inform and educate newcomers to the community involved in VNP's co-management as to the enabling and constraining elements of relationship-building. Though ethical space is used primarily as a methodological lens, an ethical space approach to co-management in northern national parks should involve deeper community engagement and respond to the community-based principles, including, but not limited to, equal and shared decision-making, respect for Indigenous Knowledges, and strengthening peoples' relationships to the land. Without continuous demonstrations of respect for community principles, co-management may fail or cause conflict. Though focused on one First Nation in one jurisdictional context, ethical space may provide a renewed approach to understanding co-management relationships across other jurisdictions, especially existing remote northern national parks. It may equally be instructive for any external organizations and governments, specifically those with social, environmental, or economic sectors, who operate in northern remote Indigenous communities.

While this study takes a community centred approach through collaboration with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, I undertook an adjacent project initiated through the recommendations of various representatives from partner First Nations to the CRP. The management planning process, which all Parks Canada heritage sites are legislatively required to undertake, had been characterized by certain CRP's Indigenous partner governments and by research participants as an opaque process obstructing the informed involvement of many Indigenous governments

which has ramifications for PC's ability to reshape park management accordingly with Indigenous priorities. This project culminated in a digital report published under the CRP entitled "Parks Canada Management Planning: A Guide for Indigenous Leadership". The creation of the guide was a collaborative process involving both formal and informal engagement with various Indigenous leaders and conservation practitioners from various Indigenous communities under my established research ethics protocol. The guide is a tangible output that may be useful to Indigenous groups across various jurisdictions who engage with Parks Canada's management planning process. The guide can be found at the following link.

Through these outputs, this thesis will hopefully contribute to wider understanding of the role of co-management in Indigenous-state reconciliation and the renewal of nation-to-nation relationships. As such, this study could contribute to how Canada will respond to its 'wicked problems' in meeting international standards of biodiversity protection, shared conservation governance, and Indigenous rights (Zurba et al., 2019). However, further advancements in Indigenous-led conservation may be threatened if Canada's reconciliation rhetoric outpaces structural changes (Townsend, 2022). The research is intended to set a foundation for collaborative approaches to Indigenous-led conservation and collaborative research to better represent Indigenous perspectives on their relationships with Parks Canada. This project supports one objective of the CRP, in support of the ICE's recommendations for Canada's Pathway to Target 1. The ICE specifically called on federal, provincial, and territorial governments to develop collaborative governance and management arrangements for existing parks and protected areas (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018). The findings of the research may be informative to Indigenous communities who engage or plan to engage with Parks Canada in pursuit of reconciliation and reclamation of power over their own traditional territories through Indigenous-led and collaborative approaches, as well as to conservation practitioners at Parks Canada and across other jurisdictions. The research also responds directly to Parks Canada's action plan towards supporting reconciliation policy development through the research relationship with the CRP (Parks Canada, 2019).

6.4 Future Research Opportunities
The scan of cooperative agreements highlights the heightened need for increased transparency, knowledge mobilization, and tracking of negotiated agreements between established protected areas as the Canadian government continues its efforts towards Target 1 and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. It also reveals an increased need to track Indigenous-state agreements in protected areas in light of Canada's objectives to establish 10 new national parks and 10 new NMCAs in collaboration with Indigenous communities (Canada, 2021b). Protected area establishment and management is a rapidly changing sector. Since the finalization of this study, Parks Canada released an official *Policy on the Establishment and Management of National Marine Conservation Areas* which marks a potentially significant contribution to the absence of unified policies for working with Indigenous peoples (Parks Canada Agency, 2022b). For instance, it includes several guiding principles that reference Indigenous stewardship and the importance of human connections to lands and waters and recommends that NMCA establishment processes should explore opportunities to advance IPCAs.

The case study amplifies one community-based narrative of relationship-building in existing co-managed protected areas. This area of study could benefit from other case and comparative

studies conducted in collaboration with Indigenous communities involved in shared conservation governance. Ethical space may offer a starting point for research in other jurisdictions, though I argue that the borrowed ethical space framework does not readily apply itself as a rigorous methodological tool for research as much as a framework to conceptualize relationships. The implementation of ethical space as an analytical lens to study governance vitality may benefit from future methods studies, led by or done in collaboration with Indigenous leaders, scholars, or communities. To conclude, just and sustainable solutions must be accountable and adaptable to the diversity of linked systems of people and nature, which demands the ethical engagement of Indigenous peoples worldviews, knowledge systems, and values the world over (Gavin et al., 2018). Evolving and sustained dialogue with individual Indigenous communities and governments is needed to clarify and amplify the possibilities presented by co-management and to co-create pathways for the resurgence of Indigenous governance and cultures through conservation and Indigenous-state reconciliation.

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