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Donna Patrick
Carleton University, Ottawa
donna_patrick@carleton.ca

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Donna Patrick

Donna Patrick is Director of the School of Canadian Studies and a Professor in the School and in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University, Ottawa. Her current research focuses on urban Inuit – in particular, Inuit literacies and community-based activities that connect Ottawa-based Inuit to the Arctic. Other research interests include Indigenous and language rights, language endangerment discourse, and the political, social, and cultural aspects of language use among Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Abstract

This paper addresses the question of how 'rights' and rights discourses are related to Indigenous language politics and social relations in Canada. It begins by contextualizing this question in Canadian colonial history, assimilationist policies and practices, twentieth-century rights discourses, entrenched in the Canadian Constitution (1982). This is followed by a discussion of Inuit language politics and its meshing with politics for territorial control. Tensions are highlighted at local, regional, and global levels, with a focus on language policy and practice in Nunavut and Nunavik and the emerging language politics in the global circumpolar sphere. Despite the contradictory and challenging demands for standardization and implementation of Inuit languages in educational, political, and other institutional domains, such demands are becoming more pressing as concerns about territorial control, environment, and Inuit well-being increase.

In Canada, state formation has encompassed the political, linguistic, and cultural struggles of European and other settlers as well as Indigenous peoples. Such struggles can be seen as basic to Canada's history – particularly that of the latter half of the twentieth century, when the liberal-democratic state was being reshaped and many social movements were emerging. These social movements, which included those involving French-speaking Québécois, non-British-origin immigrant groups, and Indigenous peoples, have echoed human rights and post-colonial struggles internationally but also played a key role in reshaping Canada's own law and policy. In particular, they helped to introduce official bilingualism in 1969 and multiculturalism as policy in 1971 and then as law in 1988 and to entrench constitutional French language and Indigenous rights, among others, in 1982. These political and legal initiatives have shaped the way that the Canadian state regulates and manages ethno-cultural and racial diversity.

But how have these 'rights', and rights discourses in general, shaped language politics and social relations between various groups in Canada? To address this question, it is important to see that much of Canada's political, cultural, and economic life has been shaped by British and American hegemonic forces, which have perpetuated English dominance and a racialized hierarchy, with white English-speakers at the top (Haque 2012; Heller 2011).[1] Of course, the persistence of French Québécois language and culture in the

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[1] This racialized ordering was arguably reaffirmed through official French-English bilingualism (Haque 2012).

face of these forces is familiar to many and the subject of considerable scholarship (see e.g. Heller 1999, Warren and Oakes 2007). Less often recognized, however, is the persistence of many Indigenous languages and cultures in the face of similar forces, including colonial laws and policies and a system of residential schooling in place in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries. According to UNESCO,[2] 88 Indigenous languages are still spoken in Canada, with many of them in the process of revitalization (Patrick 2010).

Accordingly, the question of how 'rights' and rights discourses are related to language politics and social relations in Canada can be meaningfully asked of various rights and rights discourses. The focus of this paper is one set of rights: namely, 'Aboriginal rights', recognized in Canada's constitution as applying to the three groups of 'Aboriginal' (or Indigenous) peoples in Canada:[3] First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (the last category comprising peoples of mixed European and Indigenous descent). In fact, what are loosely called 'Aboriginal rights' can be seen as comprising three distinct kinds of constitutionally protected rights: 'Aboriginal rights', or rights related to the pursuit of traditional practices; 'treaty rights', or rights flowing from treaties made between certain Indigenous groups in Canada and the Crown; and 'Aboriginal title', a kind of collective property right to traditional territory.[4] Significantly, these rights are closely tied to Aboriginal cultural and linguistic rights and to territorial rights and the maintenance of traditional economic pursuits, such as hunting, fishing, and trapping. They are also tied to political efforts to further these cultural, linguistic, and economic goals in the domains of education, place-naming, and language policy. And while these efforts have, since the late twentieth century, come increasingly to reflect transnational political and economic interests, Aboriginal struggles for self-determination continue to shape language initiatives and language politics today.

Thus, my answer to the question of how Indigenous rights and rights discourses have shaped Indigenous language politics and social relations will involve demonstrating how Indigenous language rights and recognition issues have been linked to political and social mobilization of Indigenous groups in Canada and how language has figured in these groups' self-determination processes. This linkage of language politics to rights and nation-building politics remains prominent in these Indigenous contexts. This is still the case notwithstanding the claim by some (e.g. Heller 2011) that a 'post-national' era is emerging, characterized by transnational and neoliberal politics and economics and by a commodification of minority linguistic and cultural practices (Heller 2011).

My claim, by contrast, is that language rights and recognition discourses are closely linked to nationhood projects and that both are still basic to Indigenous struggles for control over land and educational and other institutional domains. As such, these language discourses can be seen as part of ongoing social movements that pursue more equitable relations between the state and different social groups. Moreover, the recognition of language rights in law or policy is, for Indigenous peoples in Canada, more than a symbolic gesture, but an achievement that can substantially reshape Indigenous-settler and Indigenous-state relations.[5] The links between language and politics thus emerge not only

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[2] The UNESCO classification, it should be noted, is much more nuanced than earlier Canadian government analyses, which have relied on census data to list around 50 separate languages. Nevertheless, what counts as a 'language', a 'dialect', or a 'language variety' without the status of a 'language' is at times a contentious, and political, issue.

[3] 'Aboriginal' is an umbrella term now widely used to describe Indigenous peoples in Canada. In this paper, I will be using the term 'Aboriginal' when referring to this legally defined category, which came into use in Canada in the 1980s, after the entrenchment of 'aboriginal rights' in the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

[4] The landmark Supreme Court of Canada case about Aboriginal title is *Calder v. British Columbia, Attorney General* (1973).

[5] While the term 'settler' often refers to the entire 'society' of non-Indigenous people, including the state, I separate 'settler relations' from 'state relations' here to emphasize two different kinds of relations. The former involves face-to-face and mediated 'everyday' interactions between Indigenous and settler populations, whether in

in the reconfiguration of language hierarchies – in schools, government, the workplace, and other sites of struggle between languages – but also in ongoing processes of decolonization and "critical individual and collective self-recognition" (Coulthard 2008: 201).

The rest of this paper explores language and Indigenous rights discourses as they relate to processes of language politicization. It is organized as follows. Section 1 situates Indigenous language politics in Canadian colonial history and describes the assimilationist goals of English and French settler policies and practices. It then turns to twentieth-century rights discourses, showing how Indigenous groups in Canada, in their struggle to have Aboriginal language rights recognized, have drawn strategically on constitutionally recognized Aboriginal rights and the 'founding nation' status of Indigenous peoples in Canada as well as on entrenched French minority language rights (Patrick 2007). Section 2 pursues the discussion of Indigenous language issues, focussing on initiatives related to 'national' Inuit politics in the global circumpolar sphere and to language policy and practice in Nunavut and Nunavik. This section highlights both the strategic use of rights discourses by Indigenous groups in Canada and the tension between the use of these discourses of individual rights and Indigenous peoples' collective goals. Finally, section 3 offers some conclusions about Indigenous language rights and language politics in Canada.

Indigenous Language Politics and Canada's Colonial History

To proceed with this investigation, some historical context about Indigenous peoples in Canada might be helpful. Although a comprehensive discussion of this context is well beyond the scope of this study, some key parts of it are worth highlighting. One of these is the arrival of European settlers beginning in the sixteenth century, which had many devastating consequences for Indigenous peoples, including displacement from their lands. What should be recognized, however, is that early dealings between these newcomers and Indigenous groups do not offer a narrative of European domination or conquest. For example, early seventeenth-century treaties, such as the Treaty of Albany (1664) (Hill 2008: 31ff.) and the Peace and Friendship treaties (1670–71), reflected early military and economic alliances between Europeans and the Wabanaki Confederacy,[6] which were formed with a view to sharing land and developing good relations between them and the Europeans. Moreover, nation-to-nation agreements such as these, which were signed in the spirit of international treaties, meant that the Indigenous inhabitants did not relinquish "their claims of ownership" over these lands (Turner 2006: 4; Borrows 1997; see also Ladner and Dick 2008).

Yet, this early period of cooperation gave way to one dominated by the appropriation of Indigenous land and other material resources and the assimilation of Indigenous people culturally and spiritually – assimilation working hand-in-hand with the undermining, or even demonising, of traditional cultural, linguistic, and spiritual knowledge and practices.[7] A further undermining of Indigenous language and culture resulted from the decline of Indigenous communities, whether through the physical concomitants of contact, such as disease, famine, forced dislocation, and violence, or through other means.

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personal encounters or through media representations. By contrast, the latter involves larger state processes or structures of governmentality (governing practices in both processual and structural ways), which include law, policy-making and implementation, and other colonizing practices that have led to land dispossession and subjugation of Indigenous peoples within the larger settler state.

[6] The Wabanaki Confederacy, an alliance of peoples who spoke Algonquian languages, included the Míkmaq, Abenaki, and Maliceet peoples currently residing in Quebec and the Canadian Maritime provinces.

[7] Key parts of this assimilationist agenda were a reduction in the number of 'Indians' through intermarriage and the establishment of a system of residential schools (described in the following text).

Despite this history of assimilation, dispossession, and state violence, the number of Indigenous people in Canada (and elsewhere) has been growing steadily in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Smith 2007). Yet, assimilationist ideologies and practices still inform Canadian politics, particularly in the current lack of support for Aboriginal language revitalization efforts and other forms of collective cultural practices; and in other neoconservative policy proposals, including those advocating for the privatization of Aboriginal collective land ownership in the name of economic development.[8] Significantly, such proposals continue to proliferate despite the resistance of many Aboriginal groups to these and other efforts to undermine their language, culture, and collective property rights. Indeed, the rise of Indigenous collectivities in regional, national, and international political arenas speaks to the resilience of Indigenous peoples and to their continued resistance to the (neo-) colonialist enterprise.

In Canada, Indigenous politics has largely centered on the pursuit of greater control over land and economic development, through land claims and other political processes. Indeed, a key goal of early mobilization by Indigenous groups, in the 1960s and 1970s,[9] was simply to gain a more prominent role in the political and legal order of the day, in order to better position themselves to win this control. This involved, in particular, participating in legal cases whose goal was to have the notions of 'Aboriginal title' to traditional territories and 'Aboriginal rights' to hunt and fish in these territories recognized and articulated. Also important for these groups during this time was lobbying for funding, policies, and programs to assist the communities that they represented.

Despite this initial focus on land and on hunting and fishing rights, Indigenous politics in Canada has more recently placed a greater emphasis on the issues of language and culture and on the rights associated with them. This can be seen, for example, in the work of the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, appointed in December 2002 by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, to "support Canada's commitment to preserve, revitalize, and promote Aboriginal languages and cultures" (Government of Canada 2010). The Task Force's 2005 report, *Towards a New Beginning*, drew heavily on language rights discourse in arguing for the funding of bilingual and immersion forms of Indigenous language schooling and for the support of language programs more generally (Patrick 2007). This report thus appealed to French and English language rights in seeking to legitimize Indigenous language rights and to challenge the notion of 'two founding peoples'. As the Task Force's report argued, "the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis were founding peoples alongside the French and the English" (cited in Patrick 2007: 49). Accordingly, funding for the languages of these peoples should be brought, "at a minimum, [to] the same level as that provided for the French and English languages" (Task Force 2005: 75, cited in Patrick 2007: 50).

Significantly, this linking of Aboriginal language rights claims to French and English language rights has occurred within a specific discursive space. This is one that has opened up in Canada since the *Official Languages Act* came into force in 1969 and that has been further shaped by the treatment of Indigenous languages like those of 'other ethnic

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[8] See e.g. Flanagan et al. (2011).

[9] These organizations included the Indian and Eskimo Association (1960) and the National Indian Council (1961), which developed into the political organizations currently representing Indigenous interests in Canada. These two groups gave rise to the National Indian Brotherhood in 1968 (representing 'treaty' and 'status' Indians), an organization that became the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) in 1982; the Native Council of Canada (representing Métis and non-status Indians), which changed its name to the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) in 1993, and from which Métis National Council (MNC) splintered off in 1983; the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), which was formed in 1974; and the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), which was formed in 1971 as an outgrowth of the Indian and Eskimo Association – and which changed its name in 2003 to Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) (which means 'Inuit are united in Canada'). ITK represents all four Inuit land claim regions, referred to as *Inuit Nunangat*: Nunavut, Nunatsiavut (Labrador), Nunavik (Arctic Quebec) and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (in the Northwest Territories).

groups', both in law, through the *Multiculturalism Act* of 1988, and in such initiatives as the Canadian Heritage Languages Institute, established in 1987, whose goal was to bring 'ethnic' language interests together.[10] What is crucial to see, however, is that while Indigenous languages are, like 'ethnic' languages, a kind of 'heritage language', the historical circumstances surrounding them are arguably incommensurate with those of immigrant 'ethnic' groups, making their designation as 'ethnic languages' rather problematic. It is perhaps for this reason Indigenous groups have steadfastly refused to be subsumed under the 'ethnic' label (Patrick 2007: 42).[11] Thus, while an Indigenous language rights discourse can now be seen as a basic (albeit small) part of the federal language rights landscape, its development reflected a decades-long shaping of a discursive space that drew on both similarities to and dissimilarities with 'founding' and 'heritage' languages.

This process of creating an Indigenous language rights discourse raises a number of questions about contemporary language politics in Canada. These include how Indigenous language initiatives are linked to particular forms of Indigenous politics; and what effects local, regional, national, and international politics have on language politics more generally. In the next section, I will seek to answer these questions, by examining language politics in two Inuit regions in Canada: Nunavut and Nunavik.

Language, Identity and Politics: The Case of Nunavut and Nunavik

One Indigenous context in Canada where language, Indigeneity, and politics intersect very saliently is that of the Canadian Arctic, and in particular the Inuit regions of Nunavut and Nunavik. In each, the intertwined goals of economic, cultural, and territorial autonomy can be seen to sustain Inuit political mobilization. Yet, those pursuing this goal must also confront other challenges, including those that arise from the interaction of political issues on different 'scales', local, regional, national, and international.

Before we proceed, some background on the political organization of these two regions might be in order. Let us start with the Territory of Nunavut, established in 1999 as a result of the signing of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement in 1993. As a territory, Nunavut has its own legislative assembly and can enact its own laws in many domains, including laws related to language. As it happens, Nunavut recently enacted two such laws. One is the *Nunavut Official Languages Act* (2008), which recognizes two varieties of the Inuit language, Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut, English, and French as official languages and guarantees the right to use each of these languages in the legislature, courts, and public services. The other is the *Inuit Language Protection Act* (2008), which pertains to language protection in the area of 'standardization'[12] and guarantees various Inuit language rights, in particular, the right to work in the Inuit language in government offices and the right to services and education in the Inuit language. These legislative initiatives can be seen as a direct response to a 2006 report by Thomas Berger (appointed to help resolve differences between the different parties involved in the implementation of the Nunavut Lands Claims

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[10] Of course, 'ethnic' might also be seen to include French and English, although the dominant usage of the term since the *Report on the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission* (1968) has been in reference to non-English and non-French language groups.

[11] In addition, Bill C–37 (1989), the heritage language legislation that resulted from the Canadian Heritage Languages Institute initiative, was prepared with virtually no consideration of the interests of Indigenous groups. This was not rectified until many years later, with the creation in December 2002 of the Aboriginal Language Task Force, as described in the text.

[12] The issue of language 'standardization' (which includes the sharing of terminology and orthographic systems) has grown in prominence in Nunavut as its new language laws have come into effect. One sign of this is the symposium on language standardization that was held by the Inuit language authority of Nunavut, Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit in February 2011.

Agreement).[13] Berger's report pointed out that "the Inuit of Nunavut have the lowest rate of literacy in English in the country" and that Nunavut schools were also not "producing graduates truly competent in Inuktitut". On this basis, it called for "major changes in the education system in order to vastly increase the number of Inuit high school graduates" – changes that included "a comprehensive program of bilingual education" (Berger 2006: iv–v).

In contrast to Nunavut, Nunavik is a region of a province, Quebec, rather than a distinct territory, and is thus subject to Quebec law. It has, however, won some degree of self-government through the provisions of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* (signed in 1975 with the Cree, another Indigenous group, and the federal and provincial governments). As regards its goals for Inuktitut language use, these are similar to those of Nunavut, although it has adopted a non-legislative means for achieving them. This has involved a consultative, local approach, pursued through the Inuktituurniup Saturtauninga project spearheaded by Avataq, Nunavik's cultural organization.[14] As such, the development of policies to protect Inuktitut and ensure its 'visibility' in the public sphere, await the completion of this consultation process.

As these initiatives in Nunavut and Nunavik indicate, language policies, including institutional support for Inuit languages, have assumed an important role in each. Yet, as Inuit state processes develop, so too does the tension between a desire to maintain 'Inuitness' through fluency and literacy in Inuit languages and a need to function effectively in the dominant language, particularly in the bureaucratic sphere. Indeed, the emergence of significant new challenges for Inuit self-determination and territorial sovereignty, to be described in what follows, has meant that improved educational outcomes, including a high level of functioning in dominant as well as Indigenous languages, have become even more relevant to Inuit aspirations.

Arguably, there is now widespread recognition that global warming will have profound consequences for the Arctic, opening up shipping routes and making its natural resource wealth more accessible to extraction. These possibilities for the Arctic have spurred Russia, the United States, Canada, Denmark, and Norway – the five 'Arctic states' with territory bordering the Arctic Ocean – to assert control over Arctic lands and waters and to dispute the claims of other states to these. Of course, the pursuit of these state interests risks sidelining the Indigenous interests, including claims to Arctic lands, protection of the environment, and maintenance of natural resources linked to the land and sea, which are all implicated in the development of the Arctic but also basic to Inuit self-determination, political autonomy, and decolonization efforts.

These emerging challenges create a need for a single Inuit political voice in the international arena, uniting the Inuit of Canada with Greenlandic, Alaskan, and Siberian peoples to the east and west in the pursuit of 'pan-Inuit' interests across the Arctic. But the creation of such a pan-Inuit 'voice' has its own difficulties. Among them is the tension that arises between the need for a lingua franca and the desire to maintain localized linguistic and cultural practices and identities. In other words, the linguistic demands of pursuing this

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[13] These parties were Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (the Nunavut Land Claims organization) and the Government of Nunavut, on the one hand, and the federal government, on the other.

[14] As noted on the Avataq website, <http://www.avataq.qc.ca>: "This project began when the negotiators of the Nunavik Aquvvinga autonomous government requested a report on measures to protect minority languages. A second phase of the project assessed the language situation in Nunavik in light of measures in force in other parts of the world. However, the research team concluded that a valid assessment could only come from the communities themselves, and so a series of local workshops were integrated into the project.… The Inuit of Nunavik expressed growing concern for the survival of Inuktitut, and in response, Avataq Cultural Institute, with the support of Nunavik Aquvvinga and Makivik Corporation, launched the Inuktituurniup Saturtauninga project. The project's objectives are to prevent the erosion of the Inuktitut language and to ensure that, in a milieu dominated by English and French, it maintains its position as the main language shared by the majority of the population of Nunavik."

goal – and more generally of participating in international resource markets and political arenas – mean a need for effective communication in English (or other dominant European languages), which can serve as a lingua franca that crosses local, regional, and national borders. In fact, because only neighbouring Inuit language varieties are mutually intelligible, English is required as a lingua franca to enable communication not only beyond the international Inuit community but even within it – making Inuit languages subordinate to English in uniting Inuit groups supranationally. Yet, the need to foster proficiency in a lingua franca arguably detracts from a key part of any 'pan-Inuit' agenda, which is the maintenance of Inuit languages – languages that are central to millennia-old cultural and economic practices and which continue to define Inuitness in the Arctic context, even when it is only one's parents or grandparents who speak (or spoke) the language.

On a circumpolar scale, however, even the 'pan-Inuit' goal of Inuit language revitalization – reflected in such initiatives as the 2005 and 2007 Inuit Circumpolar Council[15] youth symposia on language, held in Iqaluit, Nunavut and Kotzebue, Alaska, respectively, and the 2008 Arctic Indigenous Languages Symposium held in Tromsø, Norway[16] – encounters significant difficulties. One of these involves the question of which varieties of Inuit languages 'count'. An easy way to see this difficulty is to consider the various Inuit language varieties spoken in Canada. According to the *UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* there are eleven distinct Inuit language varieties across the country.[17] However, according to the 2006 Canadian census report (the most recent one available), "[t]here are five primary distinct Inuit language dialects spoken throughout Canada", which the report refers to collectively 'as Inuktitut' (Government of Canada 2009).[18] What these different results seem to indicate is that the identification of a given language variety as 'official' or as only a dialect of an 'official' variety implicates tensions between local, regional, and national Inuit identities and language practices.

At least part of the problem here is simply a taxonomic one. That is, as we move from local to regional to national and finally to international contexts, local 'language' varieties are 'absorbed' into broader language categories, and broader 'Inuit language identities' also come into play. Thus, what might, for example, be a language variety specific to one community on the Hudson Bay coast of Nunavik would, for taxonomic purposes, be included in a larger 'Hudson Bay' Nunavimmiutitut variety; and this variety would in turn be included, along with a 'Hudson Strait' variety, in a single 'Nunavimmiutitut' language. This last variety would then be included in the still larger category of 'Inuktitut' in descriptions of 'Canadian Inuit' languages. Although this successive taxonomic 'absorption' might be of little practical concern for local speakers, it nevertheless plays at least an indirect role in contemporary Indigenous language politics. This is because it provides the basis for choices about which language varieties are (to be) 'representative' of a language category and which languages (are to) 'count' – and who will benefit or not from these choices. Such choices about language varieties are arguably

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[15] The Inuit Circumpolar Council (formerly Conference) was founded in 1977 and obtained official United Nations NGO status in 1983. It serves the interests of Inuit groups from Siberia to Greenland.

[16] For a description of these symposia, see <http://www.arcticlanguages.com/index. html> (accessed April 28th, 2012).

[17] According to the UNESCO website, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/index.php>, the *UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* lists North Alaskan Inupiaq (which is also spoken in Canada); two varieties of Western Canadian Inuktitut, Siglitun and Inuinnaqtun; five varieties of Eastern Canadian Inuktitut, Natsilingmiutut, Aivilingmiutut, Kivallirmiutut, Qikiqtaaluk uannangani (North Baffin), and Qikiqtaaluk nigiani (South Baffin); one Arctic Quebec (Nunavik) variety, Nunavimmiutitut; and two Labrador varieties, Nunatsiavummiutut and Rigolet Inuktitut.

[18] These dialects are Inuvialuktun (spoken in the Inuvialuit region in the Northwest Territories); Inuinnaqtun (spoken primarily in some communities in western Nunavut); Inuttitut (spoken in Eastern Nunavut); Inuttitut (spoken in Nunavik); and Inuttut (spoken in Nunatsiavut).

integral to the development of state institutions in which language practices have both symbolic and practical meaning for the communities that they represent and serve.

A final difficulty for Inuit language politics that is worth exploring pertains to the choice between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' language initiatives. We have already seen that the language initiatives respectively undertaken in Nunavut and in Nunavik, which share the goal of achieving Inuit language revitalization and securing a place for the Inuit language in Inuit self-determination, take very different approaches to achieving this goal, one legislative and the other 'consultative'. What we did not note about these two approaches is that the former takes a formal, 'top-down' form – although leaving open the possibility of local consultation to facilitate the implementation of policies – whereas the latter takes a decidedly 'bottom-up', grassroots form, involving face-to-face community-based interaction and consultation, which might lead to the implementation of a language policy at the regional level.[19] These two approaches highlight the tension between 'local' and 'regional' collective identities, each involving social interaction across boundaries (or 'scale jumping'; see Tomiak 2011), as Inuit participate in both personal and larger decolonization projects. The broader goal remains constant: the struggle for stronger political, economic, and environmental Inuit voices and participation in global as well as national, regional, and local arenas.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have sought to address certain key questions related to Indigenous language politics. These are how this politics has been tied to Indigenous political movements and become linked to contemporary social and political struggles over land and institutions. What I hope to have shown is that rights discourses have helped to shape Indigenous linguistic, social, and political collectivities and played a key role in the struggles of Inuit for autonomy and self-determination within the Canadian state, contributing to social transformation in Canada and other liberal-democratic societies.

What I also hope to have shown is that the recognition of rights and the creation of laws and policies related to language are much more than symbolic gestures. Indeed, these show that language revitalization matters to Inuit and other Indigenous communities and that it is tied to very real concerns – about the protection of their territory, environment, and other interests within the context of developing nation-to-nation and decolonizing relationships, with both old and new colonizing forces in Canada and elsewhere. In these language revitalization processes, top-down and bottom-up initiatives both play a role, not only to raise language awareness but also to promote the use of Indigenous languages in the informal and formal (institutional) contexts, as part of larger projects of self-determination and decolonization.

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[19] The contours of this policy are suggested by the following statements on the Avataq website at <http://www.avataq.qc.ca/en/Institute/Departments/Inuktitut-Language>: Nunavik, as "an autonomous government, [would have] an Inuktitut Language Commission [that] would supervise the protection and development of Inuktitut. Language protection (language in the workplace and of signs) must be a priority of *Nunavingmi Aquvvinga*." With regard to schools, another goal for Nunavik is to follow initiatives in Nunavut and move towards more Inuktitut-medium instruction beyond the current grade 3/4 level.

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