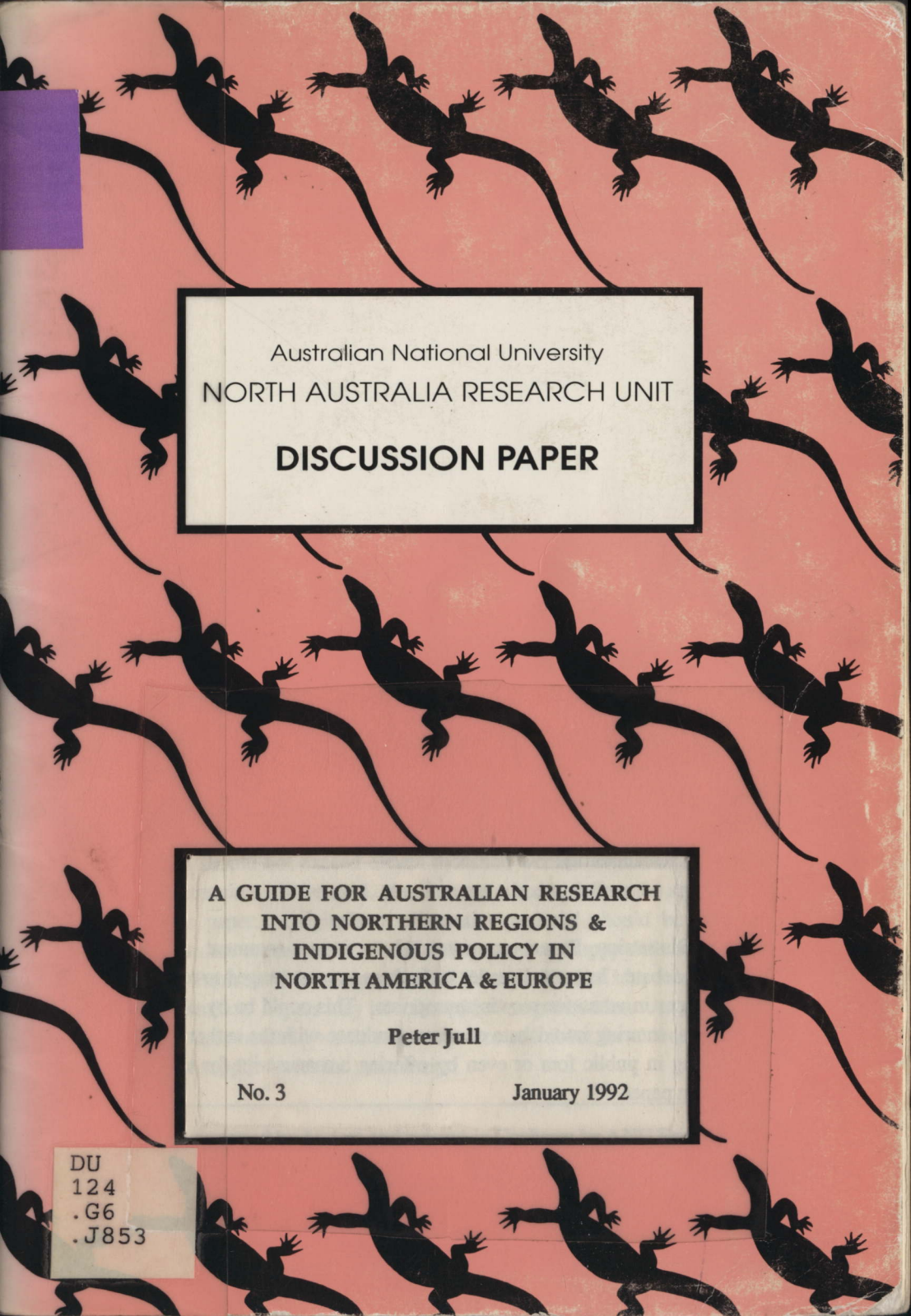




Australian National University
NORTH AUSTRALIA RESEARCH UNIT

DISCUSSION PAPER

**A GUIDE FOR AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH
INTO NORTHERN REGIONS &
INDIGENOUS POLICY IN
NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE**

Peter Jull

No. 3

January 1992

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NORTH AUSTRALIA RESEARCH UNIT

In 1973 the Australian National University created the North Australia Research Unit for two purposes: to carry out a research program of its own and to provide a base and logistic support for research workers, from ANU and from other Australian or overseas research institutions. The Unit is part of the Research School of Pacific Studies.

The Unit's activities range well beyond its base in Darwin in the Northern Territory to research localities in central Australia and the north and west of Queensland and north Western Australia.

The Unit's academic work is interdisciplinary and principally in the social sciences. An overall aim is to initiate research on problems of development in the north, little studied by other institutions. At present, emphasis is being given to four main research areas:

- Environmental management and planning
- Governance and policymaking structures
- Economic development and social equity
- Quality of community life

The future prospects and present needs of the Aboriginal and Islander communities remain a major theme in our work as are ecological and economic sustainability.

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Each paper will be short — no more than 40 pages. They will often deal with controversial topics. While the Unit takes pride in, and legal responsibility for, its publications, these papers reflect views of authors and not those of the Australian National University or the North Australia Research Unit.

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We hope that this series will open up discussion about some issues of northern development and the inevitable conflicts that arise from change, culture contacts and diversity of values.

Information about the Unit's activities and publications can be obtained from:

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ABSTRACT

Australian indigenous peoples, makers of public policy and northern development planners suffer from a common problem today: a lack of information about outback situations abroad. Those overseas experiments provide rich case studies which can enable Australia to avoid mistakes and hasten successes. In this Guide an attempt is made to sketch the most interesting and relevant features of indigenous development and northern regions in other OECD countries *as these relate to Australian needs*, and to provide suggestions for study. The emphasis here is on social and political development, constitutional innovation, regional and ethnic identity, economic development, ecologically sustainable development, and indigenous or indigenous-government development cooperation. The areas considered are Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Shetland, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

Acknowledgements

This Discussion Paper was written in direct response to interest expressed by Getano Lui Jr., Chairman, Island Coordinating Council, Torres Strait; Mick Dodson, Director, Northern Land Council, Darwin; and Peg Havnen, Deputy Director, Centre for Aboriginal Islander Studies, NT University, Darwin (in that chronological sequence). (Ms Havnen's helpful comments are largely responsible for the format chosen here.) These three wanted more Australian indigenous awareness of and contribution to international indigenous developments. My own commitment to comparative studies began with my use of Greenlandic material from 1966, long before my first visit, as an aid to understanding development issues in Canada's Northwest Territories. My thanks here go to my colleagues Sally Roberts and Monica Mulrennan, and to NARU Executive Director, David Lea, all of whom have helped me here. Nicki

Hanssen and Ann Webb were the two Fates who wove my mess into a fine, formatted and (we hope) useful product.

Notes on contributor

Peter Jull is a Senior Research Fellow, North Australia Research Unit, Australian National University. A graduate in humanities from the University of Toronto, he worked as assistant to the head of government in Canada's Northwest Territories from 1966; as cabinet secretary in the Premier's Office, Government of British Columbia; as Adviser on the Constitution (Native and Northern Affairs) in the Privy Council Office/Federal-Provincial Relations Office, ie, 'prime minister's department', Ottawa, for a decade; and from 1980 as constitutional development and government relations adviser to regional, national and international indigenous peoples' organisations. His monographs include *The Politics of Northern Frontiers* (1991); co-edited with Sally Roberts, *The Challenge of Northern Regions* (1991); with John Merritt *et al*, *Nunavut: Political Choices and Manifest Destiny* (1989); with Gordon Robertson *et al*, *The North and Canada's International Relations* (1988); *Lapland: the Native North in Norway* (1988) and *Politics, Conservation and Development in the International North* (1986).

James and Ann Webb were the two faces who were the driving force behind the formation and the early product.

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A GUIDE FOR AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH INTO NORTHERN REGIONS & INDIGENOUS POLICY IN NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

Peter Jull

Introduction

Northern and outback indigenous peoples often feel powerless in their ancient territories today. Their power to manage their own lives has been removed or seriously confined, and they have little control over the way the predominantly White society treats them. That society is no longer shooting at them, but its land and resource use policies are sometimes ruthless all the same. Today something which has been called 'welfare colonialism' afflicts them (Paine 1977). In its current form in Australia this involves many different government offices and departments designing programs and policies which are meant to re-make indigenous people in some other image. The recent addition of elected indigenous advisory councils to give the Aboriginal Affairs administration a more acceptable face seems to be changing little.

The fact is, however, that when we look at the several northern regions of 'first world' countries as in this paper, we find that indigenous northern peoples have shown great strength, courage and persistence. We find European policies failing to assimilate them or force them into the compartments adopted by social program officials. Northern regions are emerging from the marginal status they have had under national governments and are asserting themselves at a time when they are increasingly important by virtue of strategic location, mineral and energy resources, and national social and environmental conscience. In every case we find that the White Man's politics and institutions, including constitutional arrangements, have had to be adjusted or more flexibly interpreted to accommodate northern realities.

Torres Strait Islanders and Aborigines in outback and northern Australia today have two sources of strength they have not been using. The first source is knowledge of successful and workable northern and indigenous experience abroad. The fact that other peoples and other governments have been able to find ways for indigenous peoples to regain control of their lives, communities and territories means that it can be done in Australia. Knowledge of some successful cases overseas will be useful in Australia in the months and years ahead, especially when dealing with government officials who lack the knowledge or will to consider options other than their own department's programs.

The second source of strength is in the community of northern peoples and regions. In the 'first world' these peoples have not only celebrated success in their own struggles for autonomy and self-government; they have begun working together to share experience, to help each other and learn from each other. Their collective experience is even more important than that: it reveals that the remarkably similar approaches of White European governments around the world are inappropriate, and are unable to match the inner strength of northern peoples determined to decide their own future. Today we can see that northern regions are all alike: an indigenous people, either European (eg, Faroese) or non-European (Aborigines, Inuit), peacefully struggling to restore political, proprietary and cultural rights in its ancient territories which have been annexed by European peoples as part of new countries. Northern regions are strong because of the shared feelings of their indigenous peoples, and once the people start thinking and acting politically like a region — instead of as a bunch of sad individuals for whom governments design social programs — then they can negotiate change on their own terms.

Whereas the northern regions discussed below all have had to achieve their political destinies the hard way — isolated and alone, while national European majorities treated them as inadequate and inferior — Australia's indigenous peoples today have the benefit of all that northern hemisphere experience, both the successes and the mistakes.

In today's world the standards set by the collective experience of the most advanced countries determines indigenous policy world-wide, as is the case with other policy areas like nuclear energy, global warming, AIDS, etc. Australian governments have shown themselves extremely sensitive, even defensive, about foreign criticism. Such criticism is likely to increase because Australian policy is falling further behind the countries described in this paper. 1992 and 1993 are years full of particular attention to indigenous needs around the world (thanks to the 1992 Columbus 500 year anniversary and the 1993 United Nations Year of Indigenous Peoples). Islanders and Aborigines must not miss this opportunity to benefit or to contribute. The following pages are intended to help indigenous peoples, governments and the research community to derive benefit from experience abroad. The rest of this Discussion Paper is broken down as follows:

- the purpose of comparative studies, their limitations, and a few cautions;
- brief notes on what is happening in a number of 'first world' northlands and in the newly 'opened' Soviet north, followed by suggested topics for visitors or researchers to learn about there;
- a word on ongoing international political and research work; and
- notes on a few major themes common to several or all of the countries surveyed.

The purpose and practice of comparative studies

The most important point about comparative studies is that they should *not* be mere attempts to borrow or copy the experience of others for application at home. In the state of ignorance of our society, however, sometimes nothing less than the promise of such easy rewards will loosen funders' pursestrings for research. False expectations thereby created may do more long-term harm than good.

The best research requires personal travel. This should be preceded by a little background reading, and followed or accompanied by the collection of relevant documents. Only a personal visit makes sense of a place, of a context and of a situation to be compared with one's own. Without that context it may be misleading, even dangerous, to think one knows what one is talking about.

Another perspective to avoid is that of travelling politicians who like to report that 'we are way ahead of them; we have nothing to learn!' Or, everything may seem wonderful to the traveller well treated by foreign hosts. Such views usually say more about the ignorance or prejudices of the person speaking, and the shallowness of his investigations, than about reality abroad.

Unfortunately, shallow comparisons made by some commentators have often combined with the inherent self-satisfaction of society to discredit the notion that we can learn from abroad. *The purpose of comparative studies in socio-politics is to understand better the workings of social and political processes by examining different approaches taken in different (but somehow comparable) situations in order to find better ways to solve problems at home.* Away from home we can be less blinkered by habit and prejudice, by our upbringing and commitments, and we see more clearly. We can also be more free abroad to talk to people on all sides of an issue.

The two main elements of short-term comparative study are:

- getting the 'feel' of a situation by intensive or extensive exposure;
and
- checking specific details through data gathering.

Unless we have obtained detailed information as well as impressions, we will be unable to pass on useful or usable information to others. Only such care will enable us to convince governments, media or opinion-makers at home that there are real alternatives to the *status quo*. The best way to get full value from travel for a delegation is to have a staff person along whose sole job is to take notes and collect documentation.

It is best to talk with a range of people abroad such as indigenous spokespersons and/or politicians, non-indigenous politicians, government policy officials at different levels of government, social and health agency workers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), journalists, artists (whether writers, painters, sculptors, carvers, *et al*), teachers, subsistence hunters (or fishermen or trappers), lawyers and economists, private entrepreneurs, students, researchers and academics. One always meets other interesting and helpful people who fall into none of these categories.

The world of OECD countries

For indigenous people in Australia it may seem silly to consider cold climates far away for study visits. Such views are wrong. Indigenous policy has become an international matter driven by shared international experience and by standards set by progressive countries. National governments respond to criticism or comment abroad, even though no government likes such comment on 'internal matters'. For the benefit of international work to reach Australia, however, people here must bring information about it to the press, government and public at home.

Today, when many indigenous politicians and organisations in Australia fear that regional and national White politicians are simply 'stonewalling' progress on indigenous political agendas, it is all the more important to bring some inspiration from outside.

The importance of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries, the so-called 'first world', is that they share a European and, in some cases, Anglo-Celtic socio-political tradition with Australia. That is the national tradition of Australia within which Torres Strait Islanders and Aborigines have to work for social and political change. There is other work that could usefully be done in looking at small-scale development experience in similar eco-systems such as Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and various nearby island countries.

For a general introduction to northern hemisphere northlands, their problems and politics, recommended surveys are by Osherenko and Young (1989), Jull and Roberts (1991), and Jull (1991c). In each of the brief regional sketches which follow, a brief introduction to the region is given highlighting the most important topics for Australian inquiry, plus one or more titles useful for background reading before going to have a look oneself. The reader will be expected to do the work of selecting more precise study topics from the material provided, according to that reader's needs and interests.

Alaska

The history of the United States frontier in Alaska is particularly relevant to North Australia, and to the Northern Territory. Alaska's population is about four hundred thousand of whom 16% are Native Alaskans, that is, the indigenous Inuit, Aleut, Dene, Tlinkit and Haida. (Note: Different countries and peoples use different terms — native, indigenous, aboriginal — but all refer to the living descendants of the first inhabitants who are Indians, Inuit and Aleuts in Alaska; Europeans in Iceland, the

Faroe Islands and Shetland; Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia.) Alaska is a large unorganised territory which, in recent times, developed a statehood movement and a concurrent indigenous land rights movement. Statehood was achieved in 1959, and in 1971 a land rights settlement was imposed by the US Congress in Washington after the American desire for Alaskan oil forced a settlement with indigenous people. Alaska has fundamental conflicts over environmental protection and development along ethnic lines, and Native needs for traditional harvesting rights are opposed by many non-Natives. The conservation and environment movements in the USA have long roots and are both more elaborated and clearly divided than in most other countries, even if some of these traditions seem irrelevant in today's state of knowledge.

Statehood resolved little for Native and non-Native Alaskans in terms of future prospects. Now development-minded non-Natives chafe at the large areas of Native, environmental and other federal government lands set aside, while Natives are fighting to overcome the limitations of the checker-board land selections and their lack of sufficient self-government. One may hope that the need for comprehensive land use planning, sustainable development and public revenues will someday force an historic compromise between Natives and non-Natives through a new State constitution. Today in the aftermath of the claims settlement the Native people are often divided between Native land-holding corporations competing in the mainstream US capitalist marketplace (with all its powerful pressures to conform) and a tribal government movement which sees autonomy and self-government protected by federal law as the essential cornerstone of the Native future. Dramatic ventures in autonomy and self-government like the North Slope Borough created by Inuit under State law, occupying the whole northern region of Alaska and with vast spending for its Inuit people through taxation of oil facilities, yield many areas for consideration.

Alaskan politics are always flamboyant and hard fought. Native Alaskans may feel they are a minority fighting against many powerful interests including Big Oil, the military and determined State and federal

government interests, but they have nonetheless transformed modern Alaska. The irony is that although people from the Lower 48 (continental US States) go to Alaska because it is different, these settlers often organise politically to erode or erase the very features which make it different, ie, the pluralist patchwork of Native rights and cultures.

The epic of expanding Inuit (Inupiat) self-government on the North Slope in the teeth of non-Native Alaskan and oil industry resistance has many lessons despite the 'exotic' factor of vast oil revenues. Inupiat leaders have fought for coastal zone management, protection of wild species and eco-systems, strong regional government, the rebuilding of their whole region and retraining of their people, all with great success. Now other groups like the adjacent Inuit NANA region centred on Kotzebue are working their own wonders, including their cooperation with multinational mining to develop the Red Dog lead-zinc site for mutual benefit. All over Alaska the tribal self-government movement with its rejection of State institutions, the Native regional corporations with their sometimes different perspectives, and the homogenist populism of non-Native Alaska seeking to assimilate the unique Native Alaska provide much interest for Australians.

For general introduction, useful works are Berger's *Village Journey* (1985) and a recent article by Maas (1991). Also recommended are McBeath and Morehouse (1987), Morehouse (1988, 1989), and Morehouse, McBeath and Leask (1984). For American arctic interests, see Westermeyer and Shusterich (1984).

Lower 48

The 48 contiguous states of the USA — ie, all those states except Alaska and Hawaii — have many lessons in indigenous policy. Indian self-government is often simply called 'sovereignty' in the USA. Tribal sovereignty and the exercise of wide powers on Indian lands are based in part on the constitutional traditions of the Americans, traditions different

from Australian or Canadian ones in important respects. Of more general interest, however, are customary law and tribal courts, as well as the practical aspects of daily administration on Indian lands. Many Western US Indian lands have significant resources. Indian resource opportunities with their revenue, environmental and social aspects are a matter of wide study and much shared Indian experience. These several subjects are the ones most usefully explored in the USA.

Cronon (1983) on Indian and White colonist use of land and resources in the north-eastern USA, and the book of the recent television series shown by ABC, *Land of the Eagle* (Peck 1990), about settler impacts on the Indian American environment, are excellent introductions. The depressing history of Indian-White contact in the first three centuries of White settlement is the subject of popular and compelling books available in most bookshops. Peter Farb's *Man's Rise to Civilization* (1968) is a readable account of North American Indian life and contacts with Whites, despite its improbable title, stressing the dynamic, developmental character of Indian social history before the White Man. Of specialised interest to Australian groups may be the information and study materials developed by Indian research and education centres to assist indigenous communities take charge of their own futures.

Canada

Canada is the 'first world' country most like Australia, and for many reasons it is the most fruitful for comparative study. The discussion of Canada will proceed under five categories: Southern Canada, Western Resource Provinces, Quebec, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. But a few general points may be made first.

Australia's current evolution in indigenous policy may parallel Canada's own, albeit Canada's public recognition of indigenous socio-political needs came 20-30 years ago. Australia has not yet crossed the threshold to accept indigenous autonomy. Canadian change owes more to

indigenous education and mobility, and to White society's maturing social awareness and embrace of pluralism, than to any legal traditions. The law and its interpretation have followed changing social values. Canadian legal devices often noted by Australian experts were a dead letter until the last two decades.

In Canada the White Man found a continent in which the indigenous people held sufficient military power and eco-system knowledge so that they were neither swept aside nor dismissed from mind until late in the settlement process. Also, indigenous peoples were the essential producers in Canada's first European economy, the fur trade, from 1500 to 1820. In Canada the White Man, even today, has not attempted to settle or graze the lands and waters of more than a southern fringe of Canada — a difference from Australian pastoralism which was tried virtually everywhere and brought quick displacement of Aborigines. Logging, hydro-electric power development, road-building and mining have brought their own less extensive but sometimes more locally intensive problems. Physical extermination appears to have been much less practised in Canada towards indigenous peoples than in Australia, although one of Australia's strong points is the ready willingness of many of its notables, artists and ordinary citizens to confront the least attractive aspects of the national past.

Canada is a laboratory in which 2 territories, 1 proto-territory, 7 provinces, a federal government and countless indigenous governments and quasi-governments and pseudo-governments and provisional governments, plus many other local self-governing authorities and less formal self-help movements, are re-writing indigenous-white and outback-urban relations.

For Canada's general indigenous-white history, Miller's two new books are irreplaceable (Miller 1989, 1991). The most useful introductions to northern Canada are Berger's *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland* (1977), Fumoleau's *As Long As This Land Shall Last* (1975), Brody's *The People's Land* (1975), Brody's *Living Arctic* (1987),

and Paine's *The White Arctic* (Paine 1977). For Canada's emerging indigenous self-government, see Jull (1991c, 16-20 & 25-8), Wolfe (1991), Cassidy and Bish (1989), Franks (1987), Hawkes and Peters (1986), and Peters (1987). For the recent history of Canadian constitutional reform involving indigenous peoples see Jull (1987) for the 1978-87 period and Hawkes and Devine (1991) for 1987 up to the present day.

Southern Canada

Southern Canada refers to the ten provinces which make up the Canadian federation. For our purposes here it is a somewhat misleading term. That is, although most indigenous people live in large urban areas or small rural reserve communities, surrounded by the predominantly white Canadian settler population, there are also vast northlands in seven provinces where indigenous peoples retain relative freedom to pursue elements of their traditional lifestyles. This provincial mid-north has all the prospects necessary for a just and promising indigenous future no less than do Canada's northern territories. However, as in Queensland and Western Australia, outback areas are seen by provincial capitals as resource reservoirs where the quality of services is secondary until a white boomtown or other white interests attract attention. (See also the next section on Western Resource Provinces.) Canadian provincial governments enjoy the engaging logic that while they have no moral or social obligations to Indians as human beings, the Whites should prosper thanks to the sale and exploitation of formerly Indian lands and resources. Fortunately many individuals and bureaux within provincial systems are more humane, and each province has at least a few intelligent and progressive indigenous programs. Also, there are some areas or communities in each provincial northland where some social progress has been made. Nonetheless, Canada's provincial north is often appalling as a socio-economic environment for its oldest (and most permanent) residents.

The more settled areas of southern Canada see Indian and Métis populations squeezed into inadequately small areas where living standards are usually markedly lower than in nearby white neighbourhoods. Some reserves are virtually a part of large cities like Vancouver and Montreal. Here the indigenous world is dominated by the federal Indian Act which provides for local band councils to exercise some limited powers. The Act also denies to non-status Indians and Métis any particular rights, these legal categories having been unjustly created by government in the 19th century and now become social categories vehemently defended by many Indians themselves. (Note: The Métis are mixed-blood descendants of French-Indian, Scottish-Indian and other mixed unions involving Indians. In the region between the Rocky Mountains in the west and Lake Superior to the east, the Métis nation developed significant cultural, social and political character in the 19th century.)

Today the federal government's policy of devolving administration, decision-making and funds to Indian band governments has become a flood. This is emerging into a full-fledged system of Indian government and one which Indians now seek to make both permanent and non-discretionary by means of national constitutional amendment. Most Canadians support this aim. The fact remains that many indigenous communities, poor in economic assets, facilities and in experience of the worlds of government and business, would face a crisis if full responsibility was thrust upon them immediately. Many stronger communities, meanwhile, have been chafing far too long under tutelage.

Although the national constitutional process in Canada is the biggest indigenous game in town, it is difficult to study. The documentation consists mostly of official cooing which misses the point (but, written over time, also shows a marked growth in sensitivity to indigenous issues!), legal theorising which is too dominant in Canadian indigenous policy-making and which often obstructs more than it constructs, and self-serving polemics which always blame someone else for disappointing results. There is very little except for two very short

pieces by Hawkes and Devine (1991) and Jull (1987). In order to obtain anything more useful the Australian researcher must speak to many different actors and compile a picture, notably including federal and provincial inter-governmental relations officials. However, the best and most telling source is the most accessible: the transcripts of the four public indigenous-federal-provincial-territorial conferences in 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1987. It is interesting that the most significant constitutional amendments were achieved in negotiations led by Inuit in 1981, more than two years before the formal process of multilateral talks began.

In recent years two books have appeared, at last beginning to give the provincial political dimension to indigenous questions which have been too little studied or debated (Hawkes 1989; Long and Boldt and Little Bear 1988).

Western Resource Provinces

A sub-set of Canada's provinces are the large resource-based political economies of British Columbia (BC), Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. These provinces have larger indigenous proportions in their populations than do other provinces. (Northern Ontario belongs with them, in many respects, and is more or less perennially disaffected from the southern-based governments in the provincial capital, Toronto.) Political opinion of all stripes in Western Canada may be said, not altogether simplistically, to see Ontario as getting most of the money and Quebec most of the attention in the Canadian federation. With their emphasis on the development of 'frontier resources', as Canadians call them, and, especially in the relatively immature socio-political cultures of BC and Alberta, the Western provinces provide striking parallels to Queensland and Western Australia. As Queensland legal authorities are discovering, resources needs and uncertain indigenous title in BC provide contemporary scope for Australian study there. One might also note the polarised and populist politics, strong anti-indigenous attitudes

and tendency to long one-party rule which have dominated and distorted BC and Alberta social history as in WA and Queensland, with attendant problems of influence and corruption. Despite the image of Western Canada to outsiders as Rightist and redneck, BC and Saskatchewan both elected labour governments (New Democratic Party, the 'NDP') in late 1991 after long spells of very conservative rule. To many, the creating myth of 'the West' and its identity lies in the Riel rebellions of Métis in 1869 which forced the creation of Manitoba province, and the Métis and Indian 'Northwest Rebellion' of 1885 (Stanley 1960). It is also worth noting that positive policies and indigenous-White relationships developed under some Western provincial governments, both labour (NDP) and conservative, since the 1950s. The new NDP governments in BC and Saskatchewan, joining mighty Ontario's first NDP government, are expected to swing national influence behind indigenous self-government and more enlightened indigenous land rights policies.

Even aggressive indigenous organisations have tended to give tough Western provincial governments an easy life, so convinced have they been of the hopelessness as well as the undesirability of provincial involvement. Thanks largely to national constitutional politics, indigenous groups have become more pragmatic and Western leadership circles more at ease since the early 1980s with shared economic, social and political concerns.

For a fine and readable analysis of the early Indian-White history in BC, see Fisher's *Contact and Conflict* (1977). Helpful introductions to indigenous policies and politics of British Columbia are Cassidy (1991) and Cassidy and Dale (1988).

Quebec

Quebec is the French-speaking province of Canada, the heart of the old New France which stretched from the Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi Valley, through the Great Lakes system, a huge vaguely defined area

apart from the core settlements along the St. Lawrence River and Acadian shores. It has been shown by recent scholars like CJ Jaenen (1986) that the French essentially settled vacant land, and one of history's puzzles has been how it came to be empty between the 1530s and the beginning of serious French settlement with Champlain in the early 1600s. It is assumed that Indian wars were the cause. As new studies have also shown, Champlain was the classic pompous and harried bureaucrat as much as the wise founding father of history. For today we might better look for role models in some of the extraordinary French *coureurs de bois*, 'runners of the woods', individuals living, learning and working far from European settlement among the Indians, of whom the archetypal figure was Étienne Brûlé (David Berry, Brûlé researcher, personal communication). North American Indian-white relations are emerging in many new volumes and show that no European nation had much idea how to conduct itself in the inhabited New World. However, the French apparently took little land from Indian peoples and confirmed them in their traditional rights and territories, subject only to some occasional doffing of hats to the faraway king, Louis Quatorze. French settlement and ambitions seem much different than the later English settlement of Canada and Australia.

Contemporary Quebec has had a more difficult time coming to terms with indigenous peoples. The Quiet Revolution, begun in earnest in 1960, saw Quebec anxious to make up for lost time in social and political development. The hydro-electric power potential of the north seemed a gift for rapid development at home and electricity export sales to the USA. Rushing ahead the Quebec authorities were faced with the northern peoples — Inuit, Cree, Naskapi — and after bruising court and public relations battles the first land claims settlements in modern Canada were signed. Cree and Inuit had different arrangements resulting from these settlements, including new systems of self-government. Today the battle over Quebec's next phase of hydro power dams sees the same antagonists meeting again, but in a world grown more informed about the environment. Inuit have hoped that they can negotiate a major consolidation of their regional bodies into a more effective regional

government responsible to an elected assembly as part of a new deal with Quebec, while Cree have flatly opposed more damming.

In southern Quebec the provincial government has faced two major embarrassments. The 1981 raid by heavy-handed police on an ancient Micmac Indian salmon-fishing community at Restigouche and the 1990 barricades at the Mohawk-Algonkin-Nipissing community at Oka which brought police and army into direct conflict with Indian militants have overshadowed the rest of Indian-Quebec relations. In the last decade Quebec governments have been progressive in the theory of indigenous rights and often helpful to indigenous people in national politics. Unfortunately many Quebec officials and the public mistake the Indian and Inuit suspicion of Quebec intentions for anti-French feeling. The truth is that for all Canada's indigenous peoples the provinces with their land and resources powers are ultimately 'the enemy' and the federal government with its constitutional powers to protect Indian and Inuit lands and lives, the court of last resort. In reality Ottawa has usually exercised its responsibility reluctantly in conflicts with Quebec and other provinces. Today when Franco-Quebeckers look to a new Quebec constitution, one serving a possibly independent Quebec, indigenous peoples fear the loss of federal protection and the vesting in a single government of all powers over their lives and lands. They would be no less fearful whether that government spoke English, French or Indonesian.

The Quebec government has embarked on a review of its future indigenous policies with a series of public discussion papers. This task is made difficult by the fact that indigenous issues have never been as constant or major news items in Quebec as they have been in the five provinces and two territories to the west. The public is comparatively little sensitised, despite the fact that a sense of minority status is felt by Franco-Quebeckers and could lead to closer fellow feeling with indigenous peoples.

Jaenen (1986) may help counter the Australian view that the French were a more cruel colonial power and more hostile to indigenous interests than the British. For a new view of the history Canadians are taught about early French-Indian contact, see Trigger's *Natives and Newcomers* (1985). For a general view of Quebec's socio-cultural development, see Trofimenkoff (1983). The Quebec government publishes in English a small magazine, *Rencontre*, on indigenous policy and programs. Most contemporary academic studies are written in French.

Yukon

The Yukon has a history and demographic balance similar to that of Australia's Northern Territory. About 22% of the population is 'native', and the white history has centred on resource extraction since the Klondike gold rush of 1898. Like the NT as well, politics and race relations have been polarised. In recent years the commodity bust has so smashed the mining base that Yukoners have had to rethink their present and their future. A remarkable attempt to develop public consensus on economic options, Yukon 2000, surprised the cynics. Despite the confrontationist style of the first government after 'self-government' (or responsible government) with its pro-development and anti-indigenous claims policies, Yukoners tired of what was becoming a sterile approach and in 1985 voted in the NDP (labour) party who have been re-elected since. The bridging of the indigenous-White gap to some extent has been accompanied by a more promising land claims settlement, with indigenous Yukoners feeling less embattled. The claims settlement gives the indigenous people significant influence in all resource, environment and development decisions throughout the Yukon Territory.

Yukon indigenous-White relations, including the recent *rapprochement* between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples following the 1985 change of government, have interest for Northern Territory residents. The search by Yukon Indians for a political settlement, and the several attempts to reach a land claims settlement, now completed, has much

interest for Australian indigenous people because of its strong indigenous resource and development powers. Yukon and Alaska share many features of potential interest to Australia, and as the two regions are comfortably linked by road and air, extensive travel is relatively manageable.

For a short introduction to Yukon realities see Coates (1991), and for Yukon history, Coates and Morrison (1988).

Northwest Territories

The difficult indigenous-white political relationship in Alaska and Yukon gives way to more accommodation to the east. Here the Northwest Territories (NWT), a single territory in law, makes up a third of Canada's land area. In addition there are large expanses of internal sea whose coasts are populated only by Inuit villages and hunting camps. A number of NWT towns, led by the capital, Yellowknife, account for most of the non-native people. The total NWT population is about 55,000, more than half of whom are indigenous Inuit, Dene (Athapaskan Indians) and Métis. The political and economic development of the NWT has been made complex for the last 15 years by the Inuit demand for a new eastern territory called Nunavut and this uncertainty has stymied NWT 'progress'.

The NWT has a different development history and history of social processes than the Yukon. Its diverse regional identities correspond to the three main indigenous cultures within the NWT. The most essential divide, however, is between predominantly white town and indigenous village. The south-west with its artery, the Mackenzie River, has typically ragged northern forest, the ancient homeland of Dene and of the mixed-blood Métis (some of whom came north with traders and some of whom are descendants of local unions). This is the most populous and developed part of the NWT, but its mining and mining exploration industry has brought many disappointments. At last Canadians both

north and south are seeing that mining may not be the key to northern development, and that those happy visions may themselves be fantasies. The indigenous peoples still carry on hunting, trapping and gathering, activities which provide much of their food. The administration and services sectors have been the growth industries of recent times.

The north-west of the NWT is the homeland of Inuvialuit, a people made up of Alaskan Inuit who moved into the emptiness left by the Mackenzie Inuit who, but for two families, died out in the 20th century. The Inuvialuit live in the scrub forest lands and delta country of the Mackenzie River mouth and on the treeless shores of the Beaufort Sea. Inuvik, the major town in the region, was built in the 1950s as a model community and was quickly seen as an exemplary disaster, primarily for its explicit and implicit race relations. Tuktoyaktuk is the base for Beaufort Sea off-shore oil exploration as well as being a traditional Inuvialuit community. With their land claims settled in 1984, the Inuvialuit are aggressively participating in the modern economy, but traditional hunting, trapping and gathering remain very important in economy, culture and social organisation. In late 1991 the most experienced and toughest Inuvialuit leader, Nellie Courmoyea, became NWT premier.

The northern and eastern half of the NWT, Nunavut, is discussed in the next section.

Despite the complaints of some northerners about the size of the public sector in the NWT, that size is largely a result of private sector uninterest in the hazards of northern economics and of the strong commitment of Canadians through the federal government to supporting an acceptable quality of life in this remote region. For many years there has been a bipartisan northern policy consensus in Ottawa. This supports maximum social opportunity for northern indigenous peoples and demands that frontier development not leave them behind (as they were during the settlement era in southern Canada). A comparison of NWT indigenous

living conditions and indigenous-White relations within northern regions of adjacent provinces shows the practical success of this federal policy.

The lack of a party system to date in NWT politics — consciously delayed until the Nunavut issue is resolved — has meant that the legislature has played an admirably large role in running the Territories. On the other hand, the fact that the cabinet is a heterogeneous mix elected by the legislature, immune to dismissal by the 'premier', has meant that while service delivery has reached a high state, many fundamental and controversial issues are never resolved. From the end of the 1960s independent indigenous associations funded by Ottawa became an alternative political force, rejecting the White-dominated legislature which denigrated their needs. All subsequent NWT politics have consisted of indigenous wrestling with NWT legislatures and cabinets. In 1979 indigenous leaders ran for and then dominated the legislature, and still do so, as much by negative sanction as by positive direction. Although the NWT has long had the potential to be the leading edge of Canada's indigenous policy-making, its legislature politicians both White and indigenous, unlike the indigenous political associations, have been curiously diffident when outside the north. The NWT leadership of the past decade has preferred to appear modest and provincial (and ready for provincehood!) in constitutional and other national politics than to push ahead boldly with a uniquely northern agenda. This lack of political self-confidence is a common problem among settler politicians and, alas, some indigenous leaders once their goals are near, in many northern regions. As well, white NWT politicians and indigenous politicians in the associations have failed to combine on more than a few occasions, despite the considerable power such cooperation has for altering national policies! It has been left to the indigenous association leaders, relatively few of whom have joined the formal Anglo-Canadian political system to date, to lead national northern policy debate and capture the national imagination.

For the emergence of NWT indigenous politics see Jull 1984. Dacks (1988) gives another view of the most recent experience. A fine new

study by Dacks (1990) with Canada's other leading political science 'northernists' (to use a horrible new Canadian term) and a unique study of the NWT and Yukon public policy and administrations by Aird (1988) and others are especially helpful. Loveday (1991) muses helpfully on NWT-Australian comparisons. For a comprehensive report on Canada's northern policy needs in the modern, internationalist world, Robertson *et al* (1988) provide a landmark study which has been well received by all sides. Other titles are found at the end of the Nunavut section below.

Nunavut

The eastern and northern portions of Canada's Northwest Territories, inhabited almost entirely by Inuit, form a single land claims settlement region and an emerging new northern territory, Nunavut. Nunavut means 'our land' in the Inuit language. This region is made up of isolated Inuit communities of a few hundred to a thousand persons, with Iqaluit (formerly named Frobisher Bay) as a sort of unofficial capital and Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay as regional administrative centres. TFN (the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut) is the Inuit body now completing the details of the land claims agreement with the Government of Canada. A thick and detailed agreement-in-principle signed in 1990 creates new bodies which provide for Inuit to co-manage with government the resources, planning, land use, wildlife, and development impacts on-shore and off-shore, throughout the entire region.

Parallel to the claims process has been a process to create the future Nunavut Territory Government, work also being managed today by TFN. Although Canada, like Australia, has always left constitutional development in the hands of a few experts and insiders behind closed doors, Nunavut has been Canada's first truly 'popular' (that is, 'of the people') constitution-making. Elected leaders from Nunavut, both Inuit and white, held meetings in public as they wrestled with the many details of how Inuit tradition, current needs and Canadian political conventions could blend in a workable framework. A discussion document, *Building*

Nunavut, was published and discussed in every Nunavut community in 1983, and then a revised version was issued in 1985 to include results from community meetings and specialist workshops. The federal government has repeatedly committed itself to the creation of Nunavut, and delays due to arguments about the western boundary of Nunavut have disappointed Inuit. It appears that Nunavut may soon be created in the spirit of political and constitutional renewal gripping Canadians. (Surprising as it may seem to Australians, Canadians agree on no constitutional item today more than the need for aboriginal self-government!)

Nunavut is a huge region. No roads connect its communities — places sometimes isolated by the storms and 24 hour dark of the arctic winter. The economy is a mix of old hunter-gatherer ways and modern service and administrative sectors. Nevertheless, the level of public services, including comprehensive social services, community facilities, and transport and communications access is very high. This is a direct result of, first, direct federal administration and, later, high federal subsidies for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Although many residents of Nunavut believe they are disadvantaged in material ways compared with the western NWT, Australian visitors are more likely to be impressed by their many benefits. Ultimately the push for Nunavut is founded as much on shared socio-cultural, developmental, linguistic, marine-oriented and historical administrative realities in the region as on any sins of the NWT government. Canadians, at first sceptical about 'ethnically based' government, have generally come to see Nunavut as an exciting project in nation-building. On December 13, 1991, Canadian federal ministers signed an agreement with Inuit leaders committing Canada to creating the Nunavut Territory Government following the joint elaboration of some final details.

Nunavut may be especially interesting for Torres Strait Islanders because of the marine orientation and the success in achieving regional planning and marine resource co-management with governments; and for Aborigines because of the vast area, few people, hunter-gatherer lifestyle

and world-renowned art — and because the society and people could not be more different than Canada's White majority. The bureaucratic and political history is much like the Torres Strait, or Arnhem Land, or Central Australia Aboriginal lands.

There is a small but reliable literature on Nunavut. The two editions of *Building Nunavut* are useful (Nunavut Constitutional Forum 1983, 1985) and Merritt *et al* (1989) provide a comprehensive review of Nunavut claims and self-government processes. A brief survey published in Australia is by Jull (1991a). The Nunavut claims Agreement-in-Principle is a document which all Australian indigenous organisation lawyers and resource/environment staff should know, obtainable from the Canadian government (TFN-DIAND 1991). The story of emergent Nunavut politics in the total NWT context is in Jull (1984).

Greenland

Greenland has over 50,000 people, some 80% of them the indigenous Inuit who control all aspects of public and political life. The Inuit won a home rule 'constitution' in 1979. One of the most forbidding and beautiful lands on earth, most of the country lies beneath a thick glacier. Settlement is concentrated along the south-west coast on the year-round open water of Davis Strait. Since home rule the Greenland government has taken over the Danish state economy which was for 200 years vested in the Royal Greenland Trade. Fishing in the Davis Strait and the vast service sector form the economic base, plus continuing subsidies from Copenhagen. Dislike of dependency on Denmark has fuelled some controversial exploits by which Greenlanders have sought major resource development, bringing the government and an environmentally sensitive public into fierce debate.

Although Greenland has all the powers of an Australian State, and probably more, it shares a veto with Denmark on resource development on- or off-shore. This means that project proposals are negotiated in

practice to ensure maximum social and environmental benefits, and least disruption. Greenland has vetoed off-shore oil exploration and on-shore uranium mining, but has approved on-shore oil exploration in East Greenland. Greenland has also been sensitive to and resentful of American military facilities and policies (though probably less so than the Danish public!).

Greenland is the most fully elaborated social economy in the OECD. The high standards of living, culture, design, public services and quality of life, as well as the well-nigh exemplary way in which the Danish government 'de-colonised' after the Second World War, make it a land full of lessons for other indigenous peoples. The verve of Greenland Inuit people and culture, eg, their graphic art and pop music, and well-developed public institutions and infrastructure make the country's appeal infectious, improbably set against jagged cliffs, mountains, ice-scapes and black fjords which surround every community. Roads are out of the question, and the small bits of humanly habitable rock and a few south-western meadows (which meadows formed the Viking domain from 1000-1500 AD) are truly an 'ecological niche'. True to its Inuit culture, Greenland has played a vigorous and imaginative part in the international politics of indigenous peoples.

Questions worth looking at include the history of the state-run economy and its recent return to Greenlandic control; the large role of local administration; the problems of the innovative Inuitised justice and penal system; the problems of 'fit' between a highly elaborated European administrative structure and a traditional indigenous hunter-gatherer society; the indigenous campaigns against American military bases and uranium mining; and the development of national Greenlandic cultural institutions and policies.

Several chapters in the Handbook of North American Indians (sic) volume on Inuit deal with Greenland, the late Helge Kleivan's being the best discussion of post-war Greenland in print (Kleivan 1985). Danish embassies have a useful fact sheet in English on Greenland, free of

charge. Rasmussen (1987) and Jull (1979) both have brief surveys of home rule in context.

Iceland

This North Atlantic country was settled in about 870 AD by Norwegian Vikings and their Celtic wives and slaves. Incredibly it remained a republic in the Middle Ages until a combination of perfidy by the main power-brokers, machinations by the Church (which wanted kings, not anomalies like Icelandic democracy) and the ambition of Norwegian kings led to its incorporation at the end of the 13th century into Norway. Today the 250,000 Icelanders live by fishing and enjoy one of the world's highest living standards in what remains a strikingly unique society (Tomasson 1980). The recent reconstruction of the interplay of social, political, economic and environmental forces on a new land by Kirsten Hastrup is a work of great interest (Hastrup 1985), a story she has now continued from 1400 to 1800 (Hastrup 1990). The struggles of Icelanders for their language, customary laws, culture, self-government and the primacy of their renewable resource economy (resulting in the recent Cod Wars with European powers). The history and 'feel' of the early settlement period are best captured in primary sources like *Njal's Saga*, the anonymous book deservedly considered the greatest of sagas, and Gwyn Jones's survey which locates Iceland in the general westward Atlantic movement of the Norse (Magnusson and Palsson 1971; Jones 1986). As in any of the Nordic countries, contact with the authorities, who usually speak excellent English, and the welcoming of foreign interest in domestic social achievements, make study visits simple and rewarding.

The Faroes

With 45,000 people today, the Faroe Islands were one of the earliest Viking colonies overseas, settled by Norwegians around 800 AD. These rugged islands of the mid North Atlantic are all steep hillsides strewn

with sheep, sharp cliffs, and below, fishing villages wrapped around gentle coves. Very poor until recent times, the Faroese launched a battle for cultural survival and identity from the 19th century. Their Old Norse language, eroded to a rustic dialect, has been brought back to daily, official and literary dominance. Their struggles for self-government are classics of political will and ingenuity by a minority. Economy, transportation, financial institutions and government are no less success stories of Faroese self-reliance. In 1948 Denmark hastily introduced a home rule 'constitution' in order to pre-empt a Faroese declaration of independence. Although Faroese nationalism remains strong, the Right-Left political divide has checked the political momentum of independence.

In recent times the Faroese have entered North Atlantic fishing with a vengeance. Now reputed to be the most skillful, daring and successful operators on the seas, their country enjoys one of the highest living standards on earth. A total commitment to the most rigorous environmental protection standards, and their total dependence on a renewable resource economy, make their case a valuable one for study. They confound the usual critics who assure us that 'of course' such small populations, isolated locations and limited resources make self-government and autonomy 'impossible!'.

The Faroes remind us that the social, cultural and political struggles of indigenous northlands are by no means unique to 'exotic' non-European peoples like Torres Strait Islanders or Aborigines, but flow from universal socio-economic needs and from reaction to domination by outsiders.

An excellent short piece is by Jackson (1979). For Faroese self-determination, West (1972) provides an affecting account.

Shetland

An integral part of the United Kingdom (UK), Shetland has a distinct history relating to its early settlement by Norwegian Vikings. Its Viking language, lost only in recent centuries, its unique legal and cultural character, its renewable resource economy, its political patterns which make it similar to other indigenous communities, and its integral place within 'the Westminster system' of the UK, make it no less important a study than areas populated by non-European peoples. Each time Scottish autonomy or independence is placed on the British agenda, Shetland makes it clear that it wants no part of that, preferring a unique home rule link with London. Indeed, the poorer regions of both Ireland and the UK offer important clues to Australians about the underlying dynamics of the politics of northern frontiers. A special grouping of researchers in an international society for the study of 'marginal regions' looks at the whole North Atlantic and includes the Azores and Newfoundland-Labrador, as well as rural areas of the Nordic countries and the northern regions discussed in this paper.

Of particular interest are the history of oil development and its socio-political impacts, including a vigorous Shetland response; regional powers and administration; the development of planning functions in the oil era; the persistence and priority of the renewable resource economy; and the dynamics of Shetland regionalism.

The best introduction and political study is the Nevis Institute's *Shetland Report* (Nevis Institute 1978).

North Norway and Lapland

North Norway, a clearly defined region (*Nord Norge*) consisting of the counties of Nordland, Troms and Finnmark, is the 'oldest' northland in the OECD in terms of European-indigenous interaction. For at least a thousand years the outer coast near the rich fisheries off-shore has

attracted Norwegian visitors and settlers. This is also Lapland, or Samiland, or Sapmi. The Sami, or Lapps, are the original people of Finland, northern Sweden and Norway, and of the Kola Peninsula of the USSR. Expanding settlement, conflicting resource use and development, and the national political pretensions of the four countries which have carved up their homeland have compressed the Sami core areas and made others simply 'disappear'. Some of those 'disappeared' people are now re-asserting their Sami identity, as for instance in some coastal communities of North Norway. Some reindeer herding families maintain necessarily seasonal changes of lifestyle, but all Sami today enjoy the living standards of other North Norwegians — which is to say, they live very well. Norway's policy of equalising the public services and facilities available to its citizens no matter where they live has meant that fine roads and homes, and high quality medical, social, educational, recreational, transport and cultural services are available in even the most remote arctic fjords. It would be hard to find a finer monument to labour governments in Nordic Europe, a region of the world whose internationally admired character and shape has been given by 20th century labour/social democratic governments. Australia's political Labor in search of renewal might usefully examine this experience.

Despite the social equality ideals of modern times, Nordic Europe has been slower to accept the implications of socio-cultural diversity. Sami have had, and continue to have, a difficult time in establishing their rights as a distinct society. As is the case with all indigenous peoples, everywhere, Sami land and resource use has been seen as trivial or inferior by the settlers and their national governments, and the resulting conflict has been one of the two principal sources of indigenous political activism in recent times, the other being Sami cultural pride versus systemic discrimination. A major symbolic and substantive act has been the recent amendment of the Norwegian constitution which now reads, in section 110,

It is the responsibility of the authorities of the State to create conditions enabling the Sami people to preserve and develop its language, culture and way of life.

The official committee study which brought this amendment into being emphasises, on the basis of a UN covenant also signed by Australia, that preserving culture includes protecting the land, waters and other natural resources on which indigenous culture depends. Further studies will elaborate land, water and resource rights based on legal history. Another important innovation has been an elected Sami national parliament in Norway. This body has an official role in national policy-making and in advising the Norwegian Parliament, and is likely to acquire increasing influence over coming years. For the meantime it has the potential to be important for all North Norwegians, Sami or not, because of the breakdown of northern development and environment policies, and the lack of other authoritative regional institutions.

Unlike Norway and Denmark which have proven able to adjust their thinking to accommodate Greenland and Lapland, Sweden has had a particularly difficult time. Indeed, at this moment the social democratic tradition has led official Sweden in a circle with no good result (Korsmo 1991). Nevertheless, for observers of labour/social democratic government, this failure is interesting, and possibly instructive as a warning. Finland has had a few half-hearted reforms, but it appears that Norway and the Sami who live there must show their neighbours a lead.

The Sami movement is organised nationally but with strong ties across national frontiers in the north. There is a proposal for a new political framework which would unite the core Sami areas across national borders within the Nordic Council. With the relaxation of Soviet-Western tensions in international politics, Nordic capitals will presumably have lost one major excuse for rejecting such geo-political novelties within and between national segments of Lapland.

A study of the several ethno-environmental regions of Lapland is Nickul (1977). Three pieces on recent Sami politics and policy in Norway are by Brantenberg (1985), Jull (1988) and Brantenberg (1991). Korsmo (1991) provides a telling account of Sweden's inability to overcome its national dogmas to do the right thing.

Siberia

The Soviet north includes the arctic coasts of European Russia, Siberia and the region known as the Soviet Far East (the Pacific coast including the regions opposite Alaska) are often referred to simply as 'Siberia'. This northland lies entirely within the Russian Republic. Having first-hand experience of the poor conditions in Siberia from periods of exile, the Soviet leaders from 1917 were determined that the region develop its rich resources and improve its living conditions. Two indigenous policies contended for dominance: a sensitive respect for culture coupled with commitment to improve local conditions, versus a fierce modernisation and Russification. The latter won out in Stalin's day and recent Communist Party journals in the *glasnost* era have written clear critiques of present living conditions, cultural erosion and socio-political denial. The picture which now emerges is one like certain regions of the Australian, Canadian and American north. However, the post 1917 era has seen a range and depth of research on engineering, climate and other natural sciences, economics, culture and language which Western arctic specialists believe far outstrips their own. The new Soviet north is speaking up with great energy, with indigenous peoples and some political regions demanding a high degree of autonomy and self-government. The most critical problems today, and those which may hold most immediate interest for Australia researchers, are the cultural and political fightback of indigenous society; past environmental degradation and prospects in indigenous areas; food production and distribution (in which indigenous reindeer herds play an important part in some areas); radioactive pollution in seas and on land, especially in the Kola region adjoining Norway; past and present indigenous cultural

support policies; and indigenous-Russian relations at local and regional levels. The IWGIA Newsletter, Copenhagen, provides regular news in English of outback Russia, and Dahl *et al* (1990) provides the best view of recent indigenous politics. Useful background is the Kolarz (1954, 64-101) chapter on 'The Aborigines of the Soviet Far East', and Armstrong (1965) provides the history of European settlement.

International Networks

Australian indigenous peoples, government officials and researchers are missing out. The north circumpolar OECD countries discussed here, plus today's more open Soviet/Russian entity, have not only been developing their indigenous and northern region policies longer and working through policy debates which are only now building up in Australia, but they are accelerating the pace through international cooperation and comparative study. It is desirable for Australians to plug themselves into these networks which are increasingly important in setting global indigenous and environmental agendas. Australia has much to offer as well as much to gain from such forums.

The Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), Indigenous Survival International (ISI), the Nordic Sami Council and the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) are multilateral bodies. WCIP is known to Australian Aborigines and needs no discussion. The ICC includes Alaskan, Greenlandic, Canadian and now Soviet Inuit. It uses international coordination and publicity to promote regional and national interests of Inuit. ICC is now working with the new association of 26 tribal peoples in the Russian republic on common interests, especially the environment and an arctic culture which shares many features. ICC has been less interested to date in participating in international efforts for their own sake, although it has been an increasingly respected participant in world forums because of the excellence of Inuit work. The Nordic Sami Council is also a respected player, internationally, and plays an

important role in the Nordic Council of five nation-states on behalf of Sami.

ISI has concentrated on the problems posed for northern indigenous livelihoods by the world animal rights movement, and has linked Inuit, Indians and others in international campaigns, especially in Europe. It has fought hard, as has ICC, to show that the very cultures, societies and livelihoods of indigenous peoples are threatened by animal rights, none more than the Canadian Inuit whose economy has been destroyed along with the sealskin market.

The new circumpolar projects of environmental and other cooperation involving both USA and USSR, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland, and indigenous organisations, are the most exciting recent development in northern and outback internationalism. Despite the remoteness of such forums from Australia, they will have important consequences here because new styles and standards of international recognition of indigenous peoples and priorities are emerging through them.

Researchers, policy-makers and administrators in the north circumpolar countries, especially in social science and natural science fields, have been increasingly developing their own networks and promoting international conferences to compare notes such as the Inuit Studies, Marginal Regions, language, health and education conferences which occur regularly. There have been some excellent conferences organised from Copenhagen to discuss 'The Small Nations of the North' in constitutional practice and international law.

There is a great need for focussed conferences on socio-economic and politico-administrative issues of concern to indigenous peoples in Australia. It is time for practical discussion of *how* to develop workable autonomy and self-government, and how to relate to national governments.

In Australia the main task today is to bring hard-won world standards and precedents into Australian policy and programs. The three ways to do this are to press such information on governments; to raise public and indigenous awareness of more attractive policies overseas; and to inform critics overseas of Australian problems so that they can bring international pressure to bear on Australian governments.

A new article by Jull (1991b) addresses Australian aspects, as does Jull (1991c, 67-70). Dahl and others have a fine short piece on the new Soviet indigenous cooperation (Dahl *et al* 1990). The IWGIA Newsletter from the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs, Copenhagen, provides an ongoing account of national and international indigenous developments.

Conclusions

It would be possible to list an infinite number of interesting topics. There are three major areas which must be especially noted in conclusion, however.

1. The first is the relationship between national governments and indigenous peoples living in their ancient territories. Studies in the implications of change — or of various scenarios for change — may be useful. For instance, the Torres Strait Islands are already subject to an utterly unique geo-political régime being for some purposes an internationally created zone, but also a unique Queensland local-regional government and a federal ATSIC region. Some Islanders have mused on a different status more like Australia's island territories (Norfolk, Cocos and Christmas) or like the Cook Islands in New Zealand. It would be useful to examine various possibilities, as the Nevis Institute did so well for Shetland.

Sometimes governments move quickly from complaining that indigenous people are 'apathetic' to anger that they are newly asserting themselves in terms uncomfortable to the powers that be. Both attitudes are products of government misunderstanding. As Denmark has shown in respect of Greenland, perhaps with the salutary experience of the Faroes in the 1940s in mind, national governments may best respond positively and generously. Australia and Canada have been as much trapped by their traditions of federalism as liberated by the concept of different tiers of authority inherent in federalism. That is, the ethno-nationalism of northern regions and indigenous communities may require unique responses and new structures rather than being stuffed into pre-existing moulds designed for other peoples, places and times. To what extent are Western forms like the American corporation or Danish-designed Greenland administration really Trojan horses destabilising indigenous peoples in the Alaska claims settlement and Greenland home rule? Inuit and their staff designing Nunavut have been aware of this question even if not so certain of all the answers.

2. Ecologically sustainable development, or ESD as it is commonly called, is nowhere more practical than in 'first world' northern and indigenous hinterlands. There the lack of industrial development becomes an asset. At the same time, people in these areas are desperately looking for viable political and socio-economic futures. There is no better way that national governments could support ESD as national policy than by supporting regional ESD strategies for regions and areas like Torres Strait. ESD implies and requires a range of policy and institutional responses in a variety of subject areas — and it requires that we think of regions as a whole. It could be the most useful way to approach autonomy and self-government today, and one which corresponds closely to the environment-focussed outlooks of Islanders and Aborigines. (Smith [1990] on sustainable development strategies in northern regions is particularly helpful.)

One of the means by which governments exert control over northern regions and peoples, often unwittingly, is by denying the integrity of a social or cultural region in their laws and programs. Although Inuit occupy one third of Canada as an absolute majority of the population, they have been divided among election and administrative districts so that until very recently they have had no way to exert or express regional identity. Land claims regions have given them a powerful tool to achieve unity and strength together. Today in Australia we see centrally devised government social programs which are supposed to serve the whole country, but without local and regional indigenous self-governing entities, indigenous society remains powerless and programs are little help. The building blocks of social and economic well-being are local and regional identity, autonomy and self-government.

An important sub-topic is the role of traditional knowledge and indigenous peoples in the management of eco-systems and living resources. An exciting literature is emerging overseas on these matters, and one is especially directed to Feit (1988) and Berkes, George and Preston (1991) for introductions. A book of case studies is Freeman and Carbyn (1988). The particular problem posed by the conservation of biodiversity is addressed pointedly in a new monograph by Gray (1991).

3. One of the most promising fields of study and writing today is the marrying of social process, political history, economic activity, policy and environmental change as exemplified by Cronon's study of Indians and British colonists in 17th and 18th century North American New England and by Kirsten Hastrup's surveys of Iceland from 9th century to 13th, and 15th through 18th (Cronon 1983; Hastrup 1985, 1990). These books are classics if only because of their exquisite writing and wisdom. A major series of studies on North Norway — being written in Norwegian with no thought of English translations, alas — involves social scientists at the University of Tromsø. These may be the sort of books most desirable in further writing on the past, present and future of northern regions (and other hinterlands) and indigenous societies. It

would be useful for us to understand our own cultural and historical experience, especially now that we are in danger of reliving some of its negative features in North Australia and in the northern hemisphere northlands. To unravel what really happened we should not only understand today's cultures and societies more fully but also understand more about the probable impact of decisions to be taken now and in the future.

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