What Happens Next?
Exploring Connections between Repatriation, Restorative Justice, and Reconciliation in Canada

by

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Abstract

The collection and use of Indigenous ancestors and their belongings for research and display in museums has contributed to losses of cultural patrimony and to the intergenerational trauma reverberating from Indigenous peoples' experiences of colonialism. Repatriation movements, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and related Indigenous rights activism have begun to transform heritage management practices. As of 2022, in Canada and elsewhere, legislation and national policy require heritage practitioners to engage with Indigenous descendant communities and to repatriate ancestral human remains and other cultural materials.

The return of ancestors and cultural materials can remediate traumatic histories, reconnect individuals with culture and community, and serve as a form of restorative justice. However, involvement in repatriation work may also carry unanticipated challenges, including struggles with unclear policies and procedures, timelines that extend for years and decades rather than weeks and months, and high financial and spiritual burdens for descendants. Many museums also perpetuate colonial dynamics by clinging to decision-making authorities and otherwise resisting change to accommodate Indigenous values, interests, and preferences.

The three case studies presented here examine connections among repatriation, restorative justice, and reconciliation: 1) The return of a Tłı̨chǫ caribou skin lodge; 2) The reproduction of traditional Gwich'in clothing; and 3) The repatriation of ancestral human remains and other-than-human ancestors to Bkejwanong (Walpole Island First Nation). Each case scrutinizes what happened after repatriation was "completed" and identifies the effects that repatriation/rematriation processes and outcomes can and do have on Indigenous descendant communities. The cases also provide contexts for discussion of the roles that repatriation should play in ongoing reconciliation efforts here in Canada. Repatriation has the potential to be much more than a process of return. Conducted in good faith, with open minds and hearts, it can bring benefits to receiving communities across social, cultural, political, economic, and spiritual dimensions.

Keywords: repatriation; heritage; restorative justice; reconciliation; Canada; ethical practice

For those ancestors still waiting; for those descendants still searching.

For my own ancestors, who have walked with me through this.

For Megan, who was my biggest supporter.

And for myself; a reminder that I can always do hard things,
no matter how long it takes.

Right the bells that still can ring

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack, a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in.

—Leonard Cohen, "Anthem"

Words are events, they do things, change things. They transform both speaker and hearer; they feed energy back and forth and amplify it. They feel understanding or emotion back and forth and amplify it.

–Ursula K. LeGuin

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Whatever comes will come, and I hope I make you all proud when it does.

To everyone above and everyone else,

Masì | Mahsi' choo | Miigwech | Thank You

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Acronyms

AAIA	Association on American Indian Affairs
AFN	Assembly of First Nations
BCMA	British Columbia Museums Association
CAA	Canadian Archaeological Association
CMA	Canadian Museums Association
CMH	Canadian Museum of History
EMRIP	Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
FNSCORA	First Nations Sacred and Ceremonial Object Repatriation Act
GCLCA	Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement
GSA	Gwich'in Settlement Area
GSCI	Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute
GSR	Gwich'in Settlement Region
GTC	Gwich'in Tribal Council
HBC	Hudson's Bay Company
MAP	Museums Assistance Program
MBG	Matthaei Botanical Gardens (University of Michigan)
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NGC	National Gallery of Canada
NWT	Northwest Territories
ON	Ontario
PWNHC	Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre
RBCM	Royal BC Museum
RCAP	Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
ROM	Royal Ontario Museum
SFU	Simon Fraser University
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
TK	Traditional Knowledge
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
UMMAA	University of Michigan Museum of Anthropological Archaeology
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
WIFN	Walpole Island First Nation

Disclaimer

**This dissertation includes discussion on the repatriation of ancestral human remains, including descriptions of their excavation and collection by universities.

Preface: A Note on Grief

On October 22, 2019, while I was undertaking fieldwork with Walpole Island First Nation in Ontario, my best friend of 15+ years unexpectedly died. Megan was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer in 2018 and began treatment shortly thereafter. She was cleared after a double mastectomy in early 2019, then found a brain tumor in August, underwent surgery in October, and died after the cancer quickly spread. The speed at which she was here and then was not, was astonishing and terrifying. She had been my confidant, travel companion, and pseudo-sister for 15 years. I couldn't understand how I could keep going when she couldn't.

Graduate school, and particularly pursuing a Ph.D., is notoriously grueling. There are often long stretches of frustrating isolation, compounded at times by too-flexible schedules, exhaustion, and the perils that come with impostor syndrome. Because of this, doctoral students experience depression and anxiety at increased rates; add deep, personal grief to the mix and you're left with a recipe for dropping out.[1]

When Megan died, I followed a personal pattern and pushed my feelings aside. My comprehensive exams were set a month later and I knew she would haunt me if I delayed them. So, I powered through and finally finished. But what I didn't know at that time was that grief doesn't just disappear when you ignore it. While I had lost other important people, including my grandmother in 2016, I had not yet experienced the loss of someone who was so inherently woven into my life. Megan was such an important part of my identity that her death felt like a break in my timeline: demarcating a time "before" and a time "after."

In early 2020, I began transcribing interviews and conversations that I had had "before." Every single one reminded me that I was now in the "after." Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The world shut down. Research-wise, I was fortunate; I had finished most of my data collection before travel restrictions.[2] What was a roadblock for others was an opportunity for me to write without a lot of distraction. But when grief lurks in the shadows, "distractions" like exhaustion and procrastination come to the fore.

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[1] See recent discussions in Nature https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03489-1 and https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01751-z.

[2] Many other students were more deeply impacted by the pandemic; some have even had to adjust their entire project or have chosen to leave the program completely.

Repatriation is emotional work. It demands that practitioners and community workers confront difficult pasts and the way they have impacted the present with honesty. Researching and writing on these issues has put me in close contact with peoples' grief, anger, awe, joy, and hope. It can be both exhausting and exhilarating to encounter such deep emotion. Listening to my research conversations from the "before" and "after," somehow brought me back to a focus on community. The stories partners had shared with me in interviews were about connection, relationships, and listening and living with an open heart. They opened a path to healing and this grief offered me a different kind of bridge into partner communities experiences. I discerned emotional depths in interviews that I had not perceived in person. Grief and recovery thus became integral facets of my interpretive lens.

I don't mean to say that grief is an opportunity—I would not wish such suffering on anyone. But everyone faces it, eventually. The death of my best friend and others close to me, including my grandmother, have had deep and lasting impacts on my life. The grief that resulted from these deaths remains heavy. The emotional scars have influenced every step of my journey since. This included creating practical issues like delaying my fieldwork plans or adding emotional exhaustion to the list of challenges to overcome while researching and writing during a global pandemic. It has also meant shifting my focus to more emotional aspects of people's experiences. Eventually, I came to understand repatriation in a different way.

Repatriation is both a community effort and a deeply personal experience. For those doing the work, it can drag out complicated emotions like anger, fear, and sadness, that no one wants to fully acknowledge. I have spent the last ten years learning about repatriation, both from institutional perspectives and from those doing the work in their communities. It has been the ultimate privilege to be invited into peoples' homes and communities, to hear their stories and learn about why they have taken the paths they're on. This work has changed me; it has changed the way I think about human relationships, the past, and how I will approach the future. It has shown me that approaching repatriation with an open heart and learning to feel the joy alongside the sadness is essential.

In many ways, I've come to understand that this is grief work too.

Chapter 1.

Repatriation and Repatriation Work

Centuries of collecting Indigenous ancestral remains, cultural belongings, secret/sacred materials, and other heritage activities reflecting the enterprise of colonialism have left deep and lasting emotional, spiritual, and physical impacts on Indigenous peoples around the world.[3] Disputes over these materials have, in many cases, contributed to cultural trauma and exacerbated intercultural tensions (Simpson 2009; Thornton 2002, 2020). Repatriation—the return of ancestors and/or cultural belongings—offers a unique opportunity to acknowledge colonial histories and work towards reconciliation.

Large-scale social movements advocating repatriation have been driven by Indigenous rights activism around the world in the last 50 years. These have had a significant impact on heritage management practices, including archaeology and other disciplines (Killion 2008; McKeown 2020; Pardoe 2013; Turnbull 2017). In many countries, legislation and national policy now require heritage practitioners to work with Indigenous descendant communities to repatriate ancestral human remains and other important heritage materials.[4] This has meant that repatriation is now an important part of heritage management practices, with an extensive and growing scholarly literature.[5]

The literature on repatriation has generally focused on the rise and impact of repatriation movements on settler heritage systems; institutional experiences and

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[3] I recognize that "Indigenous" as a descriptive term may not be appropriate in all contexts (see Hillerdal et al. 2017). Here, I use it to refer to those groups who continue to negotiate their sovereignty and self-determination in colonial, settler, postcolonial, and neocolonial contexts (following Bruchac 2020; see also Weeber 2020). "Indigenous peoples" in what is now Canada refers to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

[4] I refer to Indigenous descendant communities throughout this dissertation; however, heritage practitioners often work with a variety of descendant and/or local communities. Other descendant communities, such as African American groups in the United States have also begun to advocate for better protections and repatriation (see Dunnavant et al. 2021; Flewellen et al. 2021).

[5] For examples, see Atalay 2019; Bell and Napoleon 2008; Bell and Paterson 2009; Bruchac 2010, 2018; Colwell 2017, 2019; Conaty 2015; Fforde 2004; Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull 2002; Fforde, McKeown, and Keeler 2020; Meloche et al. 2021a; Gunderson et al. 2019; Killion 2008; McKeown 2012; Turnbull and Pickering 2010; Watkins 2017.

practices; the effects of repatriation on research practices; and individual case studies of repatriation. These remain important topics, especially given the ongoing and evolving nature of repatriation movements today (e.g., in South Africa [Black and McCavitt 2021] and Japan [Okada 2021]), and the limited coverage of some repatriation contexts in international discussions (i.e., Canada[6]). In those countries where repatriation has long been in place, such as Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand,[7] Canada, and the United States, scholarly focus has shifted to also consider the ways that repatriation processes and outcomes can impact those involved, with recent exploration of the potential for "healing" (Atalay 2019; Colwell 2019; Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020; Wergin 2021). However, the request and return process (which I term *repatriation work*), already a highly emotional undertaking, may perpetuate an existing colonial relationship and place significant strain on descendants (Colwell-Chanthaponh 2013).

My dissertation addresses the seldom-asked question, "what happens *after* repatriation?" In asking this, my aim is to explore the ways that repatriation processes and outcomes affect Indigenous descendant communities, and more generally, the role(s) that repatriation can (and should) play in ongoing reconciliation efforts here in Canada. To do this, I partnered with three Indigenous communities that have successfully undertaken repatriation requests: the Tłįchǫ and the Gwich'in in the Northwest Territories (NWT), and Walpole Island First Nation in Ontario (ON).[8] My research with these communities has demonstrated that repatriation is much more than a process of return. It can have diverse and lasting impacts on receiving communities that extend far beyond the returned ancestors or heritage materials.

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[6] Discussion on repatriation in Canada was notably missing from Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull's 2002 survey of global repatriation issues. This is beginning to change with inclusions in recent edited volumes (i.e., Fforde, McKeown, and Keeler 2020; Meloche et al. 2021a).

[7] I use "Aotearoa/New Zealand" throughout (following other scholars e.g., Aranui 2018, 2020; Aranui and Mamaku 2021; Fforde, McKeown, et al. 2021). In this, I recognize the growing movement to recognize Māori place names, though these discussions are not without contention (e.g., Breen et al. 2021).

[8] Here and throughout, I use "the Tłįchǫ" and "the Gwich'in" to refer to those Nations, which include several First Nations (as legally defined by the Government of Canada) within their membership. For this project, I worked with the overarching self-governing bodies in each Nation (i.e., The Tłįchǫ Government and the Gwich'in Tribal Council). Similarly, Walpole Island First Nation is a singular self-governing community. In my research, I take my cue from the communities themselves and use local identifying terminology wherever possible.

Defining "Repatriation" and "Repatriation Work"

The word "repatriation" derives from the Latin *repatriatus* ("to go home again"). It is often defined as the act of restoring or returning someone to their own country; historically referring to those individuals who have been dislocated by war or other conflicts (Merriam-Webster n.d. as cited in Matthews 2016:107). One of the earliest known uses of the term within a heritage context was by Canadian government officials seeking to return a collection of Indigenous material to Canada in the 1970s (Feest 1995:34, as cited in Matthews 2016:158; see Greenfield 1989:208–210). Shortly afterward, "repatriation" was more widely adopted in reference to the return of Indigenous human remains and cultural materials from museums and other cultural institutions, including universities and government repositories (Fine-Dare 2002:90–91; Matthews 2016:158). In her work examining the repatriation of Anishinaabe cultural materials, anthropologist Maureen Matthews notes that the use of the term to describe the return of human skeletal remains and cultural materials is significant, since it can emphasize the "personhood" of returned ancestors and belongings (2016:107; also see Matthews 2014).[9]

Today, repatriation most commonly describes the socio-legal process of returning ancestral human remains, associated burial materials, secret/sacred belongings, and other heritage materials to descendant communities.[10] This can encompass (a) the legal transfer of title or ownership over such materials where appropriate; (b) the physical return of requested materials (permanently or on long-term loan); (c) the virtual sharing and/or return of heritage and archival or ethnographic information associated with materials or collections; and/or (d) some combination of these (Bell 2008a; Gray 2019; Kramer 2004; Lancefield 2019). While most often associated with Indigenous peoples, repatriation has also been used to describe and advocate for the return of important cultural heritage to other groups as well (e.g., repatriating the Parthenon Marbles to Greece [Fouseki 2014]). In this context, it has been used alongside and interchangeably

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[9] I use "belongings" to refer to Indigenous cultural objects and/or artifacts in heritage institutions. In this, I follow a general shift in terminology aimed at reducing the use of objectifying language (see Bell and Hill 2021; Brownlee 1993; Schaepe et al. 2017).

[10] There has been some discussion on whether "repatriation" is the most appropriate term to describe this work. Terms like "rematriation" have also been used in certain cases. I use "repatriation" throughout this dissertation because it is ingrained in the current discourse on such issues. However, I also use "rematriation" to describe a specific example involving the return of corn-seed-ancestors, following local conventions.

with "restitution," which more often describes the return of art objects (or appropriate financial compensation) to source communities, typically in European museological contexts (e.g., art pieces looted by Nazi troops during World War II or calls to return the Benin Bronzes to Nigeria [see Barkan and Bush 2002; Feest 1995; Tythacott and Arvanitis 2014]).

Repatriation can be required by legislation and/or policy (e.g., the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act [NAGPRA] in the United States) or undertaken voluntarily through extra-legal negotiations between holding institutions and claimant communities (Ewing 2011:3). For example, international repatriation requests are often negotiated, requiring complex discussions that involve descendant communities, holding institutions, and, sometimes, state representatives. Repatriation procedures frequently require claimant groups to prove their connections to requested materials (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2013). This can be fraught with issues (e.g., determining the identity of ancestral remains without extensive provenance information [Fforde, McKeown, et al. 2021]), and places the burden of proof on descendant communities. Such burdens become particularly problematic where guidelines are unclear or non-existent, thus perpetuating colonial power inequities, complicating repatriation processes, and delaying returns.

Types of Repatriation

There are three main types of repatriation: physical, visual, and virtual. Physical repatriation is the best-known, involving the physical return of requested materials to a descendant community. Since ancestral remains and associated burial items have been (and continue to be) a primary focus for many Indigenous communities involved in repatriation work, they are most often physically returned. In fact, the realization of the extent to which their ancestors had been collected by colonial institutions has often motivated the development of community organizations that explicitly focus on repatriation and related issues (e.g., the Haida Repatriation Committee [Krmpotich 2014]; the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre [Carter et al. 2020]). However, the return of secret/sacred and ceremonial objects (e.g., Blackfoot sacred bundles [Conaty 2008; 2015b]), other-than-human or transformed ancestors (e.g., Stone T'xwelátse [Schaepe 2007]), and other cultural belongings or objects of cultural

patrimony (e.g., Ghost Dance Shirts [Curtis 2014; Peers 2013]) have also been a priority for many groups.[11]

More recently, repatriation has also been used to describe access to heritage materials in museums or other institutions, including cultural belongings and any information associated with early anthropological fieldwork and museum collections (e.g., Gunderson et al. 2019; Perullo 2019; Reed 2019). Ann Fienup-Riordan (1999:340; 2005) has called this "visual repatriation"—where objects that were "originally collected to preserve a culture believed to be dying were temporarily reclaimed by the descendants of their makers to be used to tell a story of original spirituality and survival." Essentially, in this form of repatriation, objects are loaned or transferred to local institutions for display and interaction. She notes that in her travels with Yupik Elders (Alaska) to visit museum collections around the world, their primary goal was not to reclaim the objects themselves, but to "re-own the knowledge and experiences that the objects embodied" (1998:56). This is similar to the Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project (examined in more detail in Chapter 5), wherein the materials that were repatriated to descendant communities were the historical, ethnographic, and archival information about the use, construction, and context of museum objects, rather than the objects themselves.

Increasing access to museum and research collections is an essential part of ensuring equitable and inclusive representation. Similarly, "virtual repatriation" has been used to describe the sharing of digital information about cultural belongings with descendant communities. Several recent projects have used this approach. For instance, the *Inuvialuit Living History* project has facilitated digital access to the MacFarlane collection (in the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.) for Inuvialuit community members living in the Western arctic (Hennessy et al. 2013; Inuvialuit Living History n.d.; Lyons 2013). Their website includes high resolution images of the items alongside information from the museum's records, community interpretations, and

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[11] Objects of cultural patrimony are those which are of "central cultural importance" to descendant communities (Bernstein 2010:268). It is important to note that, while they are often defined separately from sacred objects in most repatriation policy/legislation, in practice, it can be difficult to clearly differentiate the two. For example, for the Zuni people, the *Ahayu:da* (wooden representations of their war gods) are sacred, animate beings with ongoing importance to Zuni lifeways and culture. When they are not properly honoured through ceremony and ritual destruction, they can bring adverse impacts onto Zuni communities (Colwell 2014:13–15).

available historical information.[12] Similarly, the Sámi Museum Siida in Finland provides 3-D replications and images of traditional belongings to local craftmakers in the hopes that they will revive traditional practices or styles (Magnani et al. 2018). In Australia, the *Return of Cultural Heritage* project is engaging with overseas institutions to return ephemeral materials like ethnographic information and recordings, "for the purpose of cultural renewal, revival, support and maintenance" (AIATSIS n.d., 2020).

Importantly, the use of "repatriation" to describe collaborative initiatives that only facilitate access (i.e., visual or virtual types) has been criticized because ownership and control over such materials ultimately remains with the holding institution (Bell et al. 2013:196; Boast and Enote 2013:109–110). Robin R.R. Gray (2019) problematizes this idea in relation to the return of recorded Ts'msyen songs and stories, which were discovered as part of a collection at Columbia University. While the Ts'msyen can now access the recordings, the master copies remain property of the university. This has prompted discussions around their intellectual property rights to this intangible heritage. Their complex conversations with the university around ownership and what repatriation should actually entail (i.e., full community control over their use, access, and dissemination [Gray 2019:734–735]) demonstrates the inherent difficulties in equating access with repatriation. However, both virtual and visual repatriation can quickly contribute to cultural reclamation efforts, making them a valuable step for many Indigenous communities.

Repatriation Work

I define "repatriation work" as the tasks and responsibilities that are part of repatriation. Given that repatriation necessarily involves both holding institutions (i.e., museums, universities, government agencies) and claimant communities (i.e., descendant communities), there are often different types of work involved. Thus, while I often use "repatriation work" as a catch-all term in later discussions, here I differentiate between the activities undertaken by holding institutions and the community-based work.

What Anishinaabe scholar Sonya Atalay (2019:81–82) has termed the "intellectual work" of repatriation can encompass everything from collections management and research, to submitting repatriation requests; from conducting internal institutional

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[12] See http://www.inuvialuitlivinghistory.ca/collection.

inventories and research, to negotiating stewardship or research agreements; and from coordinating the logistics of return, to participating in the handover event. Much of this labour is undertaken by representatives of the holding institution (i.e., museum directors, collections managers) and/or claimant organization or communities (i.e., community-based cultural workers, political leaders). Each step is a significant bureaucratic ritual that requires different levels of emotional and physical involvement from both requesting communities and holding institutions (Peers 2017).

In addition to institutional procedures, repatriation work also encompasses cultural and community-based research to prove cultural affiliation and ensure that returning ancestors and/or belongings are appropriately received. This can include oral history research; interviews with Elders and/or knowledge holders; community meetings to both notify and consult; finding or constructing appropriate spaces to house returned materials; planning reception and/or reburial events; acquiring funds to support repatriation efforts; and gathering or soliciting necessary ceremonial materials (e.g., funerary boxes, traditional medicines for ceremony).

Ultimately, repatriation in practice is a complex undertaking that necessarily varies across jurisdictions, communities, and in relation to requested materials. While many groups have had success in their repatriation efforts, others have not—unclear procedures, limited funding and resources, poor collection provenance, and little to no recourse for inaction have meant that repatriation continues to be a challenging, time- and resource-intensive process to undertake.[13] Furthermore, while repatriation discussions and institutional procedures have focused (almost exclusively) on ancestral remains and secret/sacred cultural belongings, there is need for continued discussion around the return of other heritage (e.g., seeds, songs, ethnographic records) from museum and research collections.

Indigenous Rights to Repatriation

George Nicholas (2017a:200) defines heritage as including "the objects, places, knowledge, customs, practices, plants, stories, songs, and designs of earlier generations

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[13] Additionally, some Indigenous descendant communities may not want to undertake repatriation, for any number of reasons (e.g., a shift in religious beliefs [Akerman 2010]), or it may be delayed due to an absence of suitable resting places or interest in pursuing research prior to return (see examples in Meloche et al. 2021a).

that define or contribute to a person's or group's identity, history, worldview, and well-being." He goes on to note that it is "complex, culturally variable, and highly nuanced." Access to heritage has important implications for identity construction at both individual and community levels (Blake 2011:204–207; see also Baird 2014).

National and international heritage protections (i.e., policy, legislation, international accords) recognize the value of heritage to peoples around the world. However, rights to heritage have not always been equitable. Indigenous peoples have had very little control over their heritage given that colonizing powers often collected and deposited their ancestors, cultural belongings, and other heritage into colonial museums and universities (Blake 2011; Nicholas 2017a:200). Indigenous rights to control and reclaim collected materials have often been denied by governments or holding institutions, prompting recourse and activism around the world.

The heritage rights of Indigenous peoples have been increasingly recognized in recent decades. In 2007, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples acknowledged their right to "maintain, protect, and develop" their cultures (Article 11.1). UNDRIP has also specifically recognized Indigenous rights to repatriation, noting in Article 12 that they have the right

> to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and **the right to the repatriation of their human remains** (Article 12.1, emphasis added).

Furthermore, Article 31.1-2 recognizes Indigenous rights

> to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

In each case, UNDRIP also recognizes the *responsibilities* of nation-states to "provide redress through effective mechanisms" (Article 11.2), "enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession" (Article 12.2), and "take effective measures to recognize and protect" these rights (Article 31.2).

Recognition of these rights has led to important changes in heritage policies and institutional practice in recent years, especially as relates to repatriation. However, there has also been continued resistance to implementing a rights-based approach to repatriation in practice. In 2020, the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) reported that Indigenous peoples continue to face many challenges in their efforts to repatriate ancestors and cultural belongings, from access issues to institutional resistance and legal impediments (2020:4). In response, EMRIP continues to advocate for a human-rights based framework, as guided by UNDRIP (2020:3; UBC 2020).

In Canada, a case-by-case approach to repatriation has been adopted by many heritage institutions, largely structured by a moral and ethical expectation rather than any legal requirement (Bell 2008; Cybulski 2011; Hanna 2003, 2005; Young 2010, 2016). The development of individual policies (e.g., Canadian Museum of History Repatriation Policy 2001) is guided by a large body of provincial, national, and international frameworks, including: the Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples (AFN-CMA 1992), the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP 1996), and the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC 2015a).

While many Canadian institutions have acknowledged Indigenous interests and claims to their collections, repatriation practice is hindered by a lack of federal support and the perpetuation of colonial relationships between holding institutions and descendant communities. In June 2021, the Government of Canada enacted Bill C-15, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.[14] The Department of Canadian Heritage's *Canadian Heritage Portfolio* (2021), includes reference to ongoing work regarding a national repatriation framework as part of the Government of Canada's efforts to implement the UNDRIP Act.[15] While these are important steps forward, it is unclear how federal or provincial implementation of UNDRIP will impact repatriation practice.[16] My research demonstrates that repatriation can play an important role in working towards Canada's reconciliation goals.

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[14] https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/index.html

[15] See https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/corporate/transparency/open-government/transition-2021-canadian-heritage.html.

[16] The B.C. Provincial Government passed the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* in 2019. It aims to align B.C. laws with UNDRIP (see

The "R" Words: Repatriation, Restorative Justice, and Reconciliation

Indigenous scholars and others have linked the collection of ancestral remains, cultural materials, and other heritage to the intergenerational traumas of colonial expansion and settlement (Simkin 2020; Thornton 2002, 2020b; Turnbull 2020).[17] Their removal can also be spiritually dangerous, with potential negative repercussions both for descendant communities and those who excavate or work with them (Colwell 2014; Robbins and Kuwanwisiwma 2017:note 10; Welch and Ferguson 2007:193). Psychological research has also demonstrated that cultural discontinuity can contribute to increased rates of suicide or addiction, whereas collective work to reclaim and protect cultural continuity can lead to increased health and well-being (Chandler and Lalonde 1998:191 cited in Simpson 2009:123).

A growing international body of literature examines repatriation as a practice that can help address these issues, linking it to ideas of restorative justice and healing.[18] The concept of restorative justice is rooted in criminological discussions on issues within criminal justice systems, particularly in western societies (Zehr and Gohar 2003:11). In these contexts, restorative justice is "a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm cause or revealed by criminal behaviour," through cooperative and inclusive methods (Van Ness and Strong 2015:44). It has been an underlying framework for several truth and reconciliation commissions that have been undertaken in recent years. Describing the South African commission, Desmond Tutu wrote that a restorative approach to justice seeks "the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator" (1999:54, cited in Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2007:26). These aims are similar

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https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/indigenous-people/new-relationship/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples).

[17] I use "'R' Words" in the title of this section to recall the seminal paper on repatriation by Gloria Cranmer-Webster (1988), which promoted this work in the face of a lot of resistance from heritage practitioners.

[18] See Aranui 2018, 2021; Atalay 2019; Bruchac 2010, 2021; Collison and Krmpotich 2020; Colwell 2017, 2019; Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2007; Conaty 2015; Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020; Halealoha Ayau 2020; Hemming and Wilson 2010; Hemming et al. 2020; Krmpotich 2014; Simkin 2020; Simpson 2009; Thornton 2002, 2020; Wergin 2021; Western Apache NAGPRA Working Group 2020.

to those of Indigenous groups seeking the return of ancestral remains and cultural belongings: to address and rectify the injustice of their collection and removal.

Indigenous scholars and community-based practitioners are driving these theoretical discussions. Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh (2007:34, 2019) and others (e.g., Simpson 2009) have argued that repatriation can be a platform for restorative justice to play out. Abenaki scholar Margaret Bruchac (2010, 2021) has argued that a restorative approach to repatriation can help to uncover the obscured histories of collections (i.e., how they were collected, by whom, how they came to be curated, etc.). This can help the parties involved to confront past injustices and bring closure to particularly difficult episodes (e.g., the Sand Creek Massacre [Colwell 2017]). Cherokee scholar Russell Thornton has argued that such closure can help to alleviate or heal cultural traumas associated with such events (2002:21; 2020:785–786).

Researchers in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand have also been exploring these themes. Australian anthropologist Cressida Fforde and colleagues have examined the connections between repatriation, dignity, reconciliation, and healing (Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020). They argue that repatriation allows Indigenous communities to bear witness to the past and process associated emotions while also facilitating cultural transmission and reconnection. Likewise, Māori scholar Amber Aranui (2018, 2020a) has identified the emotional connections Māori have to their ancestors, and how the lingering impacts of their collection for scientific research still affect Māori communities today. These aspects of repatriation demonstrate that it is highly impactful work.

In Canada, repatriation is increasingly connected to narratives on reconciliation. For example, Jodi Simkin, the Director of Cultural Affairs and Heritage for the Klahoose First Nation in British Columbia, has argued that

> Our cultural institutions should reflect the tone and tenor of our national identity and, as Canadians, we have a shared responsibility to ensure those nations wishing to reunite with their ancestors and treasures have the tools, capacity, and funding to do so, with dignity and respect. We are strong enough to withstand the scrutiny of a history in which we were not kind to one another—we ought to be brave enough now to fix it. (2020:14).

Reconciliation, which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has defined as "establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal

and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country," requires awareness, acknowledgement, atonement, and action (2015b:113). These elements are key parts of repatriation, making it an important part of the active and ongoing work of reconciliation movements here in Canada.

Repatriation can be all-encompassing. It often requires emotional investment to see the work through to the end; mental fortitude to confront potentially difficult histories and/or people; frequent social interactions in and outside of one's community; physical participation (i.e., travelling to institutions, reproducing traditional belongings, preparing ancestors for reburial, getting out on the land); and an awareness of and engagement with the important spiritual dimensions at play. Colwell's work (2012, 2017, 2019) has emphasized that the process of repatriation is the impactful part. Atalay (2019:81) and others (e.g., Peers 2013) extend this by arguing that it is the actual "doing" of repatriation work that can elicit healing. She describes an "embodied practice" which connects the social, cultural, physical, and intellectual work of repatriation with emotional and spiritual engagement. Atalay argues that it is this intersection that can lead to "healing" among practitioners, both from receiving communities and holding institutions.[19] Repatriation work, then, can be an essential tool for restorative justices and reconciliation efforts.

What Happens Next?

This study is situated within these ongoing discussions. My overarching research question is *What happens after a repatriation is "completed"?* My goal in addressing this question has been to better understand how recipient Indigenous communities are affected by repatriation processes and outcomes. This investigation has been grounded in discussions on repatriation as healing, which also link it to restorative justice and reconciliation. In pursuit of my research goals, I established four objectives:

1. To understand how the meaning and processes of repatriation change across different jurisdictions;

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[19] Importantly, while Western paradigms often approach health from a compartmentalized perspective (i.e., physical health as separate from mental health), Indigenous understandings are often more holistic. Thus, physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social health are intertwined, influencing and impacted by one another (Atalay 2019:81–82; Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020). With this in mind, I understand "healing" to be an "active and complex socio-political process" to resolve harm or injury, one that is ongoing, holistic, and fluid (Colwell 2019:91).

2. To identify the social, cultural, economic, and political effects that repatriation may have on recipient Indigenous communities;
3. To assess how and why identified effects may be similar or different among and within partner communities; and
4. To note any community-identified factors that contributed to satisfying repatriation processes and results.

To address these, I undertook a comparative case study approach, working with the Tłįchǫ (NWT), the Gwich'in (NWT), and Walpole Island First Nation (Ontario) to explore their experiences with repatriation. Table 1 identifies each community, details on the repatriation projects, and the institutions involved.

Table 1.1. Partner communities and repatriation projects.

Communities	Repatriation Emphasis	Date	Institutions
Tłįchǫ	Caribou skin lodge repatriation	1997	University of Iowa's Museum of Natural History Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre
Gwich'in	Skills and knowledge around traditional-style caribou skin clothing	2000–2003	The Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre Canadian Museum of History
Walpole Island First Nation	Ancestral human remains	2014	Walpole Island Heritage Centre University of Windsor University of Western Ontario

Methods and Fieldwork

My first case study examined the repatriation of a caribou skin lodge covering to the Tłįchǫ Nation in the Northwest Territories. The lodge was purchased by explorer Frank Russell in 1893. It was returned from the University of Iowa's Museum of Natural History, where it was housed, in a voluntary repatriation in 1997 and is now stewarded at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC) in Yellowknife. I travelled to Yellowknife and the Tłįchǫ community of Behchokǫ̀ in November 2018 and again in June 2019. While there, I reviewed archival materials on the repatriation at the PWNHC, participated in an educational event that featured the 1898 lodge and its history. I interviewed cultural workers involved in the repatriation project.

Next, I worked with the Gwich'in Tribal Council's Department of Culture & Heritage in 2019 to learn about the Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project (2000–2003). This project was a collaboration between the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute (now Department of Culture & Heritage), the PWNHC, and the Canadian Museum of History (CMH). It facilitated the production of five Gwich'in caribou skin outfits using traditional methods and materials, based on a traditional men's summer outfit from the CMH's collections. While this project did not physically return the original outfit, it facilitated the repatriation and use of Gwich'in knowledge and skills necessary to make these traditional garments again.

My third and final case study examined the 2014 repatriation and reburial of ancestral human remains at Bkejwanong, in partnership with Walpole Island First Nation. These ancestors were returned from the University of Windsor and Western University (London, Ontario) after nearly ten years of discussions. This study builds on work I completed during my master's research at the University of Windsor (Meloche 2014). While working on this study with the Walpole Island Heritage Centre, I became aware of a subsequent rematriation project that saw the return of Bkejwanong *mandaamin* (corn) seeds from the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology's ethnobotanical collections at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) in 2018. I thus consider the ways that both have affected the community.

Together these three case studies reveal the various ways that repatriation affects descendant communities, across social, cultural, political, economic, and spiritual areas. They show that, when intentionally approached with open hearts, minds, and spirits, repatriation can be restorative, supporting cultural reclamation and Indigenous resurgence.

Position and Intention

Research involving Indigenous peoples—especially in anthropology and archaeology—has a long history of exploitation and scientific colonialism (Nicholas and Hollowell 2007). I have been guided in my work by principles of community-based heritage research (Atalay 2012; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008b). My partners have also taught me that research outcomes must be mutually beneficial. Thus, I worked with (and, to a degree, for) representatives in each community to identify relevant interests and potential outcomes that could be of use to them.

My intention for this work is to contribute to a better and fuller understanding of repatriation; how both return itself and involvement in the process(es) of repatriation work may affect those communities seeking the return of their ancestors, belongings, and cultural knowledge. I recognize that Indigenous peoples and their experiences are context specific. The comparative approach I have chosen is not meant to generalize or apply to all communities. However, it may identify factors and conditions that serve (or inhibit) broadly shared interests across diverse contexts. I believe that examining similarities and differences across repatriation experiences can inform the development of culturally sensitive heritage policy and repatriation guidelines in the future.

I also recognize the roles that identity and privilege play in all research endeavours. I am a non-Indigenous, white, cis-gendered woman. I come from a family of early settlers and more recent immigrants who have settled here in Canada. I have enjoyed the privilege and ability to pursue graduate research because my family has had the means to support me doing so. All of these facets of my identity have informed my approach and understandings.

Organization

This chapter has introduced my research goals and the objectives that structured my work. I provided context for Indigenous rights to repatriation, as well as discussions on repatriation as it relates to ideas of restorative justice, healing, and reconciliation. Chapter 2 surveys the scholarly literature on repatriation in greater depth and extent. I review the rise of repatriation movements in Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, the United States, and Canada. I also discuss the legal and political contexts for repatriation in Canada (at time of writing), then examine the wide-reaching impacts of these repatriation movements.

In Chapter 3, I describe my methodological approach and fieldwork experiences. I explain my case study selection strategies and describe the interview processes I facilitated. I also present my framework for data analysis, coding strategies, and definitions.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are the individual case studies. Chapter 4 explores the Tłı̨chǫ caribou skin lodge repatriation and what happened next. Chapter 5 presents the Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project and its legacies in Gwich'in

communities through 2020. Chapter 6 recounts the repatriation of ancestral human remains and the rematriation of corn-seed ancestors to Bkejwanong (Walpole Island First Nation). For each case, I provide necessary background information about the community, their ongoing heritage work, the repatriations themselves, and what happened next. I conclude each chapter by exploring the effects of repatriation across socio-cultural, political, and economic spheres.

In Chapter 7, I consider the similarities and differences among and between the three case studies. In the first half of the chapter, I present the suite of socio-cultural, political, and economic categories used to organize my observations. I then consider the intersections of repatriation with health and well-being in each community. The second half of the chapter explores three intersecting themes that emerged from this research: 1) the importance of the intangible in repatriation projects, 2) repatriation as an emotional space, and 3) the ways that repatriation work connects with other cultural reclamation efforts.

Finally, I situate this study within the wider literature on repatriation as a healing practice in Chapter 8. The chapter presents the results of this study and identifies some important recommendations for repatriation policy in Canada. I conclude by identifying areas for future research and reflecting on the ways that this work has influenced me.

Chapter 2.

Situating the Repatriation Movement and its Impacts

Widespread interest in racial and gender equity in the latter half of the twentieth century saw the development of rights-based movements around the world (Clément 2008:17–18; Palmer 2009; Staggenborg 2008; Vipond 2008). Indigenous activists directed collective attention to treaty violations, land claims, and community health and welfare (Barker 2015; Ramos 2008). Feminist, post-colonial, and Indigenous critiques of research have called for increased community involvement in and benefits from projects. Indigenous scholars have also criticized problematic representation and appropriation of Indigenous knowledge in research findings—particularly in anthropology and related disciplines (Deloria Jr 1969; Smith 1999). In the 1970s and 1980s, questions of control, ownership, and repatriation were also raised regarding Indigenous human remains and cultural belongings.

The "repatriation movement" became a key part of Indigenous rights activism during the late twentieth century, especially in the so-called "settler societies" of Canada, the United States, Australia, and Aotearoa/New Zealand.[20] These sparked significant and ongoing debate in archaeological, anthropological, and museum circles (e.g., Meighan 1992; Gulliford 1992; Hubert 1989; Jenkins 2011, 2016a, b; Killion 2008; Nash and Colwell 2020; Pardoe 2013; Payne 2004; Peers 2004; Thomas 2001; Ubelaker and Grant 1989; Weiss 2008; Weiss and Springer 2020). However, Indigenous concerns about the protection and return of ancestral remains and cultural belongings go back much further (Fine-Dare 2002:41; see Aranui et al. 2020; Fforde, Turnbull, et al. 2020).

The implementation of repatriation legislation and policy, beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s, has situated repatriation as a pivotal part of heritage management. In recent years, it has become a domain of study unto itself, with

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[20] "Repatriation movement" is sometimes used interchangeably with "reburial debate" (e.g., Fforde 2004; Hubert and Fforde 2002); however, "reburial" most commonly refers to the return of ancestral human remains. Given my focus here on a broader definition of repatriation—one that includes cultural belongings and intangible heritage—I use "repatriation movement" instead. For more detailed discussions of these movements, see Aranui 2018; Aranui and Mamaku 2021; Bell et al. 2008; Fine-Dare 2002; Fforde 2004; Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull 2002; Fforde, McKeown, and Keeler 2020a; McKeown 2012, 2020; Turnbull and Pickering 2010.

innumerable books, legal studies, and theses examining how, where, and under what conditions it has been implemented (Watkins 2017:277; see Nash and Colwell 2020). Repatriation has also become an important part of larger conversations around collaborative and community-based research, decolonization, and reconciliation (e.g., Atalay 2012; Colwell 2016; Gray 2014, 2018; Lippert 2008a, b; Simpson 2009).

In this chapter, I present a conceptual framework for subsequent discussions on repatriation's effects. I begin by providing some context for the collection of Indigenous ancestors, belongings, and other forms of cultural heritage. I then briefly review the repatriation movement as it developed around the world. Given the focus of this project, particular attention is given to the history of repatriation and contemporary approaches here in Canada. Finally, I consider the impacts that the repatriation movement has had on heritage management. I examine its roles, both as a reckoning for research and institutional practice and as tool for recognition and restoration in and for Indigenous descendant communities.

Collecting and Collections

European empires and the institutions within them have a long history of cultural collection as part of territorial conquests. For example, alongside Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in the late eighteenth century, armies and educated savants contributed to the looting of countless ancient Egyptian cultural sites (Greenfield 1989:106–110; Waxman 2009). Similarly, the Parthenon Marbles were removed from Greece by Lord Elgin, the then-British ambassador to the Turkish government (see Hitchens 2008). "Exotic" materials like these were brought back to western Europe as curiosities and as tangible evidence of an empire's power. Subsequent scientific investigations of the natural world and human history, the development of disciplines like anthropology and archaeology, and a growing economic market in antiquities, ensured that the collection of cultural materials, human remains, animals, plant specimens, and other items not only continued but substantially increased. In the "New World," this was focused on Indigenous peoples and their cultural materials.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Indigenous human remains and cultural materials were intentionally acquired as medical specimens, curiosities in private collections, and for growing comparative collections in museums and research institutions (Fforde 2004, 57–59, 2013; see also Aranui et al. 2020; Knapman and Fforde

2020; McNiven and Russell 2005). International trade networks developed. Collectors included explorers, traders, military personnel, anatomist, physicians, government officials, missionaries, settlers, anthropologists and other researchers, and sometimes even Indigenous peoples themselves (Fforde, Turnbull, Carter, and Aranui 2020; Redman 2016, 2021; Ridington and Hastings 1997). Early museums built expansive and globally diverse collections. Anatomists, physical anthropologists, and others aimed to learn more about human origins and biological diversity, with some seeking to empirically prove then-popular evolutionary ideas about racial hierarchies. Archaeologists and anthropologists sought to "save" evidence of Indigenous cultures before they disappeared, subscribing (and contributing) to a prevalent belief that Indigenous peoples were a "vanishing" race (Redman 2021:9).

Indigenous skeletal remains were often collected from burials uncovered by development or archaeological investigations. However, individuals were also taken from battlefields, cemeteries, and medical autopsies (Fforde 2002, 2004; Redman 2016; Turnbull 2017, 2020). Ethnographic and cultural objects, including archaeological finds, regalia, and other cultural materials, were regularly accessioned into museums (e.g., Cole 1995; Redman 2021). Museum interpretations often cast Indigenous peoples in a static ethnographic present, presenting them as primitive relics awaiting the benefits of colonial rule. Such stereotypical portrayals drew heavily on contemporary discourse which saw Indigenous groups as inferior to the more "culturally evolved" Europeans. Similarly, skeletal remains were often used to investigate and provide empirical evidence for race-based notions of cultural and evolutionary hierarchies, which often supported the colonial enterprise (Bieder 2000; Redman 2016; Turnbull 2017).

While medical and anthropological knowledge was advanced using collections that contain Indigenous ancestral remains and cultural materials, it is important to acknowledge their histories and the corresponding harms perpetrated against Indigenous peoples. Collectors disregarded the rights and responsibilities of living descendants to care for and protect their ancestors, ancestral homes, and histories in accord with their cultural protocols. Archaeological materials and museum spaces were used to justify European superiority and colonial sovereignty. These actions were (and are) a direct form of colonial violence that has contributed to intergenerational traumas that are still felt by Indigenous communities around the world today (Nicholas and Smith 2020; Thornton 2020a, 2020b).

Tracing Repatriation Movements Around the World

Long-standing concerns over the collection and display of Indigenous ancestral human remains and cultural belongings were highlighted by Indigenous activists during the second half of the twentieth century. Indigenous rights groups have taken action to reclaim their ancestors and belongings. Repatriation activism has directed public attention around the world to campaigns for national and international policy solutions (e.g., the Vermillion Accord [World Archaeological Congress 1989]). In 2007, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) recognized Indigenous peoples' explicit right to the use, control, and repatriation of ancestors and cultural belongings, and the responsibilities of states in enabling access and return of these (Articles 11, 12). UNDRIP has been and continues to be a potent force for policy development in many regions.

Nations faced with these issues—particularly settler states, including Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, the United States, and Canada—have addressed repatriation in a variety of ways. Table 2.1 summarizes these, identifying the national approach, how it is implemented, and whether funding is provided to enable action. In the remainder of this section, I discuss the rise of repatriation movements in these countries and the contexts for discussions and actions in the early 2020s.

Table 2.1. Summary of major national approaches to repatriation in settler states.

Nation-state	Repatriation Approach	National Policy/Legislation	Policy Date	National Funding Provisions?
Aotearoa/New Zealand	Negotiated	Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Program at Te Papa Tongarewa	2003	Yes
Australia	Negotiated	Australia Government Policy on Indigenous Repatriation	2016 [2011]	Yes
Canada	Negotiated	None	N/A	No
United States	Legally required	National Museum of the American Indian Act (NMAIA), and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)	1989 1990	Yes

Repatriation in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Repatriation is a key concern for Māori and Moriori[21] peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand and has been for centuries.[22] Archival records have shown that Māori efforts to return their *tūpuna* or ancestral human remains date at least to the early 1800s.[23] Aranui and Mamaku (2021:91–92) identify records from 1820, that document a family's request for the return of remains from New South Wales, Australia. Similarly, Fforde, Aranui, Knapman, and Turnbull (2020:381–385) describe accounts of efforts to stop the sale of *Toi moko* from the 1830s. These efforts continued through World War II, when Māori soldiers stationed in Italy considered crossing into Austria to recover ancestral remains known to have been collected and taken to the Imperial Natural History Museum in Vienna (Aranui 2018, 2020b; see O'Hara 2020).

The post-war years saw Māori and Moriori peoples demand recognition of their rights and the government's responsibilities as identified in the Treaty of Waitangi (1840), alongside other Indigenous rights movements around the world. In 1975, the New Zealand Government established the Waitangi Tribunal to investigate Māori grievances, including concerns over the removal and collection of ancestral remains and cultural materials (Fründt 2016:179–180; Waitangi Tribunal 2017). Some groups specifically included the repatriation of ancestral remains in their tribal claims (e.g., the return of over 60 *tūpuna* to Wairau Bar [Aranui 2018:76–80]). Aranui (2020a:22) notes that during this time some museums that had already developed working relationships with local communities began to proactively return ancestral remains. However, the curation of Māori *tūpuna* remains a significant point of contention between Māori communities and museums in Aotearoa/New Zealand today.

In the mid-1980s, an international exhibit, *Te Māori: Te Hokinga Mai* (1984–1986) demonstrated just how much the heritage sector was impacted by the social and political shifts brought by the Tribunal hearings.[24] By involving Māori Elders and communities in its development, *Te Māori* demonstrated the continued importance of *taonga* (cultural

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[21] Moriori are the Indigenous people of Rēkohu/Chatham Islands.

[22] A full account of this history is beyond the scope of this chapter. For further information see Aranui 2018, 2020b, c; Tapsell 2020; Tayles and Halcrow 2011.

[23] *Tūpuna* include *kōiwi tangata* (Māori skeletal remains), *kōimi tangata* (Moriori skeletal remains) and *Toi moko* (tattooed, preserved heads) (Jones and Herewini 2020:666).

[24] This exhibition opened at the former National Museum in Wellington, and then travelled to different exhibit spaces in the United States.

treasures) to living Māori communities (Aranui 2020a:21; McCarthy 2011:58–64). Paul Tapsell (2020:260) and others (e.g., Hole 2005:17–18; McCarthy 2011:62) have noted that the success of the *Te Māori* exhibition also led to increased relationship-building between museums and Māori communities.

These new relationships helped to bolster the developing repatriation movement. As debates surrounding repatriation and reburial grew, the 1980s saw three international repatriations to Aotearoa/New Zealand. In 1985, the remains of a known chief, Tūpāhau, were returned from the Museum fur Volkerkunde.[25] Then, in 1988, a NgāPuhi leader, Sir Graham Latimer, proactively sought the repatriation of a *Toi moko* from a London auction house. In this case, Latimer was actually granted legal guardianship of the ancestor, Tupuna Māori, by the High Court of New Zealand (Aranui 2018:159–161; 2020:22). The same year, the remains of Hohepa Te Umuroa (a respected *rangatira* [Chief] who had been sent to Tasmania as a political prisoner in 1846) were received and reburied by his descendants (Aranui 2018:161–162; Aranui and Mamaku 2021:92– 93). Each of these events required the involvement of the New Zealand Government on behalf of Māori claimants.

The work of Māui Pōmare, a prominent Māori leader and Chair of the National Museum Council in Aotearoa/New Zealand, continued these efforts during the 1980s and 1990s. During his career, Pōmare researched Māori collections in the United Kingdom and North America. His work shifted museological understandings of *taonga* and he was instrumental in the return of over 30 *tūpuna* to Aotearoa/New Zealand. At the National Museum, Pōmare also oversaw the development of an informal *wāhi tapu* (sacred repository) to house Māori and Moriori remains that were returned from overseas institutions without clear provenance (Aranui 2018:162, 2020a:22; Jones and Herewini 2020:667).

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) opened in 1998.[26] After consulting with Māori and Moriori communities, the New Zealand Government

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[25] *Tūpāhau* was originally held in the Austrian collection that Māori soldiers intended to recover during WWII (Aranui and Mamaku 2020:92). The remainder of that collection was returned in 2015 (O'Hara 2020:448).

[26] Te Papa houses collections relating to art, history, *taonga Māori*, pacific cultures, and natural history. The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act (1992) significantly shifted the aims and representations of the National Museum to better represent Aotearoa New Zealand's diverse communities (McCarthy 2007, 2014; Tapsell 2013; Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa n.d. "Our History").

mandated the development of a formal program for international repatriations at Te Papa in 2003 (Aranui and Mamaku 2021:94–95; McCarthy 2007; Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa n.d. "Repatriation"). The Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Program (KARP) is a collaborative effort between the New Zealand Government, Te Papa, and Māori and Moriori peoples, to facilitate and support repatriation efforts.[27] KARP team members work with an Indigenous advisory panel to locate and negotiate the return of ancestral remains from overseas institutions. Ancestral remains with limited provenance information are temporarily housed in Te Papa's *wāhi tapu* until researchers can determine where they came from (Aranui and Mamaku 2021:98). Procedures to locate, welcome, and care for *tūpuna* are guided by traditional cultural practices and protocols (i.e., *tikanga Māori*) and undertaken in consultation with descendant communities where possible (Aranui and Mamaku 2021:96–100; Jones and Herewini 2020:667–668).

Māori and Moriori activism and involvement in heritage institutions have deeply influenced the development and recent trajectory of the repatriation movement in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This has sometimes built unexpected international connections. For example, June Jones and Te Herekiekie Herewini (2020:668–672) describe a repatriation experience that would not be considered the norm. In 2011, the University of Birmingham (United Kingdom) proactively contacted Te Papa to repatriate Māori ancestors discovered in their Medical School's collections (University of Birmingham 2013). It was the University's proactive approach that made this case unique, since typically Māori representatives are the ones contacting overseas institutions. In this case, the two parties worked together to return these ancestors. That process, which has had a lasting impact on both institutions, demonstrates the benefits that can come from working proactively and with respect for descendant communities (Jones and Herewini 2020:672).

More recently, museums and other holding institutions in Aotearoa/New Zealand have begun to approach repatriation more proactively. In 2018, the Kaihurahura Whakahoki Kōiwi Tūpuna o Aotearoa (New Zealand Repatriation Research Network) was developed. This network will connect records and repatriation experiences from 20 institutions housing ancestral human remains in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Aranui 2020a:23; 2020c). The New Zealand Government has also committed funding for the

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[27] Aranui and Mamaku (2021) provide a detailed history of the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Program.

Ngākahu National Repatriation Project at Te Papa, to further support domestic repatriation efforts (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa n.d. "Ngākahu"). Aranui (2020a:23) has noted that this "is a major development in Aotearoa New Zealand's repatriation movement and one which will grow as museums begin proactively and collaboratively repatriating human remains contained within their collections."

Repatriation in Australia

Repatriation has been an important part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' efforts to assert their sovereign rights.[28] As early as the 1960s, they were formally advocating for the return of their ancestors and secret/sacred belongings from institutions in Australia and elsewhere. While concerns had been raised for many years, a series of constitutional amendments at that time recognized their citizenship and provided the political clout to strengthen their claims (De Leuien 2014; McKeown 2020:30). Advocating bodies, including the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC), the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (FAIRA), the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre, and others, were established in the 1970s and 1980s, and the repatriation of ancestors and secret/sacred belongings was an important part of their mandates (e.g., Carter et al. 2020; David et al. 2020; Hemming et al. 2020). Federal, state, and territorial legislation was also introduced to protect Indigenous sites and cultural materials (see Fforde 2020:Table 1)

Discussions on and around repatriation became increasingly common (and combative) in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1985, a landmark case saw the recovery of ancestral remains from the University of Melbourne (Pickering 2020). Afterwards, the movement began to receive more public support, which, in turn, led to increased support from Australian state and federal authorities (Turnbull 2017:337–338). As elsewhere, the subject of repatriation was often contentious, with many scientists and heritage practitioners lamenting reburial as an irredeemable loss to science and a capitulation to the political demands of special interests (e.g., Meehan 1984, cited in De Leiuen 2020). For example, while the Australian Archaeological Association announced their conditional support for repatriation in 1984, the organization also decried the

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[28] A full review of Australia's repatriation movement is beyond the scope of this chapter, see more in Donlon and Littleton 2011; Fforde 2004; Fforde, McKeown, and Keeler 2020; Pickering 2010; Turnbull 2017, 2020.

"destruction" of important examples, such as the Kow Swamp and Lake Mungo burials.[29] However, while many anthropologists and archaeologists were against repatriation, some began to reassess their research practices to recognize Indigenous rights to ownership and control over research involving their ancestors and heritage (Pardoe 2013).

Government support for repatriation continued to grow in the 1990s and 2000s, and international efforts soon gained necessary funding (De Leuien 2014; Donlon and Littleton 2011; Turnbull 2017). Several high-profile collections were returned from overseas institutions, including the return of Ngarrindjeri and Tasmanian ancestors from Edinburgh University in the early 1990s (Fforde 2009; Hemming and Wilson 2010; Hemming et al. 2020). In 2001, the National Museum of Australia (NMA) had established an internal repatriation program and developed relevant policies and research protocols.[30] In 2005, Museums Australia (now the Australian Museums and Galleries Association) released a report that explicitly supported Indigenous Australians' right to the repatriation of their ancestors and secret/sacred belongings.[31] After its release, all state and territorial museums developed repatriation policies and protocols.

In 2011, the Australian Government introduced the "Australian Government Policy on Indigenous Repatriation" and expanded the Indigenous Repatriation Program at the NMA. These provide a formal mechanism and support for both domestic and international repatriation efforts, and established an Advisory Committee on Indigenous Repatriation. The Indigenous Repatriation Program funds domestic repatriation partnerships at major Australian museums through an annual granting program (Australian Government Office for the Arts n.d. "Domestic"). Its international component also advocates for the unconditional and voluntary return of ancestral remains from overseas museums and provides funding and support for important provenance research (Australian Government Office for the Arts n.d. "International"). As of 2020, the Indigenous Repatriation Program has supported the return of over 2,700 ancestors and 2,240 secret/sacred objects from domestic institutions, and over 1,600 ancestors from international ones (Australian Government EMRIP Report 2020).

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[29] These were returned and reburied in 1991 and 1992, respectively (De Leiuen 2020).

[30] The NMA has addressed repatriation requests since its inception in 1980 (Pickering 2010:165).

[31] See the report, "Continuous Cultures, Ongoing Responsibilities," here https://www.amaga.org.au/sites/default/files/uploaded-content/website-content/SubmissionsPolicies/continuous_cultures_ongoing_responsibilities_2005.pdf

Today, international repatriation efforts have also expanded to include the return of cultural heritage materials, including objects, photographs, manuscripts, and audio-visual recordings (AIATSIS n.d.). The *Return of Cultural Heritage* (RoCH) project has sought to identify overseas collections containing such materials and build relationships to facilitate their return.[32] From 2018–2020, the RoCH Project identified and contacted 199 overseas institutions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections. Of these, 45 institutions (only 22.5%) were willing to consider repatriation (AIATSIS 2020:16). The project team has also engaged with key stakeholders in five Aboriginal communities to identify and further explore repatriation and its impacts.

Another major international project, *Return, Reconcile, Renew* (RRR, 2014–2020), brought practitioners and researchers together to better understand and support repatriation efforts.[33] RRR has sought to document the complex histories of repatriation and develop a digital archive for practitioners and researchers (RRR 2019). As one outcome of this partnership, the National Museum of Australia released its *Repatriation Handbook* in 2020.[34] The Handbook provides context and guidance for those new to repatriation work. Projects like RoCH and RRR demonstrate the continued importance of repatriation and related work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups in Australia, and the practical benefits that can come with institutional and governmental support.

Repatriation in the United States

Colonial restrictions on traditional ceremonies and practices contributed to the collection of Indigenous ancestors and cultural belongings across North America (Cole 1995; Fine-Dare 2002; Redman 2016, 2021). Evidence of Indigenous efforts for repatriation can be traced to the late 1800s. For example, in the 1890s, the Six Nations Confederacy—encompassing Haudenosaunee groups in both the northeastern United States and eastern Canada—sought the return of several wampum belts that had been sold in New York and Ontario (Fenton 1989:397–398; see Muller 2007). While they were not successful at that time, the Confederacy continued to seek the return of the belts for

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[32] The RoCH Project is administered by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). See https://aiatsis.gov.au/about/who-we-are.

[33] See https://returnreconcilerenew.info/about-the-project.html.

[34] See https://www.nma.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/734796/NMA-Repatriation-handbook.pdf

nearly 100 years (Fine-Dare 2002:91–94; McKeown 2020:26–27).[35] These and other early examples (e.g., Apache reburial efforts in the 1880s [Welch and Ferguson 2007], or the return of a Hidatsa sacred alter in 1938 [Cooper 2008:68–69; McKeown 2020:27]), demonstrate that Indigenous concerns surrounding the collection of ancestral remains and important cultural belongings in North America existed long before the formal development of the repatriation movement.

In the United States, part of the impetus for the repatriation movement was to restore Native American rights to protect and care for their dead and cultural materials according to their own cultural traditions and customs (Trope 2013:19). By the 1970s, it had gained national attention.[36] The American Indian Movement targeted archaeological work and specifically those projects involving the excavation and removal of human remains (Zimmerman 2020:9156). Several incidents brought Indigenous activists and archaeologists into close contact. For example, an excavation of a pioneer cemetery in Iowa, in 1971, resulted in significant and well-publicized backlash (Zimmerman 1989:62; 2020:9156). The cemetery was being relocated and archaeologists identified several burials at the site. Of these, one Indigenous burial was removed for further study while the rest, determined to be white settlers, were reinterred immediately. The clearly differential treatment of Native American ancestors in this case brought a swift and negative reaction, resulting in the dismissal of the state archaeologist and, in 1976, the first state reburial law (Zimmerman 2020:9156–9157).

By the 1980s at the national level, the repatriation movement began in earnest. Indigenous advocacy organizations, including the American Indians Against Desecration and the Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA), became driving forces for a national response to repatriation in the United States (Hammil and Cruz 1989; Trope 2013). In 1986, when Cheyenne representatives discovered the extent of the human remains collections at the Smithsonian Institution (and the overall proportion that were Native American), the movement for a national approach to address repatriation

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[35] Eleven wampum belts were returned to the Six Nations of Grande Ronde in Ontario from the Heye Museum of the American Indian in 1988 (Fenton 1989), and twelve to the Onondaga Nation from the New York State Museum in Albany (Sullivan 1992). More recently, Abenaki scholar, Margaret Bruchac, has led "On the Wampum Trail," a project investigating the histories of wampum belts in museum collections (see Bruchac 2017, 2018; n.d.).

[36] An extensive review of the repatriation movement in the United States is beyond the scope of this chapter. For further information, see Chari and Lavallee 2013; Fine-Dare 2002; McKeown 2012; Nafziger 2009; Nash and Colwell 2020; Ubelaker 2011.

concerns gained significant momentum (McKeown 2012:4, 30–31; see Yellowman 1996). Three years later, after major countervailing lobbying by organizations like the AAIA, the Society for American Archaeology, the American Association of Museums, and others, the United States Congress enacted the National Museum of the American Indian Act (NMAI Act).

The NMAI Act combined the Native American collections at the Smithsonian Institution and those of the Heye Museum of the American Indian in New York City into the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). It also included requirements for the Smithsonian to inventory and report on their collections, and, where requested, repatriate.[37] While it was "an important first step" (Trope 2013:25), the NMAI Act only applied to museums under the Smithsonian's aegis. Native American advocates were thus obliged to continue to work toward a more comprehensive legislation.

In 1990, the United States Congress enacted the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). NAGPRA requires federally-funded agencies and institutions that hold Native American and Native Hawaiian materials to inventory their collections, notify and consult with affected Tribes, and repatriate material upon request (Chari and Lavallee 2013:8–9; Daehnke and Lonetree 2011:91–92). It also defines materials that can be subject to repatriation (i.e., human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony), and sets a consultative structure to ensure human remains and cultural items are properly cared for and/or returned (McKeown 2012, 2020). Importantly, NAPGRA is "a living piece of legislation," in that it has been updated since it was first passed (i.e., regarding the repatriation of culturally unidentified human remains [Nash and Colwell 2020:227]).

Both Acts were significant achievements for Indigenous rights activists (Chari and Lavallee 2013). NAGPRA, in particular, fundamentally alters the balance of power in the heritage management in the United States and remains the only example of national repatriation legislation in the world. While repatriation can and does occur outside of the bounds of both the NMAI Act and NAGPRA (e.g., pre-NAGPRA practice at the Arizona State Museum [Ewing 2011:Ch. 4]), the law remains pivotal in most discussions on the subject in the United States and, often enough, elsewhere.

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[37] See https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/about/NMAIAct.pdf

While a significant political achievement, NAGPRA has also proved to be complex in its implementation. When it was first introduced, many institutions, especially those with large collections, found it difficult to confirm compliance with NAGPRA (e.g., the Field Museum in Chicago [Hayflick and Robbins 2021]). Controversial cases, such as the Ancient One/Kennewick Man, have also challenged NAGPRA's application to ancient skeletal remains and the standards of evidence for cultural affiliation (see Bruning 2006; Burke et al. 2008; Chatters 2017). Critics have raised concerns about racial favoritism (Echo-Hawk 2020; Weiss and Springer 2020), complications surrounding culturally unidentified human remains (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010; Daehnke and Lonetree 2011:93–95), and other issues (Fine-Dare 2005).[38] NAGPRA funding, while helpful for many, is also limited. In a review of the first 15 years of NAGPRA grants, Sangita Chari (2010:216) noted that while more than $31 million USD was allocated between 1994–2008, this support met the needs of only about half of the submitted applications. Furthermore, NAGPRA is also restricted in its application to domestic, federally funded institutions; repatriation from private organizations and/or international institutions remain beyond its scope (Ray 2016).

These issues notwithstanding, NAGPRA represents an important example of human rights legislation. More recently, the focus of repatriation efforts in the United States has expanded to consider the complexities involved in international repatriation efforts. The AAIA in particular, has continued to advocate for and promote repatriation work, both domestically and in international settings (AAIA n.d.; e.g., AAIA International Repatriation Guide 2019). It hosts an annual conference to bring repatriation practitioners from across the country together to share their experiences.[39] In 2020, AAIA advocacy work resulted in the Department of the Interior hosting tribal consultation sessions at that year's conference to discuss and advise on international repatriation issues.

Repatriation Elsewhere

Indigenous activism has resulted in the rise of repatriation movements in countries beyond the above-mentioned settler states. Several nation states have adopted

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[38] See Chari and Lavallee 2013, McKeown 2012, Nafziger 2009, and Ray 2016 for further discussion on the benefits and significant challenges associated with NAGPRA.

[39] See https://www.indian-affairs.org/7thannualconference.html

government policies on repatriation, especially concerning ancestral human remains and related materials (e.g., Márquez-Grant and Fibiger 2011). These vary from national legislation to institutional policy and are often heavily influenced by public perceptions and support for Indigenous claims (Jenkins 2011).

In the United Kingdom, persistent efforts on the parts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Māori groups have significantly impacted museum practice (see Curtis 2014; Morton 2020; White 2011). Many heritage institutions have opposed the return of ancestral human remains and cultural belongings; however, beginning in the 1980s, they faced increasing calls from Indigenous groups to return their ancestors and stolen property.[40] Early examples of negotiated repatriations (e.g., the return of ancestors from Edinburgh University to the Ngarrindjeri in the early 1990s [Fforde 2009] or the repatriation of the Ghost Dance Shirt to the Lakota Sioux from the Glasgow Museum in 1997 [Allen 2013; Curtis 2014)]), demonstrated the willingness of some to work with descendant communities. While case-specific negotiations for repatriation are increasingly entertained at many institutions in the United Kingdom, institutional resistance continues (e.g., the British Museum continues to refuse the repatriation of the Parthenon Marbles to Greece). Furthermore, as repatriation has become part of the global discourse surrounding decolonization and reconciliation, other former colonial empires have also begun to address it. In France and Germany, for example, repatriation of looted cultural materials like the Benin Bronzes, to African groups has gained traction and public support (Greenberger 2020; Hickley 2018; Schuetze 2018; Toodehfallah 2018).

Activism by Indigenous peoples in other contexts has required many nation-states to develop repatriation policies and protocols in recent years. In Japan, Ainu repatriation efforts are rooted in rights-based activism traceable to the 1960s. The development of appropriate care and repatriation policies for Ainu ancestral remains has been ongoing since at least 2011 (EMRIP Report 2020; Hirata et al. 2020; Nakamura 2017, 2019; Okada 2021). In 2014, a national "Guideline of Procedures for the Repatriation of Identified Ainu Ancestral Remains" was introduced to establish principles for the return of

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[40] In 2001, the United Kingdom established a Working Group on Human Remains to address issues surrounding the repatriation of ancestral remains. The subsequent *Human Tissues Act* (2004) and "Guidelines for the Care of Human Remains in Museums" (DCMS 2005) have facilitated the return of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Māori ancestors and saw the Pitt Rivers Museum return a Haida ancestor in 2010 (Haida Repatriation Committee n.d.).

Ainu ancestors. A national resting place was established at Hokkaido University in 2019. However, putting these into practice has been complicated, since many Ainu believe that researchers will continue to have access to their ancestors without Ainu knowledge or consent (Nakamura 2019:360; Okada 2021:32).

Similarly, in Scandinavia, Sámi efforts to repatriate their ancestors and cultural materials have been ongoing since the 1990s (Jomppanen 2013; Mulk 2009; Svestad 2013). Sámi Parliaments have worked with universities, museums, and governments in Norway, Sweden, and Finland to return large collections of ancestral remains and cultural materials (EMRIP Report 2020; Magnani et al. 2018). Through these efforts the Sámi Museum Siida in Finland now houses a significant number of Sámi cultural belongings that have been returned from museums (Magnani et al. 2018:164; Mulk 2009:202–209). In some cases, the Museum has also been chosen to house returned Sámi ancestors (e.g., the repatriation of ancestral remains from the University of Helsinki, Finland in 2001 [Jomppanen 2013]). When this happens, it works closely with the Finnish Sámi Parliament, returning institutions, and researchers to care for them and review any research proposals.

International repatriation continues to be a complex and challenging process since the fear of "opening the floodgates" is still prominent among those who advocate for continued prioritization of "universal," science-driven access to collections over repatriation (AAIA 2015:1; Fiskesjö 2010). Despite protests by some scientists, international repatriations have become more common. For example, several well-known cases of cross-border repatriation between the United States and Canada have occurred. These include the return of Kwakwaka'wakw materials from the National Museum of the American Indian (2000, 2002 [Mauzé 2010]); the return of Haida ancestors from both the American Museum of Natural History and the Field Museum (Krmpotich 2014); and the return of T'xwelátse from the Burke Museum to the Stó:lō Nation (Schaepe 2007). Conversations continue to develop worldwide (e.g., in Chile [Ayala 2020]; Rapa Nui [Arthur 2020]; South Africa [Black and McCavitt 2021; Nienaber et al. 2008]; and Russia [Plets et al. 2013]). Apparent escalations of support for international repatriation suggest that the global repatriation movement will continue, and ultimately prevail (EMRIP 2020).

The Repatriation Movement in Canada

In Canada, similar to other settler nations, the repatriation movement developed alongside and within ongoing Indigenous rights activism (Bell et al. 2008; Conaty and Janes 1997; Hanna 2003, 2005). While requests had been successfully negotiated in Canada since at least the 1970s (e.g., Cranmer-Webster 1995; Cybulski 2011), it was the actions of activists during the late 1980s that brought the often-problematic relationship between Indigenous peoples and heritage professionals to national and international attention (Cooper 2008; Mauzé 2010:89–90; Phillips 2011). Figure 2.1 is a timeline of Indigenous resistance and repatriation events in Canada. It offers a sense of how these discussions are situated in ongoing and continuous Indigenous activism here.

The return of the Kwakwaka'wakw Potlatch Collection is arguably the best-known and earliest example of repatriation in Canada (Cranmer-Webster 1995; Jacknis 2000; Knight 2013; Mauzé 2003, 2010:96; Sewid-Smith 1979; U'mista Cultural Centre 1975, 1983). Seized during a raid on a then-illegal potlatch in 1922,[41] the so-called Potlatch Collection is comprised of approximately 750 ceremonial objects and regalia (Cranmer-Webster 1995:138). Importantly, while the entire collection was intended to be transported to the National Museum, several items were transferred to other institutions or kept in private collections. Table 2.2 provides an accounting of known transfers.

The Kwakwaka'wakw began to negotiate with the National Museum to return the Potlatch Collection in the mid-1960s; however, an agreement was not settled until 1974. In 1979, after the Kwakwaka'wakw had built two museum facilities to house the collection (a condition of the negotiated repatriation), the National Museum transferred its portion. In the years since, the Kwakwaka'wakw have negotiated the return of many of the confiscated items (Table 2.2). However, an undetermined number of objects are still outstanding. The U'mista Cultural Society's website notes that they will continue to seek the return of those objects when they are located (U'mista Cultural Centre 2019).

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[41] In 1885, an amendment to the Indian Act made certain Indigenous ceremonies such as the potlatch in the Northwest Coast and the Sundance in the Plains, effectively illegal.
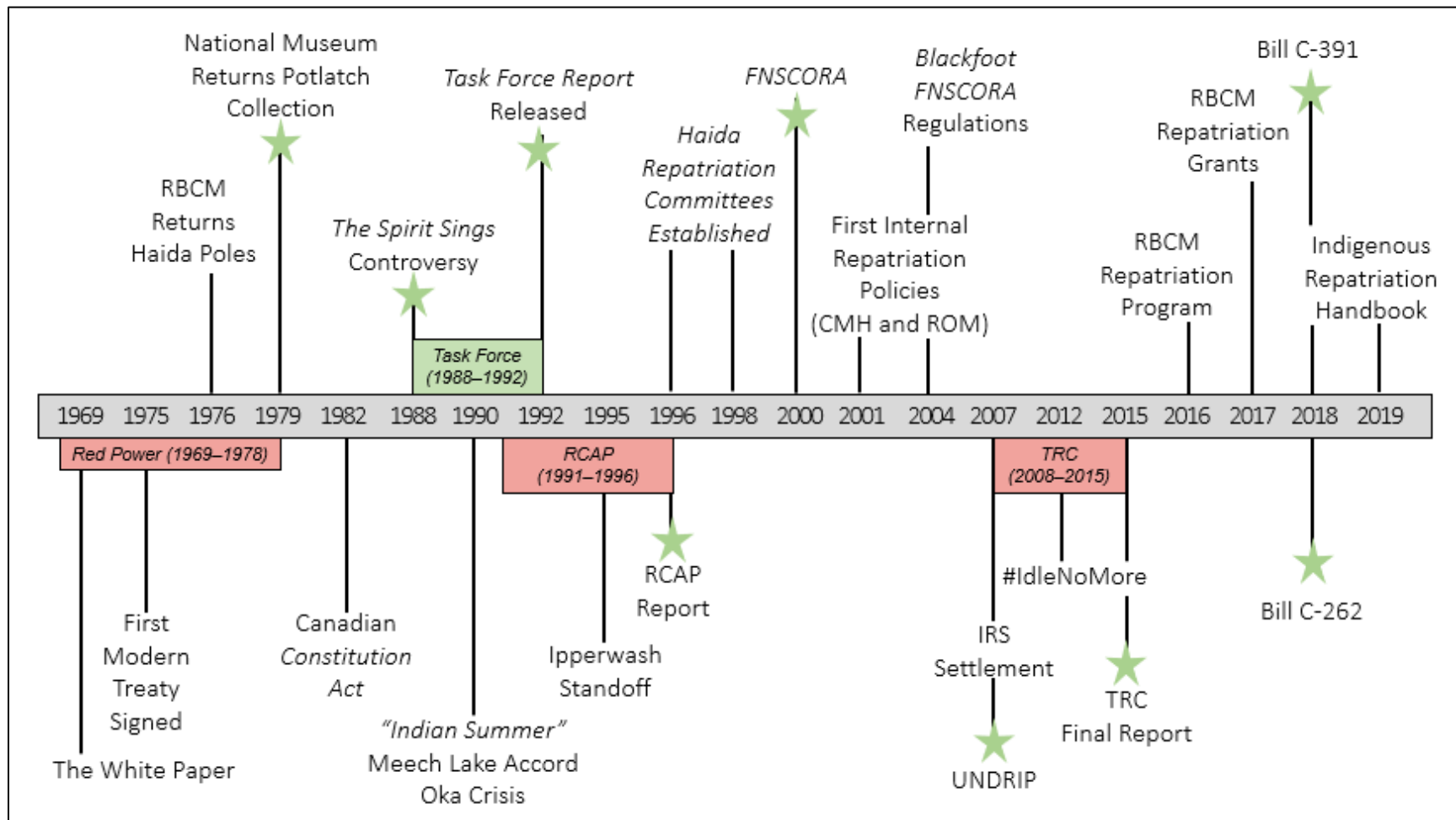
Figure 2.1. Timeline of Indigenous resistance and repatriation in Canada, 1969–2019.
Significant political events are tracked along the bottom, while repatriation events are along the top. Green stars indicate those events that have had a direct effect on contemporary repatriation practice. Red boxes denote a rights-based, multi-year period or project.

Table 2.2. Accounting of the Potlatch Collection and its repatriation.

Date Returned	Returning Institution	Objects Returned	
		Total	Details
1979	National Museum of Canada	104	Returned to the Nuyumbalees Cultural Centre
1980		c. 500	Returned to the U'mista Cultural Centre
1979–1980	Private collection of Duncan Campbell Scott[1]	11	9 donated to National Museum, returned in the 1979–1980 repatriation.
1988	Royal Ontario Museum	c. 100	Returned after Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada intervened
1992	Museum of the American Indian (United States)	33	9 items returned
2002			16 items returned
2003	Private citizen	1	Originally kept by Sgt Angerman, the *yaxwiwe'* (peace dance headdress) was repatriated from the family of the surrealist artist Andre Breton; sold by the Museum of the America Indian (1956)
2004	University of British Columbia	3	Three *hamsamł* bird masks, purchased in the 1950s; full provenance unknown (Knight 2013:103)
2005 (via long-term loan)	British Museum	1	Transformation mask transferred from the Museum of the America Indian collection in 1930s (Knight 2013:104)
2019	Private citizen	1	Sun mask sold from the Museum of the America Indian collection post-World War II.
Unclear	Private collections of Sgt. Donald Angerman[2]	Unclear	Donated to the Museum of the American Indian (ca. 1926)
Unclear (via long-term loan)	Horniman Museum	1	Dzunukwa mask from the Horniman Museum in London, England

[1] Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs, Canada.

[2] Arresting officer and prosecutor at the 1922 Alert Bay trials.

Sources: Cranmer-Webster 1995; Jacknis 2000; Knight 2013; Mauzé 2003, 2010; U'mista Cultural Centre 2018.

Nearly a decade after the return of the Potlatch Collection to the Kwakwaka'wakw, controversy surrounding a Calgary exhibit would catapult the issue of repatriation into mainstream discourse (Cooper 2008; Mauzé 2010:89–90; Phillips 2011). In 1988, the Glenbow Museum's exhibit, "The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples," was intended to present the richness and resilience of Indigenous cultures in Canada at the time of (Harrison 1988:6).[42] It was to bring together over 650 Indigenous objects from collections around the world. However, it quickly became a significant controversy when the Lubicon Lake Cree boycotted the event.[43]

The inclusion in the exhibit of a Mohawk False Face mask, which was on loan from the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), incited further controversy when it was claimed by the Mohawk Nations of Kahnawake, Akwesasne, and Kanesatake (Bell et al. 2008:369–370; Phillips 2011:54).[44] While the mask was ultimately returned to the ROM when the exhibit ended, the resulting controversy has been called a "watershed moment in Canadian museology" (AFN-CMA 1992:16; Cooper 2008:27). The Spirit Sings controversy sparked an important dialogue around the treatment and use of Indigenous heritage in museums (Herle 1994; Trigger 1988). Most importantly, it began (and in some cases, forced) a conversation in museums about their roles in relations of power and identity, and became a turning point for discussions on ownership, representation, access, and repatriation in Canada.

In response, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the Canadian Museums Association (CMA) established a joint Task Force on Museums and First Peoples (hereafter the Task Force [Wilson et al. 1992]) in 1990. The Task Force consulted with Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and institutions across the country on three key issues: interpretation, access, and repatriation. Their final report, *Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships Between Museums and First Peoples* (hereafter the *Task Force Report*), was released in 1992. In it, the Task Force recommended that museums

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[42] This exhibit was developed in connection with the Calgary Olympics in 1988.

[43] The Lubicon Cree boycott was tied to their outstanding land claim with the federal and provincial governments (Goddard 1991). Both, along with Shell Oil Ltd. (which was drilling in Lubicon territory), had sponsored the exhibit. Afterwards, debate about the exhibit erupted across the country and significant figures in the museum community often stood at odds, with some even resigning their positions in solidarity with the Lubicon and others (Trigger 1988:9).

[44] False Face masks, or *ga:goh:sah*, are used in Mohawk healing ceremonies and some are forbidden from public display (Phillips 2011:112–113).

and Indigenous groups should work collaboratively to "resolve issues concerning the management, care and custody of cultural objects" (AFN-CMA 1992:16).

Table 2.3 summarizes the *Task Force Report's* principles and recommendations as related to repatriation. Interestingly it recommended that institutions proactively notify affiliated communities of ancestral remains held in their collections and consulting with Indigenous advisors on the treatment and disposition of unaffiliated remains (1992:18). However, the report was less specific about notifying descendants about other materials held in collections. For example, the *Task Force Report* notes that the disposition of objects of cultural patrimony should be determined by negotiations between holding institutions and claimant communities based on "moral and ethical factors above and beyond legal considerations" but does not recommend a proactive approach (1992:18).[45] Ultimately, the *Task Force Report* outlined the case-specific, negotiated approach that underlies the development of many institutional policies on repatriation today. In this way, it remains the most influential force on the development of repatriation practice and policy in Canada (Paterson 2009:163).

At the same time, Indigenous communities began working directly with individual institutions to build better working relationships and, in some cases, secure the return of ancestral remains and important cultural belongings. In Alberta, for example, the Glenbow Museum entered into long-term loan agreements with several Blackfoot First Nations to facilitate the return (in principle at least) of sacred and ceremonial objects (Bell et al. 2008:369–370; Conaty 2015a:25–26). In 1996 and 1998, the Haida established the Old Massett Cultural Repatriation Committee and the Skidegate Repatriation and Culture Committee, respectively. These two community-based groups together form the Haida Repatriation Committee (HRC), which is tasked with identifying and returning Haida ancestors from museums across North America and elsewhere (Haida Repatriation n.d.). They are guided by the Haida concept of *yahgudang* (respect) and approach holding institutions with the intention of building relationships (Collison and Krmpotich 2020). Since its inception, the HRC has overseen the return of over 460 ancestors and more recently, they have begun to work towards repatriating Haida cultural treasures (Krmpotich 2014).

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[45] The *Task Force Report* defines "Aboriginal cultural patrimony" as including "human remains, burial objects, sacred and ceremonial objects, and other cultural objects that have ongoing historical, traditional, or cultural import to an Aboriginal community or culture" (1992:18).

Table 2.3. Summary of the Task Force Report's principles and recommendations on repatriation.

Principles to Establish a Partnership between First Peoples and Canadian Museums
1. Work together to correct past inequities. Museums should recognize the authority of First Peoples to speak for themselves.
2. Pursue equal partnerships with a mutual appreciation of different worldviews.
3. Recognize mutual interests and the contemporary existence of First Peoples.
4. Accept and pursue co-management and co-responsibility of collections.
5. Involve appropriate representatives as equal partners in exhibitions, programming, or other projects that deal with Aboriginal heritage, history, or culture.
6. Recognize a common interest in the research, documentation, presentation, promotion, and education of various publics of Aboriginal heritage, history and culture.
7. Involve First Peoples in the development of policies and funding programs related to Aboriginal heritage, history, and culture.

	Specific Recommendations on Repatriation
Repatriation	**A. Human Remains** • Notify descendants of named human remains and return them upon request. • Notify descendants of affiliated human remains held in collections. • Scientific research on ancestral human remains may be pursued in cooperation with descendants. Re-inter remains according to traditional or other practices. • Disposition of human remains which cannot be affiliated will be determined through discussion and negotiation with an advisory committee of Indigenous peoples. • Acquisition of ancestral human remains must involve the appropriate descendants. • Retention of ancestral human remains against the wishes of descendants is unacceptable
	B. Objects of Cultural Patrimony • Restitution or reversion of any objects (and their legal title) that are judged by current legal standards to have been acquired illegally. • Transfer of title of sacred and ceremonial objects, and others which have ongoing historical, traditional, or cultural importance to Indigenous communities. • Loan sacred or ceremonial materials for use in traditional ceremonies and events. • Replication of materials for repatriation to descendants or retention by museums. • Shared authority over collections management, storage, and use.
	C. Foreign Holdings • Support and promote the repatriation of human remains and objects of cultural patrimony held outside the country.

Source: AFN-CMA 1992:17–20.

Repatriation Policy in Canada in the 2020s

The *Task Force Report* remains a foundational part of heritage policy development in Canada, especially regarding organizational ethics policies (e.g., the Canadian Archaeological Association's 1996 Statement of Principles for Ethical Conduct Pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples[46]) and institutional repatriation policies in Canada (e.g., the Canadian Museum of History's Repatriation Policy [2001]). There is no encompassing federal legislation that explicitly addresses repatriation or, indeed, heritage protections. Existing Canadian heritage legislation operates largely at the provincial or territorial level, with a focus on conservationist aspects and economic development rather than repatriation (Dent 2016; Tuensmeyer 2014). Ownership over cultural heritage has been regulated by common law of property and by provincial heritage conservation legislation (Overstall 2008:92). Complicating things further, because repatriation requests may involve three legislative competences—trade and commerce; property and civil rights; and the rights of Indigenous peoples—claims may fall under the jurisdiction of different legal systems in Canada, including federal and provincial authorities (Tuensmeyer 2014:187, see also Bell 2009).

Today, repatriation continues to be addressed on a case-specific, negotiated basis, with practice influenced by various levels of policy and the moral and ethical obligations of Canadian institutions (Bell 2009; Hanna 2003, 2005; Koehler 2007:127; Myles 2010:50; Tuensmeyer 2014). With few exceptions (e.g., Alberta's *First Nations Sacred and Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Act* [Conaty 2015b]), repatriation in Canada is undertaken outside of federal and provincial legislation. Instead, it occurs within the bounds of institutional policies that are influenced by a "patchwork" of policy structures (Whittam 2015:502), including the AFN-CMA *Task Force Report*; institutional policies; national commissions and reports; land claims and modern treaty final agreements; provincial and territorial heritage legislation; federal legislation; and international accords.

Figure 2.2 shows how these different policy structures influence repatriation practice in Canada, while Table 2.4 provides examples of each. Institutional policies and community-based protocols typically have the most influence, given that they provide

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[46] The CAA's Statement of Principles were recently revised, see
https://canadianarchaeology.com/caa/about/ethics.

specific guidance for practitioners undertaking repatriation projects. Organizational ethics codes (e.g., the Canadian Archaeological Association's Statement of Principles for Ethical Conduct Pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples or the Canadian Museums Associations Code of Ethics), legislation (i.e., FNSCORA), and Treaty and Land Claims Agreements (e.g., Nisga'a Final Agreement [1999]) provide the next level of influence. Organizational codes guide both individual and community practice around repatriation, while legislation and final agreements can provide specific repatriation procedures relating to provincial, territorial, and federal collections. Finally, international accords like the UNDRIP and national commissions like the RCAP and the TRC, have influence over the broader conversations around Indigenous rights and settler responsibilities. While these don't often directly influence repatriation practice, they can provide guiding frameworks for policy development.
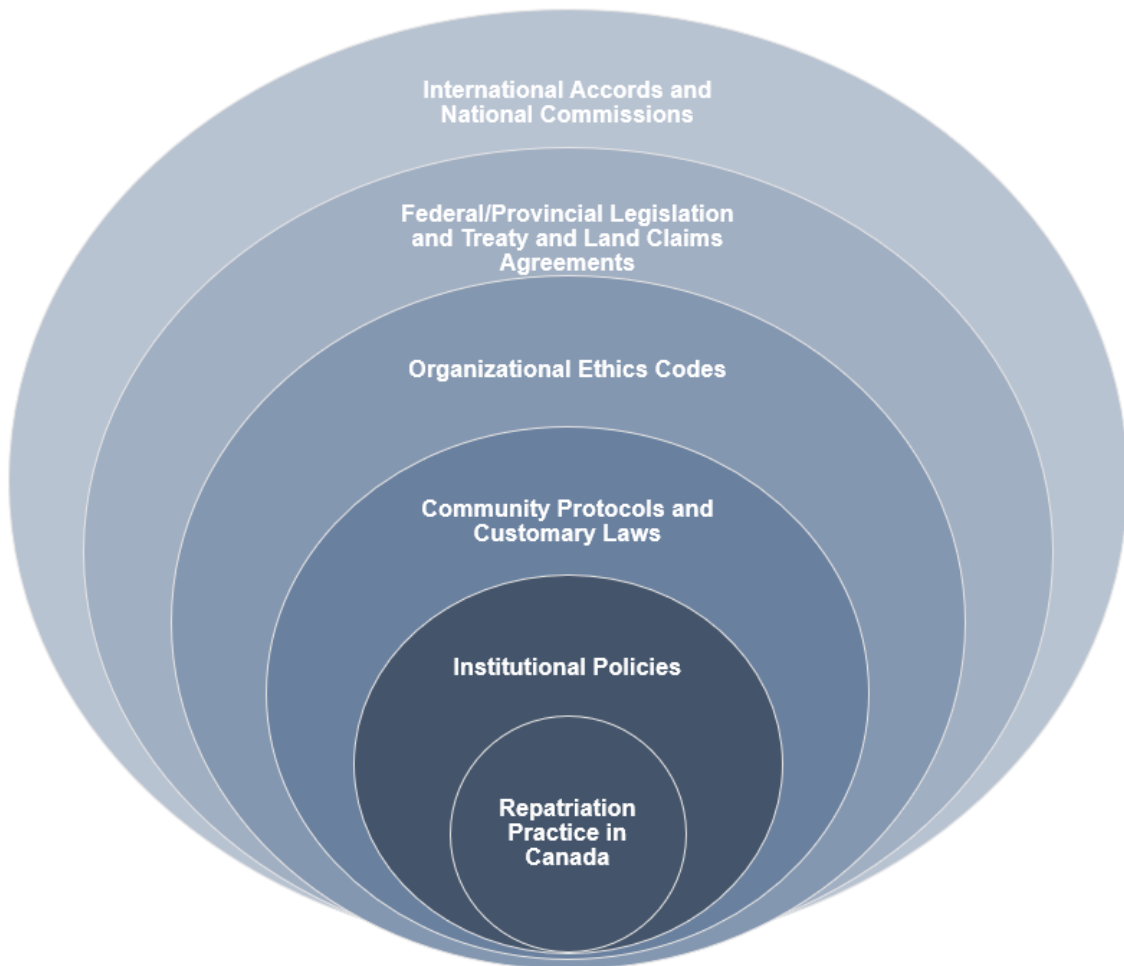
Figure 2.2. Influential policy structures for repatriation practice in Canada.
Influence is noted by colour gradient (i.e., darker = more directly influential, lighter = less directly influential).

Table 2.4. Examples of policy structures influencing repatriation practice in Canada.

Influential Policy Structure	Example(s)
Institutional repatriation policies	The Canadian Museum of History (CMH) Repatriation Policy (2011 [2001]) Royal Ontario Museum's Canadian Indigenous Objects Policy (2018[2001]) and the Human Remains of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada Policy (2018 [2001])
Community protocols	Indigenous Handbook on Repatriation (Collison et al. 2019).
Organizational ethics codes	Canadian Archaeological Association's Statement of Principles for Ethical Conduct Pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples (1996),
National commissions and reports	Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships Between Museums and First Peoples (AFN-CMA 1992) The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP 1996) The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC 2015)
Land claims and modern treaty agreements[1]	Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (1992) Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (1993) Nisga'a Final Agreement (2000) Tłįchǫ Agreement (2005) Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement (2007) Maa-Nulth First Nations Final Agreement (2009) Tla'amin Final Agreement (2016)
Provincial and territorial heritage legislation	First Nations Sacred and Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Act (2000).
Federal legislation	Cultural Property Export and Import Act (CPEI 1978)
International accords	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007)

[1] This list is not exhaustive.

Institutional policies typically have the most influence on repatriation practice in Canada, given that repatriation negotiations are often between nations and individual institutions.[47] Most outline a responsive case-specific approach that is grounded by moral and ethical obligations and facilitated through negotiation (Bell 2009:15; Young

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[47] See Appendix A for examples of institutional repatriation policies.

2010, 2016). Recent commitments to reconciliation as outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC 2015) have resulted in the revision of many institutional repatriation policies to develop a more inclusive and equitable repatriation practice (e.g., the Royal BC Museum's "Indigenous Collections and Repatriation Policy" [2018]; see Bell and Hill 2021).

Given that repatriation in Canada is typically left to individual institutions to address, funding for this work is limited. Two federal funding programs—the Museums Assistance Program (MAP) and the Movable Cultural Property Grants program both administered by the Department of Canadian Heritage—have been used to support repatriation and related projects.[48] For example, a Movable Cultural Property grant enabled the Simon Fraser University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology to prevent the export of a W̱SÁNEĆ SDÁL̲NEW̱ (human seated figure bowl) in 1994 (see Henry 1995; Winter and Henry 1997).[49] Institutional partnerships like these can help to offset some of the costs of repatriation. However, they may not be appropriate or desired in all contexts.

In British Columbia, the Provincial Government has developed a funding program for repatriation work that is administered by the British Columbia Museums Association (BCMA). The program issues funding grants of $15,000–35,000. These support community-based repatriation-related research and project activities like transportation or acquiring materials for burial containers (BCMA n.d.).[50] At the time of writing (2021), this is the only repatriation-specific funding program in the country.

While the flexible, policy-based landscape for repatriation in Canada has allowed for the development of many successful long-term collaborative research relationships,[51]

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[48] The Museums Assistance Program supports heritage institutions in the "preservation and presentation of heritage collections." They offer funds for initiatives around accessing collections, travelling exhibits, collections management, and specifically preserving and promoting Indigenous heritage in Canada (See https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/museums-assistance.html). Movable Cultural Property Grants support the purchase of "cultural property of outstanding significance and national importance to Canada." They can be applied for by Class "A" institutions. Find more information here https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/movable-cultural-property.html.

[49] The W̱SÁNEĆ SDÁL̲NEW̱ is being cared for at the SFU Museum until the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation are ready to care for it. It is expected to be repatriated in 2022.

[50] See https://indigenous.museum.bc.ca/repatriation/about-2020-repatriation-grants.

[51] For example, Kayasochi Kikawenow and other projects at the Manitoba Museum (Brownlee 2019; Brownlee and Syms 1999; Syms 2014); Kwädāy Dän Ts'ínchi in British Columbia and the Yukon (Hebda et al. 2017); work undertaken at the Moatfield Ossuary in Ontario (Williamson

it has also been criticized by heritage practitioners and Indigenous peoples alike. Limited or non-existent funding, unclear guidelines, and little to no oversight of policy implementation have meant that repatriation work is often unsupported (Herle 1994:41). The *Task Force Report's* recommendations also left much of the responsibility and decision-making power to museums and heritage organizations, placing Indigenous claimants in a largely passive role. This effectively continues a longstanding imbalance of power between Indigenous peoples and museums, and leaves repatriation projects vulnerable if negotiations break down or a shift in administration occurs (Doxtator 1996:63–64; Tuensmeyer 2014:204). This imbalance is perhaps the most significant detraction from the full potential of a negotiated, case-specific approach to repatriation in Canada.

Repatriation continues to be a significant topic for discussion in Canadian heritage circles and for Indigenous rights activists.[52] The TRC's final report in 2015, indicated the need for federal involvement in repatriation matters. In 2018, the Canadian Museums Association established a National Working Group on Reconciliation (CMA 2018) to address the TRC's Calls to Action, among other things (TRC 2015c:Calls 67–70).[53] The same year, Canadian Parliament introduced the *Indigenous Human Remains and Cultural Property Repatriation Act* (Bill C-391, House of Commons 2018). Bill C-391 called for the Ministry of Canadian Heritage to develop a "comprehensive national strategy" on the return of Indigenous human remains and cultural property. Unfortunately, it did not receive royal assent before the 2019 election and its future remains unclear. In 2019, the Royal BC Museum published an *Indigenous Repatriation Handbook* to offer step-by-step advice for communities starting their repatriation journeys (Collison et al. 2019). And in 2021, Canadian Parliament enacted the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*,[54] which requires the federal government to review, revision, and (re)development of federal legislation to

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and Pfeiffer 2003); and the Journey Home Project at the University of British Columbia (Rowley and Hausler 2008; Schaepe and Rowley 2021; Schaepe et al. 2016).

[52] A 2019 survey by the Department of Canadian Heritage found that approximately 6.7 million cultural belongings and at least 2,500 ancestors (including fragmentary and partial remains) continue to be housed in Canadian heritage institutions (not including universities). See https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/corporate/publications/general-publications/about-survey-heritage-institutions/2019-report.html.

[53] In April of 2019, the Canadian Museums Association was awarded funding from the Government of Canada to pursue this work, which is ongoing at the time of writing (CMA n.d.).

[54] See https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/U-2.2/page-1.html#h-1301574.

ensure the collective rights of Indigenous peoples are not infringed on. It remains to be seen how this will impact repatriation work and practice in Canada.[55]

Impacts of Repatriation: Reckoning and Restoration

Since the 1990s, repatriation movements have contributed to many changes in archaeology, anthropology, and other heritage-related disciplines. Repatriation legislation and policy have deeply impacted research and curation practices in many countries, and discussions around repatriation, restitution, and reburial continue to be contentious. With the return of hundreds of thousands of ancestral remains, cultural belongings, and other elements of cultural heritage, repatriation has also been recognized as an empowering act for Indigenous communities, one that restores at least some degree of control over cultural heritage to descendants and recognizes their rights to these materials. In this final section, I explore the impacts that repatriation has had, both as a force for change in institutions and as a mechanism of reconciliation and healing for descendants.

Repatriation as a Reckoning and Force for Change

Early on, critics warned that allowing repatriation to proceed, even on a case-by-case basis, would result in an exodus of materials from institutions, limiting research prospects and emptying museums (e.g., Meighan 1992). NAGPRA in particular was seen as heralding the end of bioanthropological work in a North American context (e.g., Ubelaker and Grant 1989). Debate around repatriation and reburial have also often been politicized, with media coverage of particularly controversial examples, like that of the Ancient One/Kennewick Man in the United States (Burke et al. 2008; Chatters 2017; also see Jenkins 2016b; Watkins 2013), or the Parthenon Marbles in Europe (Fouseki 2014; Jenkins 2016a).[56] This has contributed to the common and often counter-productive perception that repatriation and research are in opposition. Such discussions have often

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[55] The Department of Canadian Heritage's Canadian Heritage Portfolio (2021) includes reference to a national repatriation framework as part of the Government of Canada's efforts to implement the UNDRIP Act. See https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/corporate/transparency/open-government/transition-2021-canadian-heritage.html.

[56] The contentious debate that surrounds the return of Indigenous and other ancestral remains is markedly absent in other well-funded initiatives to locate, identify, and repatriate war dead (e.g., Belcher et al. 2021; Congram 2016).

been constructed as "us versus them," or "science vs religion," a narrative that continues to be used today (e.g., Weiss and Springer 2020).[57] However, rather than de-inventorying museums and ending research involving Indigenous collections, repatriation movements have emerged as a "force for change" in heritage institutions (Kintigh 2008; Killion 2008).

Without a doubt, legislation and policy enacted as part of repatriation movements have significantly altered the landscape for archaeological and bioanthropological research, especially in settler nations where access to collections for research and/or training has become more limited.[58] Many institutions have since implemented policies that restrict access to collections. However, it has also become apparent that the passage of NAGPRA and other repatriation policies did not end research prospects around Indigenous collections. Instead, the work required to inventory Indigenous collections or address a repatriation request has facilitated the development of new avenues and opportunities across the heritage sector (Atalay 2012; Kakaliouras 2008, 2014; Lippert 2008a; Rose et al. 1996).

To access collections for research purposes, many institutions now require researchers to consult with descendant communities. Often, their explicit consent and approval of research projects is required before access is granted. This is especially the case when research involves ancestral human remains. In some cases, these requirements have led to collaborative and community-based research partnerships that may extend beyond a single repatriation (e.g., Ferguson et al. 2000; Hebda et al. 2017; Meloche et al. 2021a). Such examples demonstrate that "research" can take many different forms, including archival research, osteological analyses, ethnographic research, oral history work, and, if appropriate, molecular analyses. However, some have criticized community-based and collaborative work for the limitations it may place on "academic freedom" (e.g., Weiss and Springer 2020). Critiques aside, repatriation

[57] Choctaw archaeologist Joe Watkins has argued that some of these tensions stem from significant differences in understanding (2013:703; see also Aranui 2020a). Researchers tend to see ancestral remains and belongings as a source of data and thus their responsibilities are to record and study the information they provide. However, as Watkins notes, Indigenous descendants understand them to be their literal ancestors and/or essential to cultural and ceremonial practices. These differences are crucial drivers of both repatriation movements and associated pushback from scientific communities.

[58] Limited access to collections has meant that some biological anthropologists have shifted their research to "less political" realms, like Europe—even if they were not necessarily opposed to the repatriation and reburial of ancestral remains (e.g., Pardoe 2013:752).

and research may not necessarily be opposed. Rather, the more significant issue is shifting who controls the research and why (Meloche et al. 2021b).

Repatriation movements have also influenced museum accessioning practices. Historically, when Indigenous remains and ethnographic materials were accepted into various collections, or traded amongst institutions, the standards of care and documentation often varied. Objects and skeletal elements were labelled directly on their surfaces, and some were preserved with arsenic and other toxins to prevent insect infestation and other forms of decay (Clegg 2020; Nichols 2014; Simms and McIntyre 2015). Until recently, documentation standards depended first on the information available to curators from collectors or traders, and then on the curator's own style of accession (Clegg 2020:122). This was particularly problematic when ancestral remains or cultural materials were procured under unclear circumstances (e.g., Colwell 2015; Fforde and Oscar 2020; Lindskoug and Gustavsson 2015). Together, these issues have contributed to the time- and resource-intensive nature of repatriation practices today.

The work now required to address repatriation claims has also transformed curation, care, and display practices in many institutions, particularly regarding ancestral human remains (e.g., Aranui and Mamaku 2021; Bell and Hill 2021; Black and McCavitt 2021; Collison et al. 2019; Hayflick and Robbins 2021; Tarle 2020; Tarle et al. 2021).[59] Margaret Clegg (2020:68–82) notes that many museums have revised their curation policies for human remains to ensure safe and culturally respectful storage, correct and accurate information, and appropriate access requirements. The construction and use of "Keeping Places" (or *wāhi tapu* in Aotearoa/New Zealand) for unaffiliated or unidentified human remains in museum collections is another important example of shifting practice. These are dedicated spaces where appropriate ceremonial practices (e.g., smudging or feasting ancestors) can be carried out. In most cases, descendants can visit these sites and control researcher access, if so desired (Clegg 2020:140–142). The integration of appropriate cultural care strategies into museum practice demonstrates the growing willingness of many institutions to expand their definitions of collection spaces in ways that are consistent with and respectful of Indigenous practices.

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[59] In some cases, ancestral remains may remain in the care of holding institutions even if custody and control are returned to descendant communities. This can be due to a variety of reasons, ranging from interest in research to the costs of reburial ceremonies (Young 2016:128–129).

Repatriation as Recognition and Restoration

While repatriation movements and their outcomes have been a reckoning for colonial institutions and practices, they have also recognized (and seek to restore) the inalienable rights that Indigenous peoples have to control their own cultural heritage. For many groups, repatriation has been "part of a broader struggle for recognition of injustices suffered and for restoration of human rights" (Bell 2008:28). These goals were apparent early on as repatriation movements developed alongside and within broader Indigenous rights activism (Aranui 2018; Cooper 2008; McKeown 2020; Okada 2021).

Nascent repatriation legislation and policy (e.g., the Vermillion Accord [1989], NAGPRA [1990]) recognized the rights of Indigenous peoples to manage and protect their heritage according to their own customary laws and traditions, albeit to varying degrees. As discussed above, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP 2007) does this explicitly. Several articles identify the specific rights that Indigenous peoples have to their cultural and religious traditions (Articles 11 and 12), and to "maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions…" (Article 31). While the implementation of UNDRIP in many settler contexts continues to be largely aspirational, the development of national policy or legislation to facilitate repatriation can be a form of recognition for Indigenous groups which, through colonization and settler colonialism, have often been dispossessed of their lands and alienated from their heritage.

Case study research has shown that repatriation work can have a variety of effects on descendant communities across a broad range of social, cultural, political, and economic spheres (Table 2.5). For example, repatriation may require the adjustment or development of cultural ceremonies to properly interact with, receive, and—if necessary—rebury repatriated materials (Nahrgang 2002:89). This often involves the sharing of cultural knowledge among kin groups, across generations, and sometimes even between communities. Repatriation work undertaken by the Blackfoot to locate and reclaim their sacred bundles from museums in Alberta and elsewhere demonstrates this. In this case, repatriation has ensured that knowledge about, and responsibilities for these sacred objects is transferred to a new generation. Reflecting on Blackfoot experiences with repatriation, Blackfoot ceremonial practitioner Jerry Potts (2015:139) noted that many of those involved in efforts to repatriate these bundles have gone on to become ceremonial leaders in their community.

Table 2.5. Examples of the effects of repatriation on descendant communities from the existing repatriation literature.

Effect	Example
Development or adjustment of cultural practices	Conaty 2008, 2015b; Noble 2002, 2008; Simpson 2008, 2009;
Generation of new material culture	Krmpotich 2011
Intergenerational knowledge-sharing	Krmpotich 2010, 2014
Identity construction	Clifford 2013; Jacobs 2009
Community solidarity/Group identity	Whittam 2015
Collaborative research relationships	Loring 2001; Tapsell 2002
Tourism/Economic development	Mauzé 2003; Whittam 2015

The deep involvement of community members in all areas of repatriation work has also been shown to affect the construction of group identity (e.g., Clifford 2013). Julian Whittam's work (2015) with the Kitigan Zibi Anishinaabeg community near Maniwaki, Québec, offers an example of how repatriation can develop a sense of community identity and solidarity among otherwise separate factions. He notes that negotiations with the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now the Canadian Museum of History [CMH]) to return ancestral human remains brought members of the larger Algonquin Nation "together as a family" (2015:506). By assembling very diverse factions under one goal (to return the ancestors to rest), repatriation became a rallying point, however briefly, that allowed groups to set aside their differences in pursuit of a greater good.

While repatriation is generally known to be a time- and resource-intensive undertaking, the extent of its economic impact for descendant communities are less understood. Costs can include (but are not limited to) travel, transportation, event planning, catering, burial fees, materials, ceremonies, and honoraria for Elders and knowledge holders. The total amounts can be extensive. If repatriation is not financially subsidized (e.g., NAGPRA has a granting program) descendant communities can end up bearing most (if not all) of the financial costs for an already challenging event that they did not sign up for. However, there are examples in the literature that show

repatriation's connections to capacity-building work—where developing the necessary relationships and infrastructure to carry out the research, negotiations, cultural elements, and other work can be of benefit over the long term (e.g., Whittam 2015). Repatriation can also require the construction of local cultural centres or tribal museums to house and handle repatriated ancestors and/or cultural materials (e.g., David et al. 2020; Mauzé 2003), which can lead to potential revenue from tourism. Unfortunately, studies of the economic aspects of repatriation have typically focused on costs to the holding/returning institution.

Finally, repatriation and all it entails can be a significant emotional and spiritual burden for descendant communities to take on. The work—archival research, visiting institutions, repatriation negotiations, and collaboration—requires serious time and emotional commitment as well. It is often understood as an important spiritual and cultural responsibility. As discussed in Chapter 1 (and explored in more detail in this study), scholarship has begun to explore these aspects by examining repatriation's connections to healing and reconciliation in more detail.[60]

Chapter Summary

Decades of concentrated efforts by Indigenous peoples have resulted in a global repatriation movement. In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have sought the return of their ancestors from both domestic and international institutions. In response, the Australian Government established a national policy and program at the National Museum of Australia to support repatriation work. Similarly, the New Zealand Government established the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Program at Te Papa to provide support for Māori and Moriori repatriation work overseas, and more recently, the Ngākahu National Repatriation Project will support domestic efforts.

While repatriation movements in the United States and Canada often paralleled, there are some important differences. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was a significant legal achievement for activists in the United States. It requires all federally funded institutions (i.e., museums and universities) to inventory their collections and, when Native American materials are found, notify the

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[60] For examples, see Atalay 2019; Bruchac 2010, 2021; Colwell 2019; Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2007, 2012; Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020; Gray 2014, 2018; Lippert 2008a, b; Simkin 2020; Simpson 2009; Wergin 2021.

appropriate descendant groups. While NAGPRA's implementation has been complicated, it remains an important example of human rights legislation. In Canada, there is no national policy or legislation that pertains or mandates repatriation. Instead, it is undertaken on a case-by-case basis, typically in response to requests made by Indigenous groups. Projects are negotiated between institutional representatives and descendant communities; repatriation practice is guided by several different policies and legal structures; and there is very little funding available. This approach is also common among institutions in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

Repatriation movements have sought the recognition of Indigenous rights to practice and maintain their cultural traditions (UNDRIP 2007: Articles 11.1, 12.1, 31.1-2), and to care for their dead in culturally appropriate ways. They have also resulted in the critical re-evaluation of the purpose and nature of museums and their collections. In this way, repatriation has been a reckoning for colonial collecting and extractive research practices.

In places where it has been ongoing for nearly 30 years, repatriation has also been described in terms of its potential for healing. Case studies have demonstrated the ways that repatriation can impact descendant communities, and more recent discussions are exploring its connections to healing and reconciliation. These themes have underscored my own approach to repatriation, and thus, have informed this study.

Chapter 3.

Methodology

The aim of my research has been to gain a better understanding of repatriation and the ways that it can affect descendant communities. I thus needed to engage with communities that have undertaken this work and "completed" a repatriation project. My focus on *experiences* with repatriation meant that a qualitative approach, working with one or more Indigenous community, would be the most appropriate. Given these aims—and cautious of archaeology's history of exploitative and colonialist approaches, especially when working with Indigenous pasts—I saw collaboration and partnership as essential to my methodological design. While a community-based approach was not feasible (for reasons discussed below), I sought to work as collaboratively as possible with each community to develop and carry out this project.

In this chapter, I describe my methodology in detail. My research design was informed by the rich literature on collaborative archaeological practice. I begin with a brief overview of key elements of these discussions. I then describe my methodological framework in four sections: 1) Methodological Approach; 2) Case Selection and Fieldwork; 3) Data Collection and Analysis; and 4) Research Challenges and Limitations.

Working With and For Communities

Indigenous peoples have long been involved in research, particularly in anthropological and archaeological contexts. Historically, they were employed as guides, labourers, translators, and research subjects working for colonial and settler scholars. Their direct contributions to research and theory building have often been downplayed or unacknowledged (Nicholas 2008:1662; Smith 2012:63–64). Early anthropologists and archaeologists often visited research sites, gathered their data, and left. But they rarely—if ever—returned any benefit to the communities that they had worked in.

Indigenous activism and critiques, beginning in the 1960s, brought a reckoning to these disciplines. Activists and allies began to criticize problematic representation (e.g., Deloria Jr. 1969), and issues like repatriation became flashpoints for very public debates

(Fine-Dare 2002). By the 1990s, new legal requirements (e.g., compliance under NAGPRA in the United States), the proliferation of the cultural resource management industry, continuing concerns over repatriation and reburial, and the development of ethical guidelines for archaeological practice further necessitated "working together" (Zimmerman 1998). In response, some researchers began to work cooperatively with descendant communities (e.g., Davidson et al. 1995; Swidler et al. 1997).

These developments prompted a significant shift in archaeological practice—from one defined by exclusive access and control by archaeologists, to a more inclusive approach that has explicitly involved collaboration with descendant and local communities (Atalay 2012:53; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008b). This "collaborative turn" (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008a:3; Supernant and Warrick 2014:565) gained popularity through an increase in public archaeology and participatory work, and collaborative projects have since become quite common.

Today, several community-oriented approaches to heritage research exist, ranging from the participatory (e.g., public archaeology) to explicitly decolonizing (e.g., Indigenous archaeology). These each foreground varying levels of "collaboration" with descendant and/or local communities as a key part of their methodological toolkit. However, collaboration is notoriously difficult to define, as so much of how it is used depends on the specific context and parties involved. Practitioners and critics have noted that the term is too often left undefined in project reports and scholarly publications (LaSalle 2010; 2014), resulting in further confusion.

That said, while some have noted that a singular definition for collaboration in archaeology is perhaps unnecessary (Atalay 2012:30), practitioners often identify several common features. In general, meaningful collaboration requires such qualities as respect and equity; co-operative control throughout the research process; open and honest communication; a space for meaningful dialogue as projects are negotiated, planned, and revised; and for research endeavours to be mutually beneficial for those involved (Atalay 2012; Colwell 2016; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2004; Connaughton et al. 2014; Lyons 2011; Nicholas et al. 2011; Silliman 2008). However, it is important to also contextualize such definitions, since "collaborative work" may look different depending on community partners' aims, goals, and interests.

Given the diversity of collaborative work, Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh and T.J. Ferguson (2008a:10–11; see also Colwell 2016) describe a "collaborative continuum" in

which there can be considerable variation in practice and definition, ranging from resistance to collaboration. While these differences are not always clearly reported, the level of alignment between community and researcher goals, control, and values can determine where a project falls along the continuum and indeed, whether the project succeeds or not (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008a:10–11; Guilfoyle and Hogg 2015; Welch et al. 2011:181). Other collaborative practitioners have built upon this model, further refining (and complicating) our understanding of what collaboration can mean and look like in practice (e.g., Atalay 2012; Colwell 2016; McAnany and Rowe 2015; Meloche et al. 2021a). For example, Atalay (2012:48) describes the continuum as a series of overlapping and interconnected, yet distinct, practices that are fluid and ever-changing. She notes that projects are not anchored to a single approach; they can continue to grow, develop, and move along the continuum as needed. This conceptualization resonates with my work, which I began with intentions of doing community-based research—where project goals and design would be developed in collaboration with community partners (see Atalay 2012). However, given limitations on my time and budget (see below), I moved towards a more participatory-collaboration approach.

Methodological Approach

This dissertation considers and compares three different repatriations, asking "what happened next?" In this, my aim has been to better understand the ways that repatriation processes and outcomes affected those descendant communities seeking the return of their ancestors, belongings, and other cultural materials.[61] One key assumption I made—informed by the work of Julian Whittam (2015), Gerald Conaty (2015), and others (e.g., Atalay 2019; Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2012; Colwell 2019; Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020; Simpson 2009)—was that involvement in repatriation work will have a number of lasting effects on recipient communities across a diverse and overlapping set of social, cultural, political, economic, and spiritual spheres.

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[61] These questions emerged from conversations with Dean Jacobs and David W. White during my masters research, conducted in partnership with Walpole Island First Nation (Meloche 2014).

As noted in Chapter 1, this project was guided by four objectives:

1. To understand how the meaning and processes of repatriation change across different jurisdictions;
2. To understand the social, cultural, economic, and political effects that repatriation may have on recipient Indigenous communities;
3. To assess how and why identified effects may be similar or different among and within partner communities; and
4. To note any community-identified factors that contributed to satisfying repatriation processes and results.

To accomplish these, I designed a comparative case study, working with three Indigenous communities that have successfully completed at least one repatriation. I grounded my research design in the principles of collaborative research, adapting my ideas and work plans as necessary to meet partners' goals and interests, and involving them in all stages of the research process—from planning and design to data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Atalay 2012; Herman 2018b). This approach also ensures that my work is not purely extractive but returns some benefit to each partner community. For example, I developed a basic toolkit for repatriation in a Canadian context based on my dissertation research, which contains resources such as repatriation policies, guidelines, potential funding programs, and related materials. This will aid partner communities in future repatriation efforts and potentially inform the development of community-specific repatriation protocols.

A Comparative Case Study Approach

Case study research offers in-depth consideration and analysis of one or more contemporary cases (individuals, events, programs, etc.) to understand complex social phenomena in context (Behar-Horenstein 2018:1339–1340; Lichtman 2014:118; Yin 2018:5). While case studies are sometimes criticized for their limited comparability and/or generalizability, including multiple cases in a study can strengthen findings through replication or compare notable similarities and/or differences that are relevant to research questions (Yin 2013:259–261). The use of multiple data collection and analysis methods can also bolster findings by triangulating evidence and interpretations (Yin 2013:262, 266–267). Given my aim of identifying similarities and differences across experiences with repatriation, a multi-case study approach, using qualitative methods for data collection and analyses was appropriate.

This comparative study has allowed me to consider repatriation in a variety of contexts and Canadian jurisdictions. It is important to note, however, that the comparative approach I chose was not meant to generalize or apply to all Indigenous communities. Instead, I believe that examining the similarities and differences in experience reveals the degree of variation and flexibility that are necessary when developing culturally sensitive, yet broadly applicable heritage policy and repatriation guidelines. Each partner community has also found value in learning about and from others' work.

As noted above, my approach has been grounded by principles of collaborative and reciprocal research (Atalay 2012; Herman 2018a). When I began planning my research, I intended to design a community-based project, one that began with community-identified aims. However, case study selection can be a time-intensive process and within a collaborative research paradigm, it can be even more so. As Yin (2013:256) notes, this process can easily be derailed by unavailability, poor communication, and other issues.

Early in my research program, I began with a selection of three potential partner communities, two of which were ultimately unable to participate. This meant that I had to identify alternative cases and begin to build new relationships. Starting over increased the strain on my time and available resources.[62] Given these issues, I was unable to build the fully community-driven project that I had originally intended. That said, my approach was still grounded in collaboration as much as possible. I sought to work directly with community partners to tailor each case study around their individual interests and goals, while still working to address the overarching objectives I set for myself. While I regret the time lost, these events and the emergent approach I took connected me with three interesting and unique examples of repatriation. This has ultimately led me to a more complex and satisfying understanding of repatriation and what it means for those who are involved.

Case Selection and Fieldwork

Schreier (2014:94; see also Yin 2018) notes that sampling decisions in case studies occur at multiple intervals, typically during the selection of case(s) and then

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[62] I received SSHRC funding (752-2018-2673) in 2018, at the end of my third year in the program.

again within each case. For this project, repatriation cases were selected via a purposive and theoretical sampling strategy, meaning that they were identified based on specific criteria guided by concepts that emerged during the research process (i.e., literature review and other preliminary research [Schreier 2018:88–92]). The primary criterion was at least one successful repatriation project. For my purpose, "repatriation" was broadly defined as the return of ancestors, cultural belongings, and other heritage materials. A "successful repatriation" was defined as the completed return of requested materials from a holding institution.

Next, the "successful repatriation" must have involved some level of negotiation or involvement with a holding institution in Canada, between 1992 and 2015. These criteria ensured that each case was undertaken after the release and integration of the 1992 Task Force Report recommendations (discussed in Chapter 2), which have guided most institutional approaches to repatriation here in Canada. Identifying projects that were completed prior to 2015 ensured that some time had passed before I began my fieldwork in 2019. This would allow me to explore whether there were any lasting impacts.

These broad parameters applied to a large number of potential cases. I thus began with those that I had a personal connection to, either through previous work or a mutual network. I selected three examples of repatriation for this project (Table 3.1). Case selection was finalized in consultation with each community and my committee. Each of these repatriations meet the criteria I set out for this study. Collectively, they offer diverse contexts for examining repatriation meanings, processes, policies, and outcomes. They also present significant variety in both materials returned and procedures followed.

Table 3.1. Case studies.

Repatriation	Year	Nation	Institution(s)
K'aàwiidaà Ewo Konihmbaa Repatriation	1997	Tłı̨chǫ	Tłı̨chǫ Government Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre University of Iowa's Natural History Museum
The Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project	2000–2003	Gwich'in	Gwich'in Tribal Council Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre Canadian Museum of History
Return of Ancestors to Bkejwanong	2014	Walpole Island First Nation	Walpole Island First Nation Band Council Walpole Island Heritage Centre University of Windsor University of Western Ontario

Consultation

Individual consultation guidelines and community-specific research procedures provided me with information on expectations for researchers in each partner community.[63] I generally sought to work as collaboratively as possible to involve community partners in key research decisions, including participant selection, data collection, and analysis. Consultation involved developing and maintaining a relationship with each community through regular conversations (by phone and email) with liaisons and in-person visits. I sought to keep in touch with most participants when I could not be physically present (e.g., asking for feedback on transcripts and early chapter drafts by email). This approach also helped me maintain a connection with each community, keep myself accountable, and remind myself that this work goes beyond the academy—that is, it has repercussions and importance in "real-life."

I submitted project proposals to the appropriate representative bodies in each partner community. I identified "community representatives" as those individuals who represent and work for their larger community on heritage management and other

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[63] These included the Tłı̨chǫ Government's Consultation and Engagement Guidelines (2019); the Gwich'in Tribal Council's Traditional Knowledge Policy (2004) and Guide for Researchers (2011); the Walpole Island First Nation Consultation and Accommodation Protocol (n.d.) and Walpole Island Heritage Centre Research Policy Protocol for Research and Publications (2015).

matters. I used established community research protocols (see footnote 54) to identify and work with the appropriate people. Table 3.2 identifies these as well as the representative bodies in each community that I partnered with on this project.

Table 3.2. Consultation and fieldwork.

Nation	Community Representatives	Community Representatives	Fieldwork Dates
Tłı̨chǫ	Tłı̨chǫ Government Department of Culture and Lands	Tyanna Steinwand Tammy Steinwand John B. Zoe Tom Andrews	November 2018 June/July 2019
Gwich'in	Gwich'in Tribal Council Department of Culture & Heritage (formerly the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute)	Sharon Snowshoe Ingrid Kritsch	July 2019
Walpole Island First Nation	Walpole Island Heritage Centre	Clint Jacobs Dean Jacobs	October 2019 January 2020

The individuals identified in Table 3.2 became my main contacts and liaisons in each community. They helped me to develop and refine individual project goals by reviewing community-specific project proposals and work plans. When these were approved, each organization provided me with a Project Approval or Letter of Support (see Appendix B). During fieldwork trips they identified individuals for interviews and connected me with them. Finally, each also provided valuable advice on early chapter drafts (both the individual case studies [Chapters 4–6] and discussion chapter [Chapter 7]).

The SFU Office of Research Ethics approved my research, contingent upon community approvals, in December 2018. After community agreements were finalized, full research approval was granted in May 2019. I also applied for a scientific research permit from the Aurora Research Institute for fieldwork in the Northwest Territories, approved in April 2019 (see Appendix B).

Fieldwork

I spent approximately three weeks in each community, reviewing archival materials related to the repatriation cases and interviewing individuals who were involved in the

project or who were identified by community partners. I received several fieldwork grants from the Northern Scientific Training Program in 2018 and 2019 to fund my trips to the Northwest Territories.[64] Funds from Simon Fraser University's Travel and Minor Research Awards allowed me to travel to Ontario for two fieldwork trips. Table 3.3 provides a timeline of fieldwork trips, including preliminary visits to consult with community liaisons and relevant dates when project proposals were approved. I expand on these below.

Fieldwork: Tłįchǫ Case Study

I first travelled to Yellowknife in November 2018 to attend a lecture on the Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC). This lecture event grew into a week-long education program and celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the lodge's repatriation. It brought Tłįchǫ students from Behchokǫ̀ and Yellowknives Dene students from Yellowknife to the PWNHC to interact with and learn about the lodge and its role in Tłįchǫ culture and history. While this event occurred before I began formal data collection, it provided me with an opportunity to learn about the lodge's repatriation; familiarize myself with Yellowknife and the PWNHC; visit the Tłįchǫ Government offices in Behchokǫ̀; present my proposed research to Tammy Steinwand, the Tłįchǫ Government's Director of Culture and Lands Protection, in person; and meet several individuals whom I would later formally interview. The Tłįchǫ Government approved my project in December 2018.

I travelled to Yellowknife again from June–July 2019. At that time, I was introduced to Tyanna Steinwand (Manager, Research Operations and Training in the Department of Culture and Lands Protection), who was to take over as the primary liaison for this project. Tyanna helped me identify and contact individuals for interviews. Giselle Marion (Director of Client Services, Tłįchǫ Government) also connected me with potential interviewees and set up a tour so I could visit local installations that were relevant to the project (i.e., the birchbark canoe installation at Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School in Edzo and the replica caribou skin lodge erected in Elizabeth Mackenzie Elementary School in Behchokǫ̀).

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[64] I also applied for travel funding for the 2020–2021 field season, but due to travel restrictions and distancing measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, funding was indefinitely delayed. In 2021, continued restrictions meant that I was not able to return to the NWT to present on research findings. I will present virtually upon completion of my research.

Table 3.3. Consultation and fieldwork trips.

Dates	Trip	Details
December 2017–January 2018	Walpole Island	Met with WIFN representatives and discuss research project.
June 2018	Walpole Island	Met with WIFN representatives and finalize research project; meetings cancelled due to local elections.
November 2018	Yellowknife	Participated in PWNHC event celebrating the Caribou Skin Lodge's repatriation. Met with Tłįchǫ and Gwich'in representatives.
December 2018	N/A	Project proposal approved by WIFN Heritage Committee. Project proposal approved by Tłįchǫ Department of Culture and Lands Protection. Conditional approval from SFU Office of Research Ethics.
January 2019	Walpole Island	Met with WIFN representatives and approve research proposal.
April 2019	N/A	Project proposal approved by Gwich'in Department of Culture & Heritage. Full approval from SFU Office of Research Ethics. NWT research permit approved by Aurora Research Institute.
June–July 2019	Yellowknife and Behchokǫ̀	Field trip to access archive materials at the PWNHC and interview individuals from both Tłįchǫ and Gwich'in projects.
July 2019	Mackenzie Delta	Field trip to visit outfit displays in Inuvik, Fort McPherson, and Tsiigehtchic and interview individuals from the Gwich'in project.
August 2019	Edmonton	Field trip to interview project managers from both the Tłįchǫ and Gwich'in projects.
October 2019	Windsor and Walpole Island	Field trip to access archive materials, present my research, and interview individuals from Walpole Island First Nation and the University of Windsor.
January 2020	Walpole Island	Field trip to complete interviews with individuals from Walpole Island First Nation and present my research.
2020–2022	N/A	Completed several virtual interviews and informal follow-up conversations with interview participants from all three case studies. Ongoing consultation with community partners.

During this trip, I spent considerable time working at the PWNHC to review their records on both the repatriation of the Tłı̨chǫ caribou skin lodge and the Gwich'in Clothing Project. I also photographed materials in their collections that were relevant to both case studies. During this field trip, I was able to complete 12 interviews with Tłı̨chǫ community members, PWNHC employees, and several participants in the Gwich'in Clothing Project who now live and work in Yellowknife.

Fieldwork: Gwich'in Case Study

The Gwich'in Tribal Council's Department of Culture & Heritage approved my research proposal in early 2019. Then, working closely with Sharon Snowshoe (Director of Culture & Heritage), I finalized a Researcher Agreement in April 2019 (Appendix B). I travelled to the Mackenzie Delta region of the Northwest Territories in July 2019.

When I arrived in Inuvik, I met with the Inuvik Band Chief and Band Manager to introduce myself and my project. I also visited with researchers who had previously worked with the Gwich'in Social Cultural Institute (now the Gwich'in Tribal Council Department of Culture & Heritage) and participated in a local beading circle. I travelled between Inuvik, Fort McPherson, and Tsiigehtchic to conduct interviews and visit the exhibit displays that feature the replica outfits made during the Gwich'in Clothing Project. These displays were located in the band office (Inuvik), a school (Fort McPherson), and the band office (Tsiigehtchic). Budget restrictions meant that I was unable to travel to Aklavik, the fourth Gwich'in community involved in the Clothing Project.[65]

In total, I completed seven interviews and viewed two of the five outfits during this trip.[66] When I left Inuvik, I continued on to Edmonton to complete two interviews with the project managers of both the Gwich'in Clothing Project and the Tłı̨chǫ Lodge projects.

Fieldwork: Walpole Island First Nation Case Study

Walpole Island First Nation (WIFN) approved my research proposal in December 2018 (Appendix B). After discussions with Walpole Island Heritage Centre Director Clint Jacobs and the Heritage Committee in early 2019, we decided that fieldwork would take place in the fall.

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[65] However, I was able to interview one Aklavik team member, Audrey Snowshoe, by phone.

[66] The Tsiigehtchic band office was closed while I was there, but I was able to see the Yellowknife outfit at the PWNHC.

I travelled to Ontario in October 2019 to complete interviews with community members and access any records on the 2014 repatriation of ancestors. Working closely with Clint Jacobs, I also organized two public presentations on my research. These were advertised locally with flyers distributed by the Heritage Centre (Figure 3.1a). These events were intended to introduce myself and my research to the wider community, however, both had less than ten people attend. While this was initially disappointing, the smaller groups proved fruitful for discussion. Shortly after the first presentation, I was able to meet with a local sewing group of mostly older women. When they asked what I was doing there, I explained that I had just given a talk about my research and mentioned the Heritage Centre flyers. They acknowledged seeing them but noted that they had not understood what the talk would be on, as "repatriation" was unfamiliar to them. This realization influenced the rest of my trip and subsequent research talks.

Figure 3.1a, b. Research presentation posters.
Figure 3.1a is the original poster for the October 2019 presentation. Figure 3.1b is the revised version for the January 2020 talk.

My October fieldwork was interrupted by the unexpected death of a good friend. While I was still able to complete five interviews and a review of relevant documents at the Heritage Centre, I decided to return in January 2020 to continue working with the community. This second trip also allowed me to organize a third presentation. This time, I changed the title of my talk to better explain "repatriation" and what it describes (Figure 3.1b). My efforts resulted in a significant increase in attendance, with almost 30 people (of all ages) joining me at the Heritage Centre. While the larger group limited some of the discussion, several attendees still identified key concerns and connections for repatriation in their community. While these observations are further considered in Chapter 8, I feel that knowing how to describe your research and thinking through the terms you choose to use—especially in a community context—are important methodological considerations to include here. Over both trips, I was able to connect with a large number of community members from Walpole Island. In total, I completed eight formal interviews with individuals involved in repatriation and other cultural work.

Data Collection and Analysis

Given my focus on gathering and learning from and about people's experiences, my research design is inherently qualitative. I employed three methods for data collection: 1) archival research; 2) observation; and 3) interviews. I discuss each in detail below. Data collection and analysis were undertaken within a grounded theory framework (Charmaz 2014; Charmaz and Belgrave 2014:348–349), which requires researchers to revisit their data regularly to identify potential themes and patterns, then adjust their sampling and data collection to expand, refine, and revise accordingly. This results in theories that are well grounded in the data and also inherently acknowledges the constructive role of the researcher in interpretation and analysis. Grounded theory offered a systematic and inductive approach to data collection and analyses, which allowed some research elements (i.e., interview questions and themes; participant selection) to evolve as my work progressed.

I also felt that this approach would be particularly beneficial within a collaborative framework, especially when limited by time and/or resources. Grounded theory requires the researcher to revisit and interact with a dataset while it is collected in the field. In this way, it encourages thorough and focused data collection based on situated experience and emerging ideas. Charmaz and Belgrave (2014:348, 357) have also noted that in-

depth interviews within a grounded theory approach are well suited to tell collective stories, rather than focus on individual accounts. For these reasons, a grounded theory approach was well suited to my research design.

Case Study Steps

I followed a similar set of research steps for each case, as summarized in Table 3.4. After finalizing my case selections, I reviewed available information on each repatriation to identify who was involved, what motivations there were for repatriation, and what procedures were followed. Much of this information was available through published and unpublished sources and was reviewed before I went into the field.

Upon arriving in each community, I introduced myself to community liaisons and coordinated with them to set out the research agenda, identify and connect with potential interview participants, and (for some) discuss their experiences with repatriation, both in general and specific to the case under study. Those early discussions informed both who and what I focused on later.

Table 3.4. Case study steps.

Preparation	
Step 1	Initial contact; background research.
Step 2	Community consultations and proposal approval/obtain permissions.
Step 3	Make additional contacts; plan community visits.
Community Visits	
Step 4	Introductions; on-site background research.
Step 5	Interviews; research presentations; talking circles; informal discussions.
Case Study Analysis	
Step 6	Transcribe interviews; return for review as requested.
Step 7	Code and analyze interview transcripts and other data.
Step 8	Follow up with interviewees, if necessary/possible.

My project was introduced in each community in different ways. I vised the Tłı̨chǫ shortly before their annual Tłı̨chǫ Gathering, so community partners connected me directly with interview participants when I visited Behchokǫ̀. The Walpole Island Heritage Centre included a short summary and introduction of my project in their quarterly newsletter. I also publicly presented my research during fieldwork trips. The Gwich'in Tribal Council Department of Culture & Heritage included an announcement on their social media sites. Later, I recorded a 10-minute presentation for each community to provide an update on my research that they could share via social media platforms. All of these promotional projects were discussed and developed in consultation with representatives in each community. The presentations were not meant for recruitment purposes, but I included my contact information so that I could address any questions that community members might have.

Archival Research

For each repatriation, I reviewed and examined the associated records, photos, documents, literature, and exhibit materials. The information provided by these records both increased my knowledge of relevant details, and substantiated peoples' recollections during interviews. This step was essential since two of the three cases I examined were nearly 20 years old. Records for each project were also digitized where possible and institutional approval was granted. These file libraries will be archived with each community upon completion of this project.

The types of records available, and access to them, varied. For example, I already had access to most of the documentation associated with the 2014 return of Walpole Island First Nation ancestors because I was involved in that project during my Master's thesis research (Meloche 2014). However, records relating to the ongoing seed rematriation work by the community and University of Michigan were more difficult to obtain. I was able to find several publications and press releases that provided enough detail on the project's foundations and corroborated participants' recollections. Similarly, I was able to access the PWNHC collections records of the Tłı̨chǫ lodge repatriation and the Gwich'in Clothing Project. Due to office moves and digitization initiatives, however, accessing community records on these projects proved more difficult. This was also the case with community records at the Walpole Island Heritage Centre.

Observation

I relied on my own experiences and observations throughout this project. The notes taken during site visits proved instrumental in gaining deeper understandings of each case and in formulating follow-up questions. I also revisited my notes from the 2014 Walpole Island First Nation repatriation project to recall any pertinent observations that could benefit or inform my work on that case.

Observation and field notes were pivotal during the 2018 event at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, which I attended before I began data collection for my dissertation. My experiences and conversations during this event directly informed my later work with the Tłįchǫ since I was introduced to important stories about the lodge and other related projects. I developed some preliminary ideas that I pursued during my later visits. I also built connections with eventual interview participants for both the Tłįchǫ and Gwich'in case studies.

I recorded observations and reflections whenever I visited relevant locations within each community. I visited several important sites including the public outfit displays in the Mackenzie Delta, the educational display of the birchbark canoe and the caribou skin lodge replicas in Behchokǫ̀, and the grave site and gardens on Bkejwanong (Walpole Island territory). Each site offered some insight into the case study, how people experienced the repatriation (both then and now), and what the legacy has been for each community.

Interviews

The bulk of data for this project came from in-depth, semi-structured interviews, and informal talking circles. Interviews are an important method for qualitative research and exist in a wide range of forms (Roulston and Choi 2018). In my work, these often functioned as "directed conversations" (Charmaz and Belgrave 2014:349; see also Holstein and Gubrium 1995) in which I guided the initial direction, but participants ultimately shaped the course of discussion. I completed interviews in each community, seeking information on peoples' experiences with the repatriation project, its process, and any perceived effects (positive and/or negative). The grounded theory approach I employed was well suited to the emergent nature of these conversations.

I conducted interviews in person whenever possible. My preference was to meet participants in a location of their choosing, that was appropriate for a safe and confidential interview. Locations varied, including a public library in Inuvik, a fish camp in Tsiigehtchic, government offices in Behchokǫ̀, personal living rooms, and an outdoor bench at the University of Windsor. When I was unable to connect with individuals in person, I conducted the interview by phone and over Zoom. Honoraria were given to most interview participants; exceptions were those who met with me as part of their current employment and thus declined.

Interviews were conducted in English, with some use of participants' own language (e.g., to identify terms or explain a story). Times ranged from 30 to 90 minutes. Most participants agreed to audio-record our conversations. However, some were uncomfortable being recorded and other discussions were more spontaneous and casual in nature. In these cases, I took notes as we talked. Sometimes these more informal conversations were followed by a formal interview. At other times, a formal interview was also followed by one or more informal conversations. When I spoke with a group of people (i.e., after my presentations at the Walpole Island Heritage Centre or when speaking with sewing/beading circle members), I simply took notes and recorded my observations.

Consent and Other Ethical Considerations

My research design and project plans were reviewed by the SFU Office of Research Ethics and each partner community.[67] As noted above, ethics approval was granted in 2019. Consent forms for interviews and participation in the project were reviewed by my liaisons in each community. While a general version was approved by both the Tłįchǫ and Walpole Island First Nation, the Gwich'in Department of Culture & Heritage required several adjustments. Importantly, they revised the consent form to remove the option for anonymity. This ensured that all Gwich'in interview participants would be recognized by name.

Ahead of each interview, I provided interview participants with a written consent form (Appendix C). These included information on the research project, the interview process, any risks or benefits to the participant, and data management procedures. I

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[67] All project photos featured in this dissertation were provided by project organizers and their use here approved by community partners.

reviewed the consent form with each participant ahead of formal interviews and answered any questions they had. At times, oral consent was given instead of a formal signature. This occurred for a variety of reasons (e.g., when the interview was conducted over the phone, or the participant was unwilling to sign a form).

My study was designated by the SFU Office of Research Ethics to be of minimal risk to participants. As noted in Chapter 1, however, repatriation is a sensitive topic and one that often arouses emotional distress. This was alleviated by the study focus on the effects of successful repatriations—that is, those in which ancestors and belongings have already been returned. Nonetheless, many ancestors and belongings remain out of descendants' control. In some cases, conversations were very emotional for participants. Concern for those "still out there" was often raised at the same time as individuals expressed their gratitude for those that had already been returned. At all times, participants were aware that they could stop or withdraw from the interview. I also provided relevant information for local mental health support where desired. However, many participants, and especially those who grew emotional, insisted on continuing. They indicated that they felt their experiences needed to be shared with and for future generations.

Interview Guide

Working from an extensive literature review on repatriation (Chapter 2), I developed a general interview guide (Appendix D). The first iteration was informed by themes frequently mentioned in the literature, including the development or revitalization of cultural practices, the generation of material culture (e.g., burial boxes, cultural regalia for repatriation ceremonies); the presence or absence of the returned materials in the community (e.g., ceremonial materials); the development or demise of institutional relationships; the economic benefits or burdens associated with repatriation work; the development of local or institutional policies; and the influence of repatriation on socio-political capacity and socio-economic infrastructure. This guide was modified to suit each case, and specific questions were adjusted accordingly.

I typically started the interviews by asking participants about their experience, how and why they got involved in the project. Then I asked about the more specific process(es) and procedure(s) followed for each repatriation. Discussions also explored whether (and how) their experiences affected them personally. I asked participants

about their perspectives on what sorts of benefits there were in returning the requested materials, and what challenges they faced. Depending on where conversations trended, I also asked about more recent projects and cultural work undertaken in each community. Finally, I asked participants for their thoughts on how this work fits within the ongoing reconciliation efforts in Canada.

Use of the guide during interviews varied. It was intended as an outline rather than a script. In some cases, when I reached out to invite individuals for an interview, participants would ask for the guide or sample questions. This was particularly the case for participants in the Tłįchǫ and Gwich'in studies, where the projects had been carried out nearly 20 years prior. Other participants said they were nervous about being interviewed and felt that the guide would give them a better idea of the things I wanted them to talk about. For these reasons, I emailed the guide along with the consent form. When that was not possible, I had a printed or handwritten list of questions to bring to the interview.

My intention for the interviews was to let participants direct the conversation and talk about what they felt was interesting or important. Providing the question guide to participants ahead of the interview likely influenced their responses to some degree. In reality, the actual conversations I had with people never seemed to strictly adhere to the guide and more often went in different or unexpected directions. However, the guide did help to cue both myself and the participant to return to core topic when conversations veered off course.

Participant Selection

I selected interview participants using a purposive sampling strategy. This involves selecting individuals who will generate "information rich" data, though defining what that means is dependent on the study and/or research questions (Schreier 2018:88). Magnusson and Marecek (2015:35) have noted that for interpretive research, sampling is always purposive since research questions are often concerned with understanding experiences of a particular phenomenon. Researchers are thus more likely to select for those individuals who have had such experiences.

A purposive strategy for participant selection allowed me to identify specific community members who had the most relevant knowledge for the goals of this project. Because I aimed to understand experiences of repatriation in each community, it was

logical to begin with those who had direct involvement with repatriation. This included heritage advisors, elected and traditional leaders, and Elders. Some were identified in published and unpublished accounts of the repatriation. I also worked with my partners to identify appropriate people to speak with. In many cases, this aligned well with those whom I had already considered.

I contacted many prospective interview participants directly, using verbal (in person or by telephone) and written (letter or email) means. This proved effective and I was able to complete 35 total interviews, including both formal interviews (recorded and transcribed) and more informal discussions (not recorded, notes taken). As presented in Table 3.5, this included 8 formal interviews and 2 formal discussions for the Tłı̨chǫ case study; 10 formal interviews and 1 informal discussion for the Gwich'in case study; 6 formal interviews and 5 informal discussions for the Walpole Island First Nation case study;[68] and 4 additional formal interviews with PWNHC staff. Table 3.6 lists interview participants and dates.[69]

Table 3.5. Interview totals.

Nation	Total	Formal Interviews	Informal Discussions
Tłı̨chǫ	10	8	2
Gwich'in	11	10	1
Walpole Island First Nation	10	6	5

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[68] Note that Walpole Island First Nation Elders and interview participants C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac passed into the spirit world before this dissertation was completed. With the support of the community, I include their stories as they told them to me.

[69] Appendix E provides more detailed information about interview participants, including names, interview dates, and role(s) in the associated repatriation project.

Table 3.6. Interviews and participants, organized by case study.

	Interview Date	Name	Interview Location
Tłı̨chǫ Case Study	Informal conversation	Tammy Steinwand	Yellowknife, NWT
	June 20, 2019	Peter Huskey	Yellowknife, NWT
	June 21, 2019	Don Gardner	Yellowknife, NWT
	June 24, 2019	Giselle Marion	Behchokǫ̀, Tłı̨chǫ Territory [NWT]
	June 27, 2019 (*)	John B. Zoe	Yellowknife, NWT
	July 4, 2019	George Mackenzie	Behchokǫ̀, Tłı̨chǫ Territory [NWT]
	July 4, 2019	Jim Martin	Behchokǫ̀, Tłı̨chǫ Territory [NWT]
	July 4, 2019	Tony Rabesca	Behchokǫ̀, Tłı̨chǫ Territory [NWT]
	October 17, 2019	Rosa Mantla	Phone
	June 25, 2019	Mike Mitchell	Yellowknife, NWT
	August 1, 2019 (*)	Tom Andrews (with Ingrid Kritsch)	Edmonton, AB
Gwich' in Case Study	Several informal conversations (*)	Sharon Snowshoe	Fort McPherson, Gwich'in Settlement Area [NWT]
	June 23, 2019 (*)	Karen Wright-Fraser	Yellowknife, NWT
	June 27, 2019 (*)	Audrey Snowshoe	Phone
	July 5, 2019	Shirley Stewart	Yellowknife, NWT
	July 24, 2019	Lillian Wright	Inuvik, Gwich'in Settlement Area [NWT]
	July 24, 2019	Ruth Wright	Inuvik, Gwich'in Settlement Area [NWT]
	July 27, 2019	Agnes Mitchell	Tsiigehtchic, Gwich'in Settlement Area [NWT]
	July 27, 2019	Maureen Cardinal-Clark	Tsiigehtchic, Gwich'in Settlement Area [NWT]
	August 28, 2019 (*)	Mary Clark	Phone
	August 1, 2019 (*)	Ingrid Kritsch (with Tom Andrews)	Edmonton, AB
	September 12, 2019	Alestine Andre	Phone

	Interview Date	Name	Interview Location
Walpole Island First Nation Case Study	November 1, 2019 January 10, 2020 Several informal conversations (*)	Clint Jacobs	Bkejwanong/ Walpole Island
	October 24, 2019 (*)	Tanya Dodge	Bkejwanong/ Walpole Island
	October 29, 2019	Russell Nahdee	Windsor, ON
	November 1, 2019 (*)	Dean Jacobs	Bkejwanong/ Walpole Island
	November 1, 2019	Montana Riley	Bkejwanong/ Walpole Island
	January 13, 2020	C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac	Bkejwanong/ Walpole Island
	March 13, 2020 (*)	Bryan Loucks	Phone
	January 28, 2021 (*)	David W. White	Phone/Zoom
Additional Interviews	June 21, 2019	Joanne Bird	Phone
	July 3, 2019	Anonymous	
	July 5, 2019	Rosalie Scott	PWNHC
	Several informal conversations (*)	Susan Irving	PWNHC

Data Analysis

My grounded theory approach to data analysis involved reviewing and reflecting on data while in the field, then adjusting my data collection methods (i.e., interview questions) when necessary, to clarify their meaning for participants. Interviews were transcribed and then thematically coded along with other data (i.e., archival materials, media coverage). Codes were initially developed based on my knowledge of scholarly work that has explored repatriation as a form of restorative justice (Bruchac 2010, 2021; Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2007; Simpson 2009) and means toward reconciliation and healing (Atalay 2019; Colwell 2019; Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020; Simkin 2020; Wergin 2021). Furthermore, conversations with Clint Jacobs (Walpole Island Heritage Centre) emphasized the need to "listen deeply" and with an open heart to understand

the intended meaning of participants' stories and reflections (January 10, 2020).[70] This was similar to a point made by anthropologist Allice Legat while working with Tłı̨chǫ Elders, who noted that writing without feeling in research only provides half the story (Legat 2012:9) Thus, I made a conscious effort to re-immerse myself in each case study's dataset during analysis, listening with intention and identifying relevant emotional cues during discussions. I also sought to capture the emotional dimensions of this work in my writing by including long block quotes from interviews.

Transcription

I transcribed all recorded interviews using transcription software. This allowed me to track, pause, and rewind audio recordings more easily. As part of the consent process, I offered to return transcripts to participants for review and commentary where desired. These follow-up consultations sometimes continued earlier conversations. Importantly, this approach continues to involve community members and partners in the research process, where desired. This can be essential for issues around voice (see discussion under "Research Challenges and Limitations" below). It also allowed for corrections to be made and any sensitive or inappropriate information to be removed before analysis, which ensured the accuracy of my interpretations.

Case Study Analyses

Once transcripts were finalized, I undertook analysis in two stages: 1) within individual case studies; and 2) in a cross-case comparison. This approach allowed me to address my second and third objectives: to first identify any local effects of repatriation, and then to identify similarities and/or differences across communities. Comparison of the three cases also identified things that worked (or not) in a variety of contexts, which addresses my fourth objective.

For each case study, I employed an inductive and iterative process of reading and re-reading transcripts and other data to code it into thematic subcategories (Braun and Clarke 2006:79; Hancock and Algozzine 2011:78–79). Data coding, as described by Charmaz and Belgrave (2014), requires the construction of "short labels that describe,

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[70] For further discussion on deep listening and heart-centred research in archaeology see Schmidt and Kehoe 2019; Supernant et al. 2020.

dissect, and distill the data, while preserving its essential properties." Coded themes at both stages were preliminarily developed from my literature review, but quickly evolved from my knowledge of the data. I coded interview and documentary data in Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis software program. This digital platform allowed me to organize data, notes, and preliminary ideas into one file.

Individual Case Studies

Case study data included project-related archival materials, my fieldnotes, and interview transcripts. It also incorporated relevant publications and media coverage. I initially coded these data across three general areas, including the community's history and context, past and ongoing heritage projects, and reflections on the impacts, benefits, and challenges relevant to the repatriation in question. The first two were necessary to understand each community's context and history. Such information was typically used to inform my writing on community histories and case study backgrounds.

The third area of coding focused on identifying the effects of repatriation across a broad spectrum of community experiences. For this, I coded data twice: first, using short, descriptive codes (e.g., reconnection-revitalization, personal pride, environmental implications, economic benefits), then I grouped these into more general categories of "effects" (i.e., socio-cultural, political, economic). The second level of coding helped to organize my observations. Table 3.6 identifies these codes by case study; effect groups are also noted. For each study, there were several additional effects that were more general; these are not grouped, rather, they correspond more directly with an effect category (e.g., "Personal health" corresponds with "Health/Well-being effects"). Table 3.7 provides definitions for the more general categories of "effects." A more detailed and descriptive codebook is also included as Appendix F.

Table 3.7. Summary and organization of individual case study coding.

Tłįchǫ Case Study		Gwich'in Case Study		Walpole Island First Nation Case Study	
Socio-cultural effects	Social connections	*Socio-cultural effects*	Ancestral relationships	*Socio-cultural effects*	Ancestor-descendant relationships
	Reconnection-revitalization of cultural practices		Friendships/ camaraderie		Community relationships
	New material culture		Material-tangible outcomes		Obligations-responsibilities
			Education- teaching others		Reconnection to traditional practices
	Education-youth/ Elders		Reconnection to traditional practices		Cultural education-teachings
Political effects	Pride in culture/ Tłįchǫ community	*Political effects*	Personal pride	*Political effects*	Inter-community connections
	Tłįchǫ political figures/ politics		Pride in culture/ Gwich'in community		Formalizing WIFN repatriation procedures
	Nation-building		Political support		Personal pride
					Repatriation-sovereignty
Economic effects	Logistical challenges	*Economic effects*	Logistical challenges	*Economic effects*	Self-sufficiency
	Costs/funding		Costs/funding		Funding for projects (not just repatriation)
	Economic benefits		Economic benefits		
Environmental implications/ climate change		Personal feelings/ mental health		Personal and community health	
Personal health		Important for future reconciliation		Reconciliation-healing	
Reconciliation					

Table 3.8. "Effect" category definitions.

Effect Category	Definition
Socio-cultural effects	This category included data that identified impacts on the community's social organization, beliefs system, cultural traditions, or material productions. I initially began coding the data into separate "Social" and "Cultural" effect categories. However, I quickly realized that the overlap between the two would be too restrictive and decided to combine them.
Political effects	This category included data that identified impacts or involvement of political bodies or individuals, politically motivated actions, nation-building, and identity. Personal Pride and Community Pride were difficult to place; ultimately, they were grouped here due to their influence on nation-building/community identity.
Economic effects	This category included data that identified financial and logistical challenges, capacity-building, and any potential economic benefits.
Personal effects	This category included data that identified impacts on personal feelings and emotions.
Spiritual effects	This category included data that identified spiritual impacts, such as ancestral spirits and other relations.
Health/Well-being Effects	This category included data that identified impacts on mental and physical health, and community well-being

These general categories of "effects" structured my thinking and writing. However, as can be seen above and in Table 3.6, they often overlap. For example, in the Walpole Island First Nation case study, I grouped both "ancestor-descendant relationships" and "community relationships" within "socio-cultural effects," while "inter-community connections" (also a form of relationship) was categorized as a "political effect." Data that identified personal feelings and emotional responses to repatriation work could be grouped under both "personal effects" and "health/Well-being effects" (and, arguably, "spiritual effects"). Thus, while these overarching categories were useful in organizing coded data, it is important to remember that they are not wholly distinct from one another.

Cross-Case Study

During the second stage of analysis, I compared coded data across the dataset to identify any similarities and differences in effects among partner communities' experiences. This would address my third objective for the project. These "effects" were defined in the same way as above. Table 3.8 shows my identification of similar and different codes across the three case studies. The same codes from Table 3.6 are presented and similar themes within the "effect" categories are identified by colour coding. For example, within "socio-cultural effects," "cultural education" was emphasized as an important outcome of repatriation projects in each community (identified across the dataset by a dark orange colour). Similarly, the costs of repatriation were an important consideration across all three case studies (identified by a blue colour). Those codes that are not colour-coded represent important differences between partner communities' experiences.

While coding, I noticed that underlying many interview discussions was the idea of repatriation as related to increased health and well-being; the emotional investment and thus impact of repatriation on individual participants; and the spiritual aspects of repatriation and other reclamation work. I thus incorporated these into my analysis and discussion in Chapter 7, rather than present them in individual case study chapters.

Table 3.9. Cross-case comparison of case study coding.
Matching colours indicate similar codes/themes across data set. Absence of colour indicates differences.

Tłı̨chǫ Case Study		Gwich'in Case Study		Walpole Island First Nation Case Study	
Socio-cultural effects	Social connections	*Socio-cultural effects*	Ancestral relationships	*Socio-cultural effects*	Ancestor-descendant relationships
	Reconnection-revitalization of cultural practices		Friendships/ camaraderie		Community relationships
	New material culture		Material-tangible outcomes		Obligations-responsibilities
			Education- teaching others		Reconnection to traditional practices
	Education-youth/ Elders		Reconnection to traditional practices		Cultural education-teachings
Political effects	Pride in culture/ Tłı̨chǫ community	*Political effects*	Personal pride	*Political effects*	Inter-community connections
	Tłı̨chǫ political figures/ politics		Pride in culture/ Gwich'in community		Formalizing WIFN repatriation procedures
	Nation-building		Political support		Personal pride
					Repatriation-sovereignty
Economic effects	Logistical challenges	*Economic effects*	Logistical challenges	*Economic effects*	Self-sufficiency
	Costs/funding		Costs/funding		Funding for projects (not just repatriation)
	Economic benefits		Economic benefits		
Environmental implications/ climate change		Personal feelings/ mental health		Personal and community health	
Personal health		Important for future reconciliation		Reconciliation-healing	
Reconciliation					

Research Challenges and Limitations

An important challenge for any community-based and collaborative research—and especially projects that involve Indigenous peoples—is to think critically about "voice" in conveying stories and research findings. Given that I am a white, settler individual, this was an important concern. With this in mind, I have indicated where participant knowledge informed my interpretations and writing by citing conversations in the text. I was also intentional about including long block quotes to recognize the input and voices of participants. In-text references for formal and informal interviews identify individuals' names and the date of the conversation. Additional information gained through follow up conversations are identified as personal communications (i.e., "pers comm."). Appendix E contains further details, including the interview location, participants' project roles, and their occupation at the time of the interview (where available).

I shared both my research ideas and writing with community representatives and (when they were interested) interview participants. I asked that individuals review quotes used from our interviews to ensure accuracy and that I was appropriately presenting what they meant to convey. These reviews occurred at several levels, including transcripts, case study drafts, and the full dissertation. Where desired, these were provided to community partners and interested participants to review and comment on. When I received feedback, I discussed it with community representatives and, where appropriate, incorporated it into the revised version(s). Even with such measures, I was cognizant that my focus on "effects" in my analysis and interpretations implies a causal relationship between repatriation and the identified "effect." In reality, these relationships are more complex and nuanced. Assumptions around a linear/causal relationship (i.e., removal-repatriation-return-effect) may contradict Indigenous perspectives which take a more holistic approach to understanding repatriation.

In a sense, this project was both too big and too small. In choosing to complete a comparative case study, I have favoured variety and comparison over depth. Given this, only a limited understanding of the diversity of experiences *within* communities is considered here. Participants were generally limited to those individuals who were directly involved in projects, restricting a broader understanding of community opinions on repatriation. Moreover, constraints on logistical aspects of the project (i.e., case selection, time, and budget) further impacted my research plans. For example, because I

had limited funding at the start of my doctoral program, it was difficult to plan for extensive, in-person fieldwork (though this changed when I received a SSHRC doctoral fellowship in 2018). Because of this, early on, I felt that some communities that have had extensive experience with repatriation, such as the Haida, were inaccessible because of limitations on my time and resources. Similarly, several communities keen to work with me in the beginning were unable to because of constraints of their own.

In 2020, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic for a new coronavirus—COVID-19. I was fortunate to have been able to finish my in-person fieldwork in January 2020, and I completed additional interviews by phone or over zoom. The mandated isolation and heightened anxiety brought on by these and other events (i.e., widescale civil unrest, increasing impacts of climate change, personal grief) have had lasting impacts on my emotional, physical, and mental health, leaving me to complete my research and writing in a state of burnout. While I was able to persevere, these issues have undoubtably influenced aspects of my dissertation research.

Chapter Summary

The aim of my research has been to understand how repatriation may affect receiving communities. Given this, I designed a multi-case study that would allow me to explore several examples of repatriation in-depth, and then compare the results. I partnered with the Tłı̨chǫ Government, the Gwich'in Tribal Council Department of Culture & Heritage, and the Walpole Island Heritage Centre to explore three examples of repatriation. With the Tłı̨chǫ, I reviewed the repatriation of a traditional caribou skin lodge covering in 1997. I examined the reconnection to traditional knowledge and skills through the Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project (2000–2003). Then, working with Walpole Island First Nation, I explored the return of ancestors from two universities in 2014.

I grounded my research design in principles of collaborative research and worked with partner communities to develop this project, identify appropriate data collection methods, and carry out my fieldwork. To ensure accuracy and that my interpretations were appropriate, I also asked community liaisons and interested research participants to review and comment on draft chapters as they were completed.

I undertook data collection and analysis within a grounded theory approach structured to some extent by discussions in the relevant scholarly literature. In addition to an extensive literature review (Chapter 2), I used qualitative methods for case study data collection, including archival research, observation, and in-depth interviews. Collected data were then coded for common themes based on both my knowledge of the literature and evolving understandings of the data itself. Data was coded within individual case studies first, to identify case-specific experiences and effects. These codes were then grouped into more general categories of "effects."

A secondary round of analysis compared coded data across the dataset to identify similarities and/or differences among partner community experiences. While no two experiences are alike, community-identified benefits from, and/or challenges faced during the repatriation process can inform a better understanding of the potential impacts of this work. This can lead to the development of more culturally sensitive and proactive policy and support. In the next three chapters (4, 5, and 6), I present the results of the individual case study analyses, and in Chapter 7, I present and discuss the comparison of these.

Chapter 4.

The Tłįchǫ Caribou Skin Lodge

In 1997, the University of Iowa Museum of Natural History returned a caribou skin lodge or *ekwǫ̀ nįhmbàa* to the Tłįchǫ in the Northwest Territories (NWT), Canada.[71] The lodge was legally purchased by explorer Frank Russell in 1893. Russell was employed by the University to collect specimens in the far north. It was transferred to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC) in Yellowknife, NWT, where it remains today.

Tłįchǫ have long undertaken projects in close collaboration with the PWNHC (Andrews and Zoe 1997, 1998; Verge 1978). Several of these have sought to revitalize Tłįchǫ traditional practices and reconnect with historical artifacts. To learn more about the lodge repatriation and its effects, I completed ten interviews and examined the archival records on the 1893 lodge, its repatriation, a reproduction project, and an education-focused event held in 2018. I interviewed both Tłįchǫ individuals and PWNHC employees to understand contextual and logistical details of these projects, and to learn what the benefits and challenges of these projects have been, why they were so important to do, and what their legacy has been for Tłįchǫ.

In this chapter, I examine the repatriation of the Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge and consider the effects that it has had. It is important to note that, while the repatriation of the lodge grounds my case study, it is situated within a broad network of collaborative projects focused on heritage reclamation and revitalization. First, I introduce the Tłįchǫ and their history. I then describe connected heritage projects (both before and after the return of the lodge) in some detail before providing details on the repatriation itself. I describe what happened next, using the results of interviews and archival research. Finally, I identify the legacy of the lodge's repatriation for Tłįchǫ by examining the socio-cultural, political, and economic effects.

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[71] I use "lodge" to describe this repatriated object and follow the existing literature. However, many participants also used "tipi" when discussing or describing it.

Tłı̨chǫ People

The Tłı̨chǫ are a Dene people, living in the Northwest Territories (NWT), Canada. Formerly known as Dogrib, Tłı̨chǫ and other Dene groups[72] have been here from time immemorial and certainly, archaeological evidence supports their occupation for thousands of years (Hanks 1997). However, rapid socio-cultural and economic shifts following contact with Europeans in the late eighteenth century significantly impacted traditional lifeways and culture. Today, the Tłı̨chǫ Nation's population numbers approximately 3,000 (Government of the Northwest Territories 2019a). Most members live in the four main communities of Behchokǫ̀, Whatì, Gamètì, and Wekweètì.[73] Of these, only Behchokǫ̀ is accessible by road year-round. [74] The other communities are accessible by ice road in the winter and by plane or canoes in the summer. There are also a number of Tłı̨chǫ people living and working in Yellowknife, the territory's capital.

The Tłı̨chǫ Land Claim and Self-Government Agreement, signed in 2005, returned control over 39,000 km^2 to the Tłı̨chǫ and established the Tłı̨chǫ Government. Tłı̨chǫ territory— Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nı̨ı̨tłèè —encompasses much of the Bear-Slave Uplands, north Great Slave Lake region and extending to the Great Bear Lake (Figure 4.1). This landscape features many lakes and waterways. It includes boreal forests in the west and extends into the barrenlands, in the northeast. The Tłı̨chǫ Agreement also established the Tłı̨chǫ Government, which enacts and implements laws, and protects the rights and interests of Tłı̨chǫ within this territory.

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[72] Dene are Athapaskan-speaking peoples living across the western subarctic and northern boreal regions of Canada. There are several Dene groups living in the NWT today. They include the Tłı̨chǫ, Sahtú Dene, Dehcho, Akaitcho, and Gwich'in. The Dene Nation—of which the Tłı̨chǫ Nation is a member— is an advocacy organization working to support Dene interests and rights in the Northwest Territories and elsewhere (https://denenation.com/).

[73] Formerly known as Rae-Edzo, Lac La Martre, Rae Lakes, and Snare Lake, respectively.

[74] However, an all-season road to Whatì opened in late 2021 (Government of the Northwest Territories 2021).
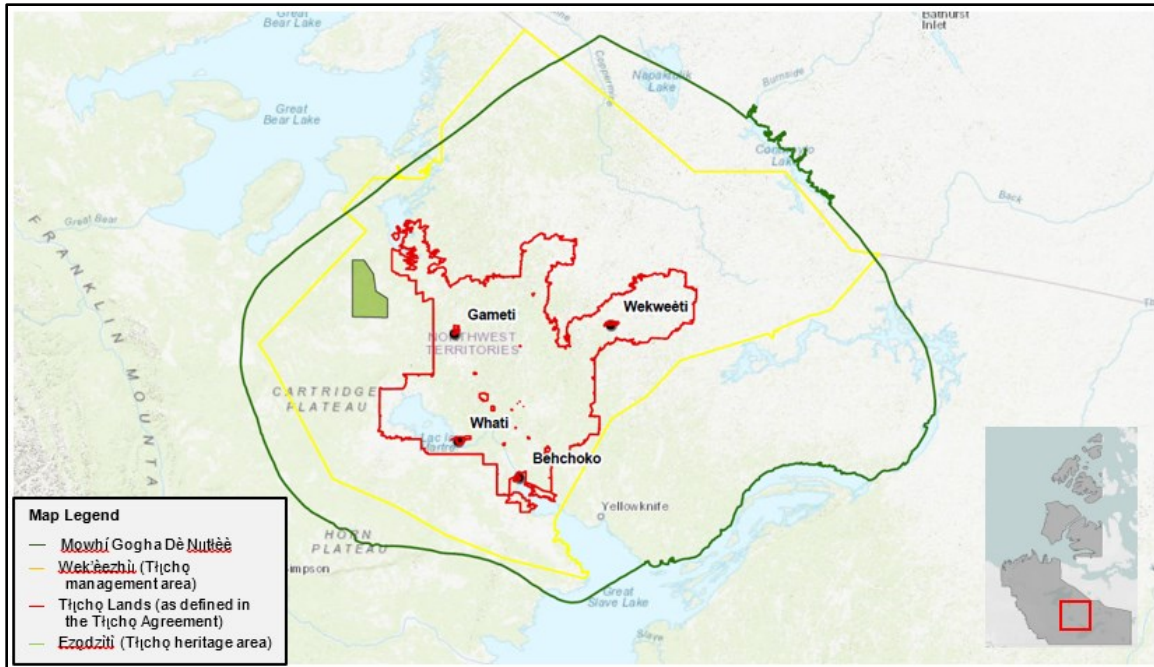
Figure 4.1. Tłı̨chǫ territory, as outlined in the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement.
Source: https://www.Tłı̨chǫ.ca/Tłı̨chǫ-mapping

Historically, the Tłı̨chǫ, like other subarctic Dene groups, were highly mobile, travelling seasonally. Traditional on-the-land subsistence practices such as hunting, fishing, and berry gathering continue to be important to Tłı̨chǫ culture and lifeways. However, rapidly declining caribou herds in recent years has resulted in severe restrictions on hunting, which has shifted contemporary subsistence (Walsh 2015, 2016). Trapping has long been a significant source of income for Dene and other peoples in the NWT. In recent years, however, falling prices of fur and the rise of environmental and animal advocacy groups have resulted in a steady decline of trapping as a primary source of income for most (Andrews 2011:28). Today, mining and oil/gas extraction make up nearly 30% of the NWT's gross domestic product (Government of the Northwest Territories 2019b). While these industries must consult and work with the Tłı̨chǫ Government when operating on Tłı̨chǫ lands, they have had both positive and negative impacts on local communities (see Davison and Hawe 2012).

Tłı̨chǫ Cosmology and History

For thousands of years, Tłı̨chǫ have travelled *Denendeh* (the land), moving seasonally from the bush to the barrenlands, and back again. This highly mobile lifestyle

resulted in an intimate relationship to the land, with extensive knowledge of its topography, distribution of game, and connections to Tłįchǫ knowledge and history (Andrews 2011:33; Andrews and Zoe 1997:162–163; Legat 2012; Zoe 2007)—a relationship that continues to be very important to Tłįchǫ today.

What Tłįchǫ refer to as their cosmology is their "traditional understanding of how they came to be, their relationship to the earth, and how they develop as a people" (John B. Zoe, June 27, 2019; Tłįchǫ Government 2014). It is understood through stories, legends, and myths, and is built from people's life experiences. The land is inextricably intertwined as well, since stories are often anchored to specific places on the landscape (Andrews 2004; 2011:42; Asch et al. 1986; see also Ruiz 2017:256–257; Walsh 2015b, 2017). For Tłįchǫ, knowledge is carried forward and shared through travel and experience (Andrews and Zoe 1997; Andrews et al. 1998; Legat 2012:14, 175–176). Thus, visiting places and travelling on the land—what Andrews (2011:27) calls "wayfinding"—is essential to an understanding of Tłįchǫ heritage, territory, and lifeways (see also Zoe 2006). To have travelled extensively means that you are a well-informed person, as these cultural landscapes tell the history of the Tłįchǫ people.

Tłįchǫ cosmology also serves to organize their history, tracing stages of Tłįchǫ development, and cataloguing the various relationships that are embedded in these stages. For example, what some refer to as "floating time" (Helm 2000:221; Helm and Gillespie 1981:9–10; John B. Zoe, June 27, 2019; Tłįchǫ Government 2014a) and others call "the old world" (Andrews 2011:70), describes a period in Tłįchǫ history that exists before and outside of common conceptions of a linear time. This period is often described as a time of creation, connection, and chaos. Stories from this era tell of the close relationships between humans and animals, all of whom could understand one another and change forms at will (Shopify 2017; John B. Zoe, June 27, 2019). It was also a highly dangerous time that only ended with the arrival and actions of the Tłįchǫ culture-hero, *Yamǫ̀zha*.[75] This period of co-existence can then be traced through a more linear or "relative" time (Andrews 2011:74; Helm 2000:221–222; Helm and Gillespie 1981:9–10).

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[75]*Yamǫ̀zha* is a figure common to many Dene stories, though he appears by a different name depending on the group (e.g., he is *Yamǫ́rıa* for the Sahtú Dene, and *Atachùukąįį* for the Gwich'in) (see https://www.nwtexhibits.ca/yamoria/; also Andrews 2011; Andrews and Zoe 1997:167, n. 9).

Contact with Europeans

While early contact with settler populations occurred gradually,[76] the resulting changes to Tłįchǫ ways of life were significant. Subarctic anthropologist June Helm (2000:108–110) noted that Europeans were likely first encountered through the import or trade of new technologies, like firearms and other European goods, and via stories. This was closely followed by what Helm refers to as the "contract-traditional era," with an influx of explorers and fur traders in the late eighteenth century (2000:107, 110–114).

The fur trade became an important economy for Tłįchǫ and other Dene groups in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[77] While many prospered during this time, involvement in the fur trade and other northern exploration initiatives brought significant socio-cultural changes. Before the fur trade, Tłįchǫ did not recognize individuals as "chiefs" (by today's definitions) within their communities. However, the Hudson Bay Company (HBC)'s policy of trading with *leaders* resulted in the rise of "trading chiefs," or *donek'awi* (Helm 2000:183–187).[78] These individuals were excellent hunters and affable members of their communities, recognized by traders as key people to work with (Helm 2000:186). Larger groups would trade their furs using them as intermediaries with the trading companies. The *donek'awi* would then redistribute the trade goods among their group or community.

Christian missionaries also made their way north during this period. Helm (2000:115) notes that many groups were quickly converted, and by the 1890s, most people had become Roman Catholic. Today, traditional beliefs and practices continue within Christian systems (see Helm 1994; Walsh 2017). Roman Catholic Oblate and Anglican churches and mission schools appeared in the NWT after 1850 (TRC 2015d: 14–15). These residential schools continued into the twentieth century, when legislation enacted by the Canadian government required Indigenous children to attend. For children in the north, they were often very far from home communities and lacking in

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[76] Settler peoples are also known as *Kweèt'įį,* meaning "stone people" or "people who live in stone houses" (Andrews and Zoe 1997:16, note 1; Legat 2012:3).

[77] It was also important for Inuit peoples living along the northern coasts (e.g., the Inuvialuit Living History project http://www.inuvialuitlivinghistory.ca/wiki_pages/About).

[78] The HBC was originally incorporated in the seventeenth century, but in 1821 it merged with the NorthWest Co. (a previous competitor). It established ten trading forts across the north (Helm 2000:26), including Old Fort Rae (in 1852) at Mountain Island on the north arm of the Great Slave Lake. The old fort moved to the present-day location of Behchokǫ̀ (formerly Rae-Edzo) in 1905, after the mission was relocated there (Andrews 2011:110, n. 81; Helm 2000:27)

adequate funds, food, and space. Students were isolated, separated from their families for many years at a time, forced to learn a new language and religion, and sometimes severely punished for minor infractions (TRC 2015d:17, 23–25, 26–27).[79] Illnesses and epidemics were common, given the close quarters of students, poor diets, and limited medical services (TRC 2015d: 27–31). Given these conditions, many children died. The impacts from residential schooling are still being reckoned with today in many Tłįchǫ communities.

Treaty Promises and Self-Government

> *As long as the sun rises, the river flows, if the land does not move, we will not be restricted from our way of life*
> —Chief Monfwi, Tłįchǫ signatory for Treaty 11 at Fort Rae, 1921.[80]

By the late nineteenth century, government interest in the North, mainly for the purposes of resource extraction and land expropriation, required treaties to control access to the territory (Fumoleau 2004:24). The Tłįchǫ and other Dene groups living in the Mackenzie Valley signed Treaty 11 (1921) immediately after the discovery of oil there. Provisions for annual payments, medical services, education, and senior care were negotiated in exchange for land and resource rights. However, the Tłįchǫ and other Dene groups today contest the interpretation of Treaty 11 as a cessation of title and several modern-day Land Claims have been settled or are in negotiation (Fumoleau 2004:273–276).

Ultimately, many promises made in Treaty 11 were not upheld and Indigenous rights were often infringed upon. The years following the treaty signing were marked by government and industry expansion into the Mackenzie Valley, restrictions on hunting and trapping, and continuing health concerns (Fumoleau 2004:351–410). In 1974, the Dene-Métis Land Claim negotiations began, with a coalition of groups working towards a final agreement with the Canadian Government together. In 1990, these negotiations broke off. The Dene-Métis groups refused to surrender existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights, and the government saw this as a full rejection. Following this, many Dene groups began to negotiate their own claims. The Dogrib Treaty 11 Council negotiated a

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[79] Isolation, illness, and emotional, physical, and sexual abuse were unfortunately, common experiences across the Indian Residential School system in Canada (TRC 2015).

[80] Monfwi remains an important figure today. His words at the treaty signing—cited above—are often repeated (Tłįchǫ Government 2014b).

successful Agreement-in-Principle in 2000 that ensured provisions for self-government. In 2003, the Tłı̨chǫ Land Claim and Self-Government Agreement was finalized and signed. It was the first combined Land Claim and Self-Government Agreement in the NWT (Government of the Northwest Territories n.d. "Concluding").

The Tłı̨chǫ Land Claim and Self-Government Agreement (hereafter the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement) identified and returned control over Tłı̨chǫ lands; set a compensation amount for all Tłı̨chǫ; established the powers of the Tłı̨chǫ Government; and enacted the Tłı̨chǫ Constitution (Tłı̨chǫ Government 2017a). The Tłı̨chǫ Agreement returned approximately 39,000 km^2 of Tłı̨chǫ traditional territory. It identifies four specific regions (see Figure 4.1 above): Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nı̨ı̨tłèè (Tłı̨chǫ traditional use area); Wek'èezhìı (a resource management area within the Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nı̨ı̨tłèè); Tłı̨chǫ lands (lands and resource rights officially owned by the Tłı̨chǫ); and Ezodziti (an area of historical and cultural significance outside the Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nı̨ı̨tłèè).[81]

Since it was first established nearly 15 years ago, the Tłı̨chǫ Government has worked to develop and implement social and cultural programs, as well as enact various legal mechanisms to protect Tłı̨chǫ rights within their territory (Tłı̨chǫ Government 2017b).[82] One of their mandates has been to protect and promote Tłı̨chǫ culture, language, and way of life. The Department of Culture and Lands Protection now oversees this important work, implementing programs that connect youth with their Elders on the land, like the Tłı̨chǫ Į̣mbè Program and the ongoing Trails of Our Ancestors events.[83] However, efforts to preserve, protect, and revitalize Tłı̨chǫ culture have been ongoing for many years.

Tłı̨chǫ Heritage Work

Like other modern treaty agreements in Canada, the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement (2003) includes a chapter dedicated to Tłı̨chǫ Heritage Resources. It clearly established the Tłı̨chǫ Government as the custodian of Tłı̨chǫ heritage resources (17.2.1) and lays out

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[81] Management rights to Ezodziti were not retained in the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement but it has been protected based on its importance to the Tłı̨chǫ (Tłı̨chǫ Government 2017b).

[82] There are Community Public Governments in each of the four Tłı̨chǫ communities, each with a Chief and elected councillors who manage local and municipal affairs.

[83] See https://Tłı̨chǫ.ca/government/departments/culture-lands-protection/cultural-practices/Tłı̨chǫ-imbe-program and https://Tłı̨chǫ.ca/government/departments/culture-lands-protection/cultural-practices/trails-our-ancestors respectively.

clear stipulations for how such heritage is to be managed. It also outlines a plan for repatriation of Tłįchǫ heritage from outside Tłįchǫ territory, noting

> …Tłįchǫ heritage resources which have been removed from the Northwest Territories be available for the benefit, study, and enjoyment of Tłįchǫ Citizens and all other residents of the Northwest Territories. The attainment of this objective may include the return of such resources to the Northwest Territories, on a temporary or continuing basis, provided that (a) appropriate facilities and expertise exist in the Northwest Territories which are capable of maintaining such Tłįchǫ heritage resources for future generations; and (b) such relocation is compatible with the maintenance of the integrity of public archives and national and territorial heritage resource collections. (Tłįchǫ Agreement 17.3.1)

and

> At the request of the Tłįchǫ Government, government shall … (b) use reasonable efforts to facilitate the Tłįchǫ Government's access to Tłįchǫ artifacts and human remains of Tłįchǫ ancestry that are held in other public and private collections. (Tłįchǫ Agreement 17.3.4)

These clauses ensure that Tłįchǫ heritage and interests in their heritage is and will remain protected. In what follows, I describe examples of long-term efforts to protect and revitalize Tłįchǫ culture and heritage. First, however, I introduce the "strong like two people" ideology that has underpinned much of these efforts.

"Strong Like Two People"

In the 1960s, Chief Jimmy Bruneau, an influential Tłįchǫ leader, advocated for a school to be set up for Tłįchǫ children, on Tłįchǫ land (Chief Jimmy Bruneau School n.d.).[84] Chief Bruneau spoke of the benefits of having such a local school so that students wouldn't have to travel outside their community. They could also be educated in Tłįchǫ traditions and culture, alongside western curricula; to "learn both ways" (CJBS n.d.; Legat 2012:4–5). This idea, to be sufficiently knowledgeable of both Tłįchǫ and Euro-Canadian languages, culture, and knowledge systems, evolved into a knowledge-building ideology (and regional education motto) conveyed through the phrase "strong like two people" (CJBS n.d.; Zoe 2007).

Traditional knowledge and heritage research have been important venues to learn from and about Tłįchǫ knowledge and culture. However, the last generation of Tłįchǫ to

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[84] The Chief Jimmy Bruneau School is in the community of Edzo, just outside of Behchokǫ̀ (formerly Rae-Edzo).

have grown up on the land are aging. Working with Tłı̨chǫ Elders for many years, anthropologist Allice Legat (2012:16) notes that many of them see research as an essential step toward ensuring the stories and land-based knowledge continues for young people. This belief has a long history, as Tłı̨chǫ have often partnered with researchers to undertake anthropological and other studies.[85] As the former Territorial Archaeologist for the NWT, Tom Andrews' extensive collaborations with the Tłı̨chǫ on ethnoarchaeological and other projects also demonstrates this. Collaborations between Andrews, the PWNHC, and the Tłı̨chǫ span nearly 30 years (Table 4.1; Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019).

Table 4.1. Collaborative projects between the Tłı̨chǫ at the PWNHC, 1991–2017.

Date	Project
1991–1992	Į̀daà Trail cultural resource inventory
1993–1994	Hozìideè cultural resource inventory
1996	*K'iela Revitalization Project* and exhibit at the Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School, Behchokǫ̀
1998	*K'aàwiidaà Ewo Konihmbaa* repatriation and exhibit at the PWNHC
1999–2000	Ekwǫ̀ Nı̨hmbàa Revitalization Project
2002	National Museums of Scotland visit to view Dene collections
2006–2007	*De T'a Hoti Ts'eeda: We Live Securely by the Land* exhibit at the PWNHC and the Carleton Art Gallery, Ottawa
2006–2011	Boreas: Home, Hearth, Household in the Circumpolar North project (with focus on Tłı̨chǫ caribou skin lodges)
2015–2016	Ezodziti Cultural Resource Inventory
2015–2017	Tłı̨chǫ Place Names Project

Source: Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019.

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[85] For examples, see Helm 1994, 2000; Renwick 2004, 2006; Ruiz 2017; Ryan 1995; Walsh 2015b, 2016

Collaborations with the PWNHC

The PWNHC's connections with the Tłıchǫ date at least to the 1970s. In 1978, the museum purchased almost 100 objects made by the Tłıchǫ (then Dogrib) through an initiative called "Operation Heritage" or the Rae Heritage Project. Operation Heritage, established in Behchokǫ̀ (then known as Fort Rae), was funded through Canada Works in the late 1970s. It was initially intended to transform the Roman Catholic mission in Rae into a local museum (Verge 1978), but also funded the production of traditional artifacts and clothing, many of which were accessioned into the collections of the PWNHC.[86]

During the Dene-Métis Negotiations (1974–1990), the Dene Nation sought to map Dene traditional land use onto the NWT landscape. The Dene Mapping Project (1981–1989; see Asch et al. 1986) would be the first in a long history of collaboration between Tom Andrews and the Tłıchǫ to document, protect, and revitalize Tłıchǫ culture. During this project, Harry Simpson, a Tłıchǫ Elder from Gamètì, strongly influenced Andrews:

> *…at a meeting in 1982 in Gamètì, I arrived with bundles of rolled computer plots under my arms to report to the Tłıchǫ Treaty 11 Council what the Dene Mapping Project had done to date. And an Elder stood up at the end of it and said in Tłıchǫ, "Well, thank you very much." He said, "now you know the trails, it's time for you to learn the place names and the stories that go with it." His name was Harry Simpson.* [Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019]

Unfortunately, the ongoing negotiations and project deadlines of the Dene Nation did not allow for further exploration of Tłıchǫ stories at that time (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). After he was hired by the PWNHC in 1990, Andrews began to collaborate with then-Chief Land Claims Negotiator for the former Treaty 11 Council, John B. Zoe, Harry Simpson, and other Tłıchǫ on place name and cultural revitalization projects.

Trail Mapping and Birchbark Canoes

Two heritage resource inventory projects, the Įdaà Trail project (1991–1993) and Hozìideè Trail project (1994), continued and extended the work begun on the Dene Mapping Project years earlier. Andrews and Zoe mapped Tłıchǫ traditional land use along two important Tłıchǫ trails (Andrews and Zoe 1997; Zoe 2007, 2018). These

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[86] See https://Tłıchǫhistory.ca/en/learn/tools-artifacts/resources

projects documented hundreds of archaeological sites and recorded many Elders' knowledge of the names and stories associated with important places on the Tłįchǫ landscape.[87] Gamètì Elder Harry Simpson became an integral part of these efforts and continued to collaborate with Andrews on a number of other projects in the years after (e.g., an on-the-land science camp).

During these projects, the team recorded the remains of 35 birchbark canoes (Andrews and Zoe 1997; Andrews 2011:174; Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). Birchbark canoes, or *k'iela*, play an important role in Tłįchǫ stories and history. Given how lightweight and sustainable they were, *k'iela* were very important to Tłįchǫ ways of life. Tłįchǫ Grand Chief George Mackenzie explained,

> *They're very light to carry in portages. One person can carry two birchbark canoes on their-both shoulders That's how light they are. So, that was used as the main transportation. In the olden days, people travelled. A man would have his own birchbark canoe, wife would have their own, and young lady, young men who were old enough, they have their own. So, everybody in that camp or that clan, when they built one, they all helped each other. They'd build one and then they'd build another one--they help each other. So, they'd build one in the springtime, after the snow was all done. They have to travel for the spring, get back to the summer grounds. So, they'd all help each other to build birchbark canoes. I heard it was a very strong team effort for sure. Lot of good stories about that.* [George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019]

Often built in the spring, these canoes would be used to travel to and from the barrenlands where Tłįchǫ hunted caribou (Andrews and Zoe 1998). However, commercially manufactured boats and canoes began to replace bark canoes in the early twentieth century. By the time of the trail surveys, birchbark canoes were no longer made or used by Tłįchǫ.

These cultural resource inventory projects documented living memories of land use, place names, and stories, and recorded archaeological sites along the trails. In this way, they extended beyond typical archaeological surveys (Tom Andrews pers. comm. 2020). The work also stimulated community interest in the canoes, though few Elders recalled the details involved in canoe construction (Andrews and Zoe 1997:165). Given this, the PWNHC, the Dogrib Divisional Board of Education (DDBE), and Dogrib Treaty

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[87] Andrews reflected that in fact, these inventories were centred on documenting Tłįchǫ land-related knowledge and history. This knowledge was then used as a tool to help in locating archaeological sites while on the land (Andrews pers comm. 2020).

11 Council developed and funded a collaborative project to replicate a traditional birchbark canoe and document the process (Andrews and Zoe 1998). In 1996, six Tłı̨chǫ Elders who had some knowledge of canoe building were selected for the project. They examined a canoe at the PWNHC that was made in the 1970s by Chief Jimmy Bruneau. The DDBE also selected several Tłı̨chǫ students to apprentice with the project, watching and learning from the Elders as they worked (George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019; Jim Martin, July 4, 2019).

In the early summer of 1996, the six Elders and several Tłı̨chǫ youth established a camp on Russell Lake. Working with non-Tłı̨chǫ canoe builder Don Gardner, the group set about building a traditional birchbark canoe.[88] While none of the Elders had built their own canoe before, they had all, as youths, helped family members build such boats. This limited experience, along with different personalities and opinions, proved challenging. However, the Elders' respect for their work, one another, and the opportunity to pass their knowledge on to younger and future generations, ultimately won out (Don Gardner, June 21, 2019; George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019).

The team completed the canoe in two weeks. Many Tłı̨chǫ, especially those in the community of Behchokǫ̀, felt that the project was very important. For Tłı̨chǫ community member and educator Rosa Mantla, whose parents were involved and who interpreted for the Elders and the others, she

> …was happy to participate because the birchbark canoe, people talked about for years. We hadn't had anybody demonstrate how they built or used to build birchbark canoes long before us. And so, this was a project that I really wanted to participate in. To see how and what materials and collections around, as well as the time and commitment that the Elders had. [Rosa Mantla, October 17, 2019].

The entire project, including resource gathering and the production of the canoe was video documented. Over 25 hours of archival footage and a 30-minute documentary

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[88] Gardner is a master canoe builder who works with Indigenous communities and others to build traditional-style canoes (see http://dongardner.blogspot.com/ and https://vimeo.com/219836966). He has worked with several communities in the north to bring traditional canoe or *qayaq*-building into schools, get kids working with their Elders, and connecting with their culture and the land.

were produced for use as educational materials (Andrews and Zoe 1997; Woolf and Andrews 1997).[89]

The completed canoe was tested in the waters near Behchokǫ̀ during a celebration of the project in 1996 (George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019). Afterwards, it was installed as a permanent exhibit at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School (Figure 4.2). The tools and materials used to build it were included as part of the exhibit and duplicates were accessioned into the PWNHC collections. The intention was for the exhibit to be used as a tool for cultural education. Surrounding the canoe are pictures and stories of important Tłı̨chǫ Elders, which make this a place of Tłı̨chǫ pride in culture and people.

Figure 4.2. The k'ıelà display at the Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School in Edzo.
The materials needed to make a k'iela are included in the drawers at the bottom of the exhibit case. Photos of Tłı̨chǫ Elders involved in the project are posted on the walls behind it.

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[89] The documentary was broadcast on the Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN) in Canada (Andrews 2011:175). See it here https://vimeo.com/87140307

The canoe project accomplished a main goal of revitalization projects in that it stimulated local interest in traditional canoe building. Shortly after it was completed, one of the canoe project's Elders, Nick Black, made another birchbark canoe on his own (George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019). That one has since been put on display at the Elizabeth Mackenzie Elementary School in Behchokǫ̀. A third canoe was commissioned by a large corporation in the NWT to display in their offices (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). Gamètì Elder Philip Zoe was also inspired to make birchbark canoe models that he would sell or give away as gifts (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019; Giselle Marion, June 24, 2019; see Andrews and Zoe 1998).

"Trails of Our Ancestors" and On-the-Land Programming

Another important example of this ongoing work to preserve and revitalize Tłı̨chǫ culture and connections to the land is the "Trails of our Ancestors" program. Administered by the Tłı̨chǫ Government's Department of Culture and Lands Protection, this initiative aims to get Tłı̨chǫ youth out onto the land again. It is a yearly canoe trip where Tłı̨chǫ youth and Elders travel over several weeks to whichever of the four communities is hosting the Tłı̨chǫ Annual Gathering. While travelling, Tłı̨chǫ youth are told stories of the land, develop key survival skills, and build their knowledge of Tłı̨chǫ ways of life. It remains one of the most popular programs, filling up quickly each year. In 2019, when I was in Behchokǫ̀, the trip hosted ten canoes, with nearly 60 people setting out for the Tłı̨chǫ Annual Gathering in Gamètì (John B. Zoe, June 27, 2019). More recently, the Department has been working on a project to create a digital, interactive map of common Tłı̨chǫ trails used by the program, starting with the trail between Behchokǫ̀ and Whatì (Tłı̨chǫ Government 2020).

Other initiatives, including the Government of Northwest Territories' Tundra Science and Culture Camps[90] and the Scottish Museum Project (2006–2007), are also connected to these other projects and programs. Harry Simpson, the Tłı̨chǫ Elder working on the trail mapping projects, was a key collaborator alongside Tom Andrews in on-the-land science camps (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). The Scottish Museum Project brought a series of historic Dene objects back to the NWT from Scotland (Andrews 2006; Daitch and Andrews 2007; Knowles 2011, 2013; Wrightson 2016). It evolved from a conference trip where a delegation from the NWT showcased

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[90] See https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/en/services/tundra-science-and-culture-camp.

the products of several collaborative projects (discussed below). Ultimately, the nature of Tłįchǫ efforts to protect and revitalize their culture and ways of life—in the past and today—are inextricably interconnected.

Repatriating Cultural Belongings

Embedded within this larger network of collaborative heritage work is the repatriation of a traditional Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge covering. It was returned to the North in 1997, from the University of Iowa's Natural History Museum and is now housed in the collections at the PWNHC. In this section, I first consider the historical role that caribou skin lodges played in Tłįchǫ lives, then describe the returned lodge and provide some detail as to its specific history, and finally recount the events surrounding its return to the North.

Caribou Skin Lodges in Tłįchǫ Culture

Caribou hide was (and is) a very important material for Tłįchǫ and other Dene groups. As Tłįchǫ Elder Dora Nitsiza reflected in 2003, "Back in the olden days, the main thing was caribou; we lived on caribou and fish. From the caribou hide we could make many things" (in Andrews 2006:13). Caribou hides were used for lodges, clothing, and other important items. Caribou hide lodges, or *Ekwǫ̀ Nįhmbàa* [also spelled *ewo ko nihmba* or "skin hearth lodge"], were the main type of habitation structure for Tłįchǫ historically (Figure 4.3; Andrews 2013:36; Andrews and Mackenzie 1998). There is archaeological evidence that indicates that conical lodges of this sort were used in the north for at least 5,000 years (Wright 1972; 1975). Light, waterproof, and easy to set up, they were among the most valued possessions a family had (Tłįchǫ Elder Elizabeth Mackenzie, quoted in Andrews 2013:39–40). They were often well-maintained, with skins replaced or repaired as needed.

Figure 4.3. Dene caribou skin lodges in the early twentieth century.
(Photo credit: NWT Archives/Bobby Porritt/N-1987-016-0066)

Making a caribou skin lodge was time- and labor-intensive, but essential to life.[91]
For a 3.4 m lodge, approximately 30 tanned caribou hides, 45 braids of sinew thread,
and 14-20 poles were required (Andrews 2013:37).[92] Hides were collected during the fall
caribou hunt, then processed and lightly smoked in camps (Andrews and Mackenzie
1998; Woolf et al. 2000). Women then worked in groups to tan the caribou hides and

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[91] Andrews (2011, 2013) provides ethnographic detail on caribou hide processing and making
lodges. The 1998 lodge exhibit book (Andrews and Mackenzie 1998) describes the step-by-step
process for tanning caribou hides as described by Tłı̨chǫ Elder, Elizabeth Mackenzie.

[92] There are two Tłı̨chǫ lodges known to have survived in museum collections. One was
repatriated to the Tłı̨chǫ and remains at the PWNHC; the other remains in the collections of the
Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. Andrews (2013:33, Table 3.1) provides
approximate dimensions for both (i.e., PWNHC lodge: 3.4 m (11 feet) tall, 17.4 m (57 feet) long
at bottom edge; NMAI lodge: 3.2 m (10.5 feet) tall, 15.4.4 m (50.5 feet) long at bottom edge).
Andrews (2013:37) also notes that Tłı̨chǫ Elders also spoke of larger lodges, that would have
required anywhere from 40 to 60 hides.

then sew them together using sinew thread.[93] Often, they would produce many at once, especially helpful if making lodge coverings for trade (Andrews 2013:31, 37).

Women would also set up, carry, and maintain the lodge coverings (Andrews 2013:41). When set up, Tłı̨chǫ lodges had a broad base and a wide smoke hole opening at the top (Figure 4.3), similar to reindeer skin lodges in central Siberia (Anderson 2007; Andrews 2013:36). Inside, the ground was covered with spruce boughs around a central hearth. Spaces inside had purpose and were sometimes gendered. The fire was always centred, both for cooking and drying food, and served as a connection to ancestors (Andrews 2013:41, 43–44; Walsh 2016).

Beginning in the 1900s, skin lodges were slowly replaced by other modes of habitation. Semi-permanent settlements with log or stone cabins were becoming more common, and canvas tents were introduced to the north (Andrews 2013:41–42; Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). With the introduction of portable stoves, canvas tents were quickly adopted, and caribou skin lodges no longer used.

K'aàwidaà's Caribou Skin Lodge

In 1893, explorer, Frank Russell purchased a number of items from Bear Lake Chief, also known as K'aàwidaà (among other names), at Fort Rae. Russell was in the NWT to collect specimens for the Museum of Natural History at the University of Iowa. He was interested in big game, particularly muskoxen, which were thought to be close to extinction at that time (University of Iowa Museum of Natural History 2015a). Russell convinced several local Tłı̨chǫ hunters to guide him and hunt in the barrenlands. His published report documented his travels in great detail (Russell 1898). His journals from the trip have also been archived in the National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. (Tom Andrews pers. comm. 2020).

K'aàwidaà (c. 1852–1914) was a prominent trading chief at the turn of the 20th century, dealing in fine furs and muskox robes. He was often a contact for explorers new to the territory, as he had extensive knowledge of the land (Andrews 2018). On his way to the barrenlands, Russell consulted with K'aàwidaà and purchased the caribou skin lodge and other essential items. Table 4.2 provides an accounting of his purchases. Of

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[93] Sinew thread is from the thoracolumbar fascia of the caribou's back. Braids typically included 10-15 strands, each of which were between 30-38 cm long (Andrews 2013:37).

note is the price Russell paid for the lodge, $25—or approximately $700 today (Andrews 2013:31, 2018; Nayally 2018).

Table 4.2. Items purchased from K'aàwidaà by Frank Russell, with amounts paid.

Item Purchase	Amount Paid
Caribou skin lodge	$25.00
Birchbark canoe	$5.00
Dog team and toboggan	$16.00

The lodge Russell purchased was likely made by K'aàwidaà's wife, Emma Kowea, and other women in their family/kin group (Andrews 2018). Andrews (2013:33) noted that it is comprised of 30 tanned caribou hides and weighs approximately 15.8 kg (35 lbs.). It is decorated with three hide tassels and red ochre bands on both the tassels and the centre seam. Red ochre is a powerful substance in Dene culture. It was often used for protection, to keep bad spirits away (Andrews 2013:37–39).[94] Evidence of repairs and a smoke-stained interior indicate that the caribou skin lodge was well-used, likely both by K'aàwidaà and his family, and Russell during his travels.

Russell returned to Iowa in 1894, donating his finds and acquisitions to the University of Iowa's Natural History Museum (Shrimper 1992:89–90). The Russell Collection includes over 600 natural history specimens—with five of the much-prized muskoxen—and over 300 ethnographic objects. Several of these continue to be displayed today, including the muskoxen he hunted in the 1890s, which are on permanent display in the Mammal Hall (University of Iowa Museum of Natural History 2015b).

Repatriation to the North

Despite the prominent and continued display of Russell's muskoxen, the Tłı̨chǫ caribou skin lodge was never exhibited at the Natural History Museum. In the mid-1990s, Tom Andrews and John B. Zoe reached out to the late June Helm, an anthropology

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[94] Records and Tłı̨chǫ oral tradition understand K'aàwidaà to be a powerful medicine man (Helm 1994:106, 123–124).

professor at the University of Iowa, for feedback on a chapter they were writing (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019; see Andrews and Zoe 1997). Helm had worked with the Tłįchǫ from the 1950s to the 1970s (see Helm 1979, 2000). Knowing that the Tłįchǫ lodge would likely not be exhibited in the museum anytime soon, she proposed and advocated for its repatriation to the NWT.

In 1997, a small delegation, consisting of Tom Andrews, John B. Zoe, Tłįchǫ Elder Elizabeth Mackenzie and her daughter, Mary Siemens, travelled to Iowa to reclaim the lodge (Baker 1997; Helm and Andrews 1998, 1999). The Natural History Museum worked outside of the bounds of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)—which applies only to the domestic return of ancestral remains and cultural items to tribes in the United States—to return the lodge (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). Though not unheard of at that time, repatriation outside of NAGPRA was certainly not the norm.

After the gifting ceremony in Iowa (Baker 1997; Bullard 1997), the Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge was packed and shipped to the PWNHC. It would be accessioned into the PWNHC's collection but stewardship over it was to be shared between the museum and the then-Dogrib Treaty 11 Council (now the Tłįchǫ Government). Museum records of the transfer document this important agreement. A small group received the lodge in ceremony upon its arrival to the museum in 1997 (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019; Ashbury 1997). Figure 4.4 shows some of the Tłįchǫ Elders invited to this private viewing. Shortly afterward, preparations began to create an exhibit on the lodge and celebrate its return.

Figure 4.4. Tłįchǫ Elders viewing the repatriated lodge at the PWNHC,1997.
L-R: Philip Huskey, unknown cameraman, John B. Zoe, Harry Simpson, Rosa Huskey, Elizabeth Mackenzie, Mary Siemens. Rosa Huskey is a granddaughter of Bear Lake Chief. (Photo credit: Thomas D. Andrews).

What Happened Next?

With the arrival of the Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge, staff at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre began to prepare an exhibit to showcase the lodge, its history, and its return to the public (Andrews 2013; Andrews and Helm 1999). The lodge was once again raised onto poles, occupying half of the gallery in which it was erected (Tom Andrews pers comm. 2018; Cameron and Bird 1999; see Figure 4.5). In June 1998, the lodge exhibit, "Tłįchǫ Ewo Konihmbaa: The Dogrib Caribou Skin Lodge," opened to the public (Andrews and Mackenzie 1998).

Figure 4.5. K'aàwidaà's lodge set up at the PWNHC, 1997.
(Photo credit: Thomas D. Andrews).

The opening event featured a traditional feast, prayers, drumming, and a feeding-the-fire ceremony (Figure 4.6; Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). Representatives from both the Tłįchǫ and Territorial Governments spoke, celebrating the return of the lodge, as did June Helm (by phone) and others involved in the effort. Elders told stories from their youth and time on the land—some recounting their experiences living in similar lodges (Helm and Andrews 1999:20).

Figure 4.6. Celebrations for the repatriation and the opening of the lodge exhibit at the PWNHC, 1998.
(Photo credit: Tessa Macintosh).

There were hours of Dene hand games—an important feature of northern Dene events (Helm 2000:293–311)—and a spontaneous tea dance (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019; Helm and Andrews 1999). Remembering the dance and the emotions it evoked, Andrews said,

> *In a tea dance, everybody stands shoulder to shoulder and with a cappella singing. There's no drumming at all. And there are these beautiful old tea dance songs where men mostly do the singing, but everybody dances. And I can remember this just happening right in front of the museum (Ingrid: and the gambling too, right?) …Getting emotional again... But I remember at the dance, Bernadette [Williah] grabbing me and making me dance with them. And then, they broke out into hand games, another kind of spontaneous celebration. Playing hand games on tarps, on the uncomfortable hard ground, with drums in the background. People just loved it. What a day, what a day.* [Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019]

The exhibit opening was attended by over 1,500 people, and Tłı̨chǫ Elders from all four communities flew in for the occasion.[95] News coverage of the event captured the sense of pride felt by Tłı̨chǫ in the return of this lodge (Jennings 1998a, b). It remains the largest opening in the PWNHC's history (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019).

Tłı̨chǫ Elder Elizabeth Mackenzie and Andrews co-authored a booklet to complement the exhibit and showcase the important roles caribou skin lodges played for Tłı̨chǫ historically (Andrews and Mackenzie 1998). Written in English and Tłı̨chǫ Yatıì, the booklet includes information on the history of Russell's expeditions and K'aàwidaà; facts about the 1893 lodge; instructions on how to tan a caribou hide; and details on how lodges were designed, set up, and used by Tłı̨chǫ historically. Of particular interest to many in attendance was the inclusion of a panel that traced the genealogy of K'aàwidaà, identifying four prominent Tłı̨chǫ families from Rae among his lineage (Andrews and Mackenzie 1998). Many of those present could trace their family lines back to K'aàwidaà, and so felt a shared sense of pride and ownership in seeing it returned (Cameron and Bird 1999; Jennings 1998a, b).

The exhibit remained on display for eight months. Unfortunately, being erected on poles began to stretch the lodge's century-old seams (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019; Rosalie Scott, July 5, 2019). Ironically, the day it was taken down and folded for storage in the PWNHC's climate-controlled collections space, two Tłı̨chǫ Elders came to view it. Andrews recalled that they had expected it to still be on display and were thus disappointed to see that it had been taken down (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019).

Reproducing the Caribou Skin Lodge

In 1999, the Tłı̨chǫ Government worked in collaboration with the PWNHC to acquire funding for a project that would replicate the 1893 lodge. The project would follow a similar structure to the earlier birchbark canoe reproduction project and emphasized a collaborative approach that was aimed at revitalizing a traditional practice and educating Tłı̨chǫ youth on their culture and history. Partners would again include the

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[95] Elders from Sahtú communities also came, and people drove in from Dettah and Ndılǫ as well (Tom Andrews pers. comm. 2020).

PWNHC, the then-Dogrib Community Services Board (DCSB), Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, and Chief Jimmy Bruneau School. Funding was provided through a Museum Assistance Program grant administered by the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and in-kind contributions from project partners. Together, they set out to create two replicas of the repatriated lodge using traditional methods and materials.

A total of 75 caribou hides were needed to make two lodges. In fall 1999, the project team accompanied the local high school to the barrenlands for the annual hunt. As part of their cultural curriculum at the time, the Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School students set out each fall for a community caribou hunt.[96] Tłı̨chǫ Grand Chief George Mackenzie—formerly the Cultural Coordinator for the school—recalled the trip,

> *Yes, the school had been doing that for many years before that. So, we talked about it. And this one staff is a gunsmith—he's like a marksman, he has a very good shot, scope, and all of it. So, he would help put down 50 caribou with the Elders—Elders have a good shot too; they were good shooters. To take 50 hides is lots of work. We did it in two weeks. One week, one group of students. And then the second week another group of students—boys and girls. So, they all took part, they helped out. You have to put the animal down, skin it, take the meat, dry the meat, prepare the meat, put the meat back on the plane, back home. And the hides, they worked on the hides, to get them ready on the plane, so everybody helped out where they can. So, it was a good project, yeah.* [George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019]

They returned with the hides needed to make two lodges.[97] Students and other participants—including project members, were able to help with processing the animals and hides in preparation for the project (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019).

Several Tłı̨chǫ women and two men were selected and hired onto the project. Melanie Weyallon, Bernadette Williah, Mary Madeline Champlain, Margaret Blackduck, Mary Adele Tlokka, Margaret Drybones, and Mary Ann Football worked as the main

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[96] Unfortunately, with the significant decline in barrenlands caribou populations and the ban on caribou hunting in recent years, this program is no longer possible (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019; see https://www.nwtspeciesatrisk.ca/species/barren-ground-caribou).

[97] Additional hides and sinew were acquired from Adele Apples, Rosa Pe'a, Elizabeth Michel, Mary Adele Tlokka, Adele Wedawin, and Bernadette Williah (all from Behchokǫ̀), and Elise Simpson (Gamètì) (Tom Andrews pers. comm. 2020).

seamstresses on the project.[98] Edward Weyallon and Francis Williah managed the camp, while the women processed and sewed the hides into two new lodges. John B. Zoe noted that many women in the community still actively processed hides at that time,

> *We still had older women that still had these traditional skills, because,*
> *you know, they just moved into the communities from the bush back in*
> *1960s. They were always doing this stuff, so this was...so they looked at*
> *the original tipi at the Museum. They looked at it and 'oh, we can do this.*
> [John B. Zoe, June 27, 2019]

The camp was first set up at Russell Lake following the fall hunt in 1999—the same location as the birchbark canoe project, since it was an ideal place for on-the-land work (George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019). This location allowed the project partners to again include school visits from Behchokǫ̀, Yellowknife, and Fort Providence, as it is close to a road (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). However, the weather soon grew too cold, and the project was paused until the spring of 2000. Andrews reflected that he always saw the Elders' return to the project as a sign of its importance and of their commitment to see it through (Tom Andrews pers. comm. 2020).

The women worked very hard to process and sew the hides the next spring. Andrews described the site as a "hide-tanning factory" (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019), with the women processing several at a time. The hides were brain-tanned, scraped with stone and bone scrapers, wrung out, stretched, dried, and scraped again to soften them (Elizabeth Mackenzie, in Andrews and Mackenzie 1998).[99] These processes were repeated as necessary until the desired texture and stretch was achieved. After they were smoked (usually only once [Tom Andrews pers. comm. 2020]), they were cut and sewn together with caribou sinew, following a pattern made from the 1893 lodge. Mary Adele Wedawin, a respected Tłı̨chǫ Elder, provided nearly 45 braids of sinew that she had processed herself (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019).

The lodge reproduction project was completed in August 2000, in time for the Tłı̨chǫ Annual Gathering in Behchokǫ̀. Like the birchbark canoe project, the entire lodge

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[98] Most individuals who worked on the project were from Behchokǫ̀, but two women, Mary Adele Champlain and Elise Simpson, were from Whatì and Gamètì, respectively (Tom Andrews pers. comm. 2020).

[99] Processing caribou brains and spinal columns into a boiled liquid to soak the hides before scraping, stretching, and smoking them (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). Skilled hide processors would develop and use their own brain-tanning recipes (Giselle Marion, June 24, 2019).

reproduction project was captured on film, producing a 30-minute documentary (Woolf et al. 2000) and nearly 48 hours of raw footage that can be used for future education (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019).[100] The new lodges were set up and celebrated at the Gathering, then one was gifted to the PWNHC. The women working on the two lodges worked through the night to finish in time. Tom Andrews recalled,

> *These old ladies, they did it. The next morning, they were just so jubilant that they had done this in time. They were hugging each other…it was my favorite picture I've ever taken…these beautiful, Elder Tłįchǫ women with their colourful head scarves and their outfits…they're just so jubilant…smiling, that they'd finished this these two lodges…*
> [Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019]

Showcasing the two lodges at the Annual Gathering allowed Tłįchǫ from all four communities to come together and celebrate, both the lodges' completion and the skill of their makers (Figure 4.7). It was also another opportunity to remember life on the land and tell stories about the role and use of caribou skin lodges in Tłįchǫ society (Andrews 2011:196).

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[100] The Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge film is available here https://vimeo.com/87306413

Figure 4.7. Painting red ochre on the lodge at Russell Lake camp, 2000.
The lodge intended for the PWNHC is set up at the Russell Lake camp so the seamstresses can paint the main seam with red ochre. L-R: Melanie Weyallon, Bernadette Williah, Mary Madeline Champlain. (Photo credit: Thomas D. Andrews).

Several challenges were met along the way, including some interpersonal conflicts. George Mackenzie reflected on this both for the birchbark canoe project and the lodge reproduction,

> *When you work with the Elders, they are very knowledgeable, skillful, they take pride in what they do. So, along the way--the birchbark canoe as well as the caribou tipi, because of their strong character and their skills, sometimes there's disagreement on *how* to do it. Sometimes because of their strong character, the disagreement was so strong that it almost came to a halt on both projects…But as the coordinator, I went to [get] the Grand Chief—at that time—to come to the camp. And I went to [get] the parish priest—at that time, was Father Pochat—to come to the camp. I told [them that] we were in a big bind. We needed to finish the project here, but it looked like the Elders might walk because of disagreements. So, I organized it so that they came to the camp, and I made them talk to the Elders on two different occasions. And the beauty of what I saw is, even though it was a strong disagreement, they pulled back together with pride and finished the project.*
>
> *What I learned from that personally, is that men's…those two men who were building that canoe project. They had a disagreement, but they made up. They compromised, and they talked, and they finished the project. That's something I learned from watching Elders. That's significant—even when I was watching how they clashed, how they started talking, compromised, and finished the project together. That I will never forget"* [George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019]

These disagreements may seem at odds with the intentions of collaborative work but are perhaps not unexpected. Such conflicts demonstrate both the strong personalities of Tłįchǫ Elders *and* their determination to see those projects through. It also shows that the Elders involved in these projects worked as hard as they did because they saw the importance of the work and documenting it for future generations.[101]

The original goal of the project was to replicate the 1893 lodge, which was accomplished. However, the two new lodges were unique in their own way and were "replicas" only nominally. For the new lodge intended for permanent display at the PWNHC, the women working on it chose to decorate it more elaborately, with a full fringe going all the way around the middle. Andrews recollected that they did so to showcase their skills and culture to the world:

> *What's really interesting is when they made the one for the museum, they broke with the general pattern. The traditional lodges had three*

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[101] Mackenzie also noted that this is something he carries with him in his own work as a Tłįchǫ leader.

tassels…rubbed with ochre to keep malevolent entities out. So, they're very symbolic, these things. But for the museum, the ladies made a fringe that went all the way around it and when I asked why they were adding the fringe, Bernadette [Williah, a seamstress on the project], she said to me, 'We know that this one's going to the museum.' She said, 'People from all over the world are going to see it and we want them to see the special tipi' [Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019]

This intention to showcase the new lodge as an example of Tłı̨chǫ talent and pride was also reflected in a statement from then-Tłı̨chǫ Grand Chief Joe Rabesca at the time of the unveiling: "There's going to be a lot of history behind it once they bring it to the museum in Yellowknife … people from all over the world will see it and know where it came from and what it represents" (Kearsey 2000). After it was completed, this lodge was accessioned into the PWNHC collections. While it has not yet been part of an official exhibit, the lodge was erected for a special event in 2018 (discussed below).[102]

Showcasing Tłı̨chǫ Culture at Home and Abroad

More closely resembling the repatriated 1893 lodge, the second new lodge was made for the Tłı̨chǫ themselves. Today it can usually be found set up in the Elizabeth Mackenzie Elementary School (EMES) library in Behchokǫ̀, where it is often used for Elders' storytelling. Rosa Mantla, former Principal at EMES reflected on its installation at the school, saying,

Well, I know that a caribou hide tipi was given to Elizabeth Mackenzie Elementary School when I was working there. And also, how we put it up in the library so that the people-the students would be able to see the caribou hide tipi there and how the tipi was made with all those stories and information that was offered to them so that they understand how they need to respect the caribou hide tipi. [Rosa Mantla, October 17, 2019]

George Mackenzie also noted that it has also been displayed at special events, like the Tłı̨chǫ annual gatherings (George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019), to showcase pride in Tłı̨chǫ culture and ways of life.

The community lodge has also been used to showcase Tłı̨chǫ culture and pride abroad. In 2002, a small delegation from the NWT, including Tom Andrews, Rosa Mantla, Ingrid Kritsch, and Karen Wright-Fraser, travelled to Edinburgh for the Ninth

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[102] Time of writing: fall 2020.

International Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies (CHAGS) and a study tour of the Tłı̨chǫ and Gwich'in collections at the National Museum of Scotland.[103] That year, the Tłı̨chǫ community lodge was displayed at the event.[104] Positioned next to the main podium, the lodge was always in view and its presence was an "iconic marker" for the conference (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019).

Another international trip took place in 2008, when Andrews and a small group of Tłı̨chǫ travelled with the community lodge to Tromsø, Norway, to attend a two-day conference exploring homes and homelands of circumpolar Indigenous peoples.[105] While there, the lodge was set up at the Tromsø Museum, alongside Sámi *lavos* (tents) and sod huts. Andrews noted that because it was made from traditional materials and real caribou hide the Tłı̨chǫ lodge became an icon of the event. He noted,

> …all the other ones were set up already and when ours came they chose to have the whole conference helped set it up, as an event. And so, all these students and—(Ingrid: Peter [Loovers] was involved in that)—Peter was there, and it was kind of in a center [space]. So, there was a grass island with a driveway all around it and they chose that spot to set up the hide tipi. And everybody at the conference got involved in putting it up, you know, so it became an important engagement, you know, for everybody." [Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019]

At both events, the community lodge operated as a material "ambassador" for Tłı̨chǫ culture and people, and also was a significant source of pride for those present (Knowles 2011; Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019).

The Legacy of the Tłı̨chǫ Caribou Skin Lodge: 20 Years Later

In 2018, a Tłı̨chǫ family from Behchokǫ̀ reached out to the PWNHC, asking to see and spend time with the original 1893 lodge. This was not the first time the museum had fielded such a request. The family in question can trace a direct genealogical connection

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[103] CHAGS brings together anthropologists and other researchers working with and researching hunting and gathering societies, past and present (https://chags.univie.ac.at/history/)

[104] One of 5 replicated traditional Gwich'in outfits was also displayed at CHAGS (see Chapter 5).

[105] The *Boreas: Home, Hearth, and Household in the Circumpolar North* project was a four-year initiative (2006–2010), involving five circumpolar nations (including Canada) and based in Norway. The project sought to investigate how the use of portable lodges contributes to a uniquely northern narrative (https://site.uit.no/boreas/). The 2008 conference, "Exploring Domestic Spaces in the Circumpolar North" (https://site.uit.no/boreas/conference/), brought project partners together to explore the ways that Indigenous peoples create homes and homelands in the circumpolar North. See Anderson et al. 2013.

to K'aàwidaà, the original owner of the lodge, and thus feels a special connection to it. Peter Huskey, a great grandson of K'aàwidaà through his mother's family (Kotchilea), sees the 1893 caribou skin lodge as a tangible connection to his family and culture (Huskey pers comm. 2018). He has visited the lodge at the museum on several occasions through the years (Lord 2018).

This time though, the PWNHC's Curator of Heritage Education and Public Programs, Mike Mitchell, decided to take advantage of the lodge coming out of storage (Mike Mitchell, June 26, 2019). He organized a week-long event centred upon the 1893 lodge, its history, the 1997 repatriation, and the reproduction project. The original lodge was exhibited in the main gallery space, on the top floor of the museum. It was laid flat, with stanchions preventing visitors from getting too close or touching the fragile material (Figure 4.8).[106] While the flood lights pointed in many directions, the overall light in the gallery space was almost dim and had a somewhat reverent feeling to it. In the times I spent alone in the gallery, the lighting lent the space a presence or a weightiness. The PWNHC's reproduction lodge was also displayed in the main lobby, where visitors to the museum could see and interact with it (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.8. K'aàwidaà's lodge on display at the PWNHC, 2018.

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[106] Due to conservation concerns, the lodge is typically not erected on poles (Rosalie Scott, July 5, 2019).

Figure 4.9. The replica lodge on display at the PWNHC, 2018.

Three days of teaching and learning sessions were hosted by the PWNHC. Tłı̨chǫ youth from Behchokǫ̀, and youth from the Yellowknives Dene First Nation in Yellowknife were invited to learn about the lodge. Tom Andrews and Peter Huskey led daily teaching sessions. Students were invited to ask questions, experience the smoky smell of the 1893 lodge, and see if they could identify any of their family members on K'aàwidaà's family tree (Figure 4.10).
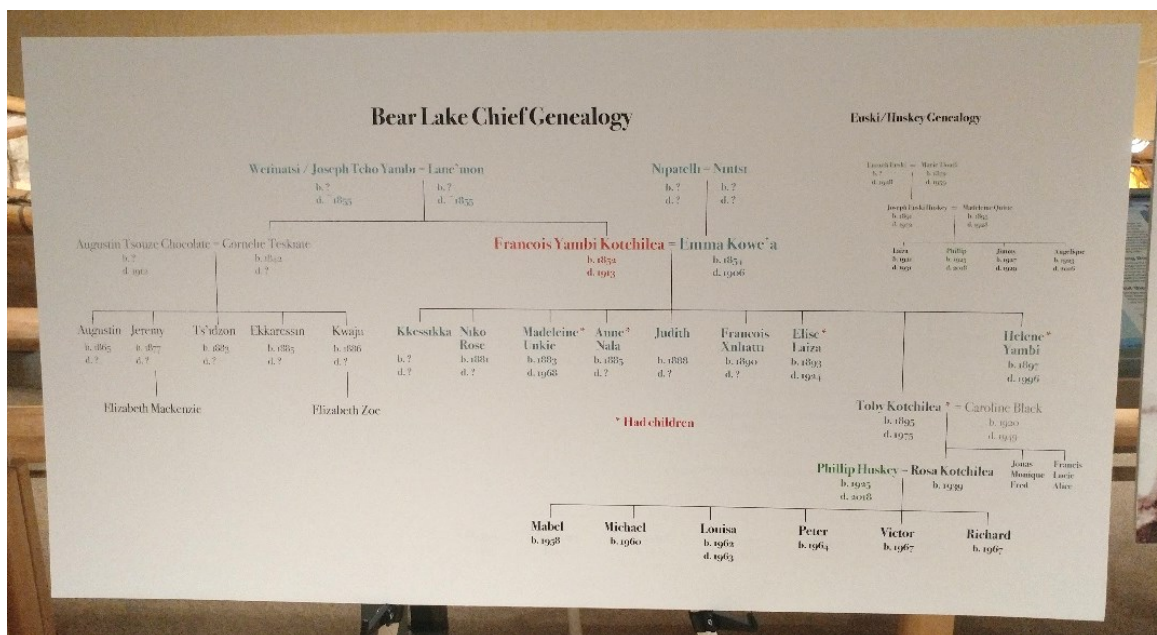
Figure 4.10. K'aàwidaà's genealogy, part of the 2018 lodge exhibit at the PWNHC.

One of the most poignant parts of the week was a visit from a small group of Tłı̨chǫ Elders from the Jimmy Erasmus Senior's Home in Behchokǫ̀, which included two of the seamstresses who had worked on the reproduction project, Bernadette Williah and Margaret Drybones.[107] For several hours, the Elders sat around the lodge, spoke about their memories of living on the land, and, for a few, their experiences on the reproduction project (Figure 4.11). Some Elders examined the seams closely, remarking on the skill of the original makers of the lodge. A particularly emotional moment came when one Tłı̨chǫ Elder, Margaret Drybones, began to pray to K'aàwidaà, asking him to help to bring the caribou back.[108] Andrews recalled the moment,

> *She felt the impact—as do all the Tłı̨chǫ today—of not having caribou anymore. When the lodge was made, they were still living a traditional lifestyle and caribou were abundant. That was a really touching moment for me to see Margaret give the prayer. I think everybody felt it …they know that K'aàwidaà is listening to participate in whatever, and she was appealing to him, you know, to help bring caribou back and it really links into the modern events too.* [Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019]

As Andrews observed, the importance of the lodge as a touchstone for Tłı̨chǫ connections to culture and the land felt glaringly obvious to all those in attendance.

Figure 4.11. Elders visit during the 2018 PWNHC event.

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[107] They were the only surviving seamstresses from the project (Kritsch pers comm. 2020).

[108] A report on the significantly declining caribou numbers had just been broadcast over NWT radio that morning (Nayally 2018).

Identifying Effects of the Caribou Skin Lodge Repatriation

The repatriation of the Tłı̨chǫ caribou skin lodge has had a broad ranging influence across different spheres of Tłı̨chǫ life. In this section, I identify and describe a number of socio-cultural, political, and economic effects and legacies of this repatriation. These discrete categories are somewhat awkward since this case study also demonstrates the interconnected nature of repatriation work within other ongoing heritage preservation efforts (discussed in more detail in later chapters). However, my aim here is to explore the different ways that repatriation intersects and affects community dynamics. Thus, in order to compare this across different examples of—and experiences with—repatriation, these categories are employed.

Socio-cultural Effects

The return of K'aàwidaà's lodge is embedded within ongoing efforts to protect and revitalize Tłı̨chǫ culture and ways of life. It also directly connects to the subsequent reproduction project and the two new lodges. However, several more broadly construed socio-cultural effects of this repatriation can be identified. Here, I discuss three responses to this event: 1) the generation of various tangible outcomes, including new objects, museum exhibits, and research projects; 2) the development of new and continuing relationships and connection; and 3) the continuing effort to connect cultural revitalization and education.

Tangible Outcomes

An important intention for knowledge repatriation projects is to inspire people to reconnect and take up traditional practices again. This was certainly the case for the earlier 1996 Tłı̨chǫ birchbark canoe project, which produced a birchbark canoe, intended for an educational display with the materials needed to build it, and inspired individuals to make several canoes even after it concluded. Similarly, the lodge reproduction project produced the two replica lodges: one accessioned into the PWNHC's collections, the other remains in the community. Unlike the canoe project, however, it is unlikely that another lodge reproduction project will be possible. In 2018, surveys indicated that the Bathurst and Bluenose-east caribou herd populations had declined by nearly 60% and 50%, respectively (GNWT report 2018). The sharp decline of the caribou populations

resulted in a no-hunting zone, particularly for the Bathurst herd. This has had a drastic impact on northern subsistence and associated cultural practices and will likely prevent efforts to reproduce traditional materials like the lodge in the future.

The return of the 1893 lodge has also been connected to the development of new exhibits, educational displays, and associated documentary materials. For example, the exhibit booklet produced for the 1998 exhibit at the PWNHC (i.e., Andrews and Mackenzie 1998) represents a type of new material generated by the return of the lodge. At the time of the first exhibit, these booklets became a popular keepsake (Cameron and Bird 1999), and they continue to be an item of interest for Tłı̨chǫ visitors to the PWNHC today (Mike Mitchell, June 25, 2019).[109] Photos and video documentaries continue to be used for the purposes of cultural education. The 2018 educational event centred upon the repatriated lodge provided another opportunity to showcase the 1893 lodge and the reproduction project.

The repatriation is also connected to the 2006 PWNHC exhibit, "We Live Securely by the Land," which saw the temporary return of historical Dene artifacts to the NWT. While presenting on the repatriation and revitalization project at the Conference of Hunting and Gathering Societies in the United Kingdom in 2002, Tłı̨chǫ representatives and collaborators visited the National Museum of Scotland (NMS).[110] The group laid groundwork for another collaborative "knowledge exchange" project (Knowles 2011, 2013).

What became known as the "Scottish Museum Project" sought to facilitate greater Tłı̨chǫ access to the NMS collections. Working collaboratively with the Tłı̨chǫ government, the PWNHC and the NMS temporarily returned 50 historical Dene artifacts to the NWT. The project included an exhibit at the PWNHC in Yellowknife in 2006 (Andrews 2006), and a series of short outreach visits to Tłı̨chǫ communities. These smaller events allowed Tłı̨chǫ in more isolated communities the opportunity to also view and experience the historical items, some of which are no longer in use. The project concluded in 2008, and all objects were returned to the NMS. However, Chantal

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[109] A digital copy of this exhibit booklet is available for download on the PWNHC's website https://www.pwnhc.ca/item/dogrib-caribou-skin-lodge-project/

[110] The National Museums of Scotland (https://www.nms.ac.uk/) houses a large Dene and northern Athapaskan collection from their close ties to the HBC and the North American fur trade. Its collections primarily include everyday items—some of which are no longer in use—and are extensive and well-documented. Records sometimes reference specific communities and summarize an object's use or purpose (Knowles 2013:152–154).

Knowles, then-Principal Curator for Oceania, Americas, and Africa, noted that this, "did not terminate the relationships" (201:158). Rather, the collaboration established a lasting working partnership, and made the Tłįchǫ Nation's stake in NMS collections very clear (Knowles 201:258–260; see also Wrightson 2015).

A final tangible connection can be seen in another project focused on Tłįchǫ ideas of home. The "Strong Like Two House" project, discussed by Tłįchǫ cultural programs manager, Tony Rabesca, is a collaboration with researcher Gavin Renwick. Building on the "Strong Like Two" ideology (discussed above, this project sought to examine ideas for modern dwellings based on Tłįchǫ traditional knowledge, particularly in the community of Gamètì (Renwick 2004, 2006)[111]. Rabesca describes an increase in modern tipis built alongside Tłįchǫ houses—even his own—saying,

> We've started seeing people building tipis behind their house. Even for me, I was looking at the tipi and decided, well, how can I build a tipi that's going to preserve for another 10–20 years. So, what I did was I looked at a tipi and looked at the design... I built a tipi beside my house, where I use the boards, but I still used the poles. But then I just attached the boards to the poles and made it look like a real tipi, in the door frame, and the door and the handle. So actually, there's...on top of it, …you know the smoke can go out from it. And in the floors, mostly [the] floor [is] like, plywood. And so, and then I made a fire hole in the middle. So, it makes it look like a real tipi, but it felt comfortable. …[W]e still could work in the old ways but do it in the modern ways, using modern tools. It's preserving it, but it'll last long, too. So that's a benefit… That's a "strong like two" tipi: Using the traditional with the modern, contemporary way of life. [Tony Rabesca, July 4, 2019]

While this contemporary version of Tłįchǫ lodges may not be a direct result of the 1997 repatriation, the existence and use of the community reproduction lodge in Behchokǫ̀, and the presence of the lodges at events like the Tłįchǫ Annual Gathering, may inspire community members to revisit traditional-style housing.

Relationships and Connection

Repatriation work is often grounded by relationships, especially where there is no official mechanism or legal requirement for return in place. The Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge was returned as a gift from the University of Iowa, outside of NAGPRA, and this process was entirely dependent on personal and eventual institutional relationships of those involved. The ongoing working relationship between Tom Andrews and the Tłįchǫ—

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[111] See https://www.gavinrenwick.org/research.

particularly with John B. Zoe—resulted in his contacting June Helm. It was Helm's personal relationships with the Tłįchǫ, and Andrews and Zoe that led to her suggesting the lodge's return, and her personal relationships within the University of Iowa that eventually saw the repatriation through. The repatriation of the 1893 lodge brought Helm into close contact with the Tłįchǫ again and helped to rekindle friendships from her fieldwork decades earlier (Helm and Andrews 1999; Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). This reconnection also inspired Helm to write her final book, *The People of Denendeh* (2000), which is a compendium of her earlier research and work with the Tłįchǫ and other Dene groups.

Work on the lodge repatriation both continued an ongoing relationship between the Tłįchǫ, Tom Andrews, and the PWNHC and fostered new connections and relationships with other museums. For example, in 2001, Andrews, Zoe, and others travelled to examine a second caribou skin lodge in the collections of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. (Andrews 2013; Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019).[112] Similarly, attending the Conference of Hunting and Gathering Societies conference in Scotland to showcase the Tłįchǫ community lodge also resulted in a connection with the National Museums of Scotland. Both situations have resulted in lasting working relationships between the Tłįchǫ and these cultural institutions (Andrews 2013; Knowles 2013) and reveal the potential of future collaborations.

Of the many Tłįchǫ families related to K'aàwidaà, some have developed a direct connection to their ancestor(s) via the 1893 lodge.[113] As noted above, Peter Huskey, a direct descendant through his mother's family, sees the lodge as a tangible connection to his family and culture and visits it regularly (Huskey pers comm. 2018). The 2018 public education event at the PWNHC emerged from one of these visits. Huskey co-facilitated the educational talks and Elders' visit. His emotional connection to the lodge was clear in his presentations and work that week. Mike Mitchell, the Curator of Education at the PWNHC, recalled Peter's dedication to the Elders' visit in particular,

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[112] This lodge is similar in style to the 1893 lodge, but was purchased much later, in 1923. It is the only other known Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge left in museum collections today (Andrews 2013: 31; Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019).

[113] Some of his descendants, including John B. Zoe and Elizabeth Mackenzie, were directly involved in efforts to repatriate K'aàwidaà's lodge and other connected projects.

> *And Peter, God bless him, really took that by the horns, you know. He gave me some ideas, but particularly, when the time came, he brought translation headsets from the Tłı̨chǫ government, and he really took ownership over the interpretation that day. It was fantastic to see.*
> [Mike Mitchell interview 2019]

Tom Andrews had a similar recollection on working with Peter for the event,

> *It was nice for me to come back, as a retired old timer, and talk about it. But to share the stage with Peter, who had this very emotional and genetic connection to the lodge… it was a wonderful experience.*
> [Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019]

Peter's own reflection on the meaning of the lodge for Tłı̨chǫ demonstrates the ways that the lodge itself serves as a touchstone to Tłı̨chǫ history and culture (Andrews 2011, 2013; Helm and Andrews 1999). He sees the caribou as the heart of Tłı̨chǫ language, culture, and way of life (Huskey, pers comm. 2019), a sentiment echoed by many others (George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019; see Walsh 2016, 2017). The important historical role of caribou in Tłı̨chǫ life and culture—through the use of hides for clothing and shelter, bones for tools, meat for food—cannot be understated, and emotional connections to the 1893 lodge in particular provides a clear example of this.

Andrews has written extensively on the mnemonic link between Tłı̨chǫ storytelling, culture, and place names (see Andrews 2004, 2011; Andrews and Zoe 1997). The visual cue of an important historical object, like the 1893 lodge or the artifacts returned as part of the Scottish Museum Project, can also function as a touchstone to culture and history (Andrews 2011:190–191). One example of this can be seen in the way Elders interacted with the lodge, both when it was returned in 1997 and 21 years later, during the 2018 event at the PWNHC, often elicited stories about life on the land in the old days. This was common during the reproduction project as well, both for the lodge and the earlier canoe project; most evenings were spent listening to the Elders' stories (Rosa Mantla, October 17, 2019; George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019; see Andrews 2011:211; Andrews and Zoe 1997, 1998).

Cultural Revitalization and Education

As with earlier work to map Tłı̨chǫ trails and record archaeological sites, the repatriation of K'aàwidaà's lodge stimulated interest in learning about Tłı̨chǫ history. From the 1998 exhibit opening to the 2018 educational series, each event was

enveloped in stories about the past, about life on the land, and about the skills needed to survive on it. These interests were carried into the reproduction projects and continue to be a key part of continuing projects aimed at revitalizing aspects of Tłı̨chǫ culture, like the Trails of our Ancestors program.

Apprentice programs were a key part of both the birchbark canoe and lodge reproduction projects. The intention was for Tłı̨chǫ youth to work alongside their Elders, observing and learning the skills necessary to make these cultural materials. Rosa Mantla describes the students working with Elders during the birchbark canoe project,

> *Well, some of the students, they were able to speak and understand Tłı̨chǫ language. Not so many of them, but they watched, and they did some work as the Elders guided them through. Like, how they can [chew and then] spit the [spruce] gum on the bark to glue them together. And when the Elders wanted some help in holding the frame or even to collects spruce roots. They'd walk them through the bushes and help them collect spruce roots. First, it was the frame. They started frame and how they had to peel the bark and shape the wood into a frame. Then they put the frame together, that took a couple of days. And then they collected birchbark. So, the students with the Elders would walk through the bushes to look for a good, fresh birch trees. And that's how they collected a lot of bark and helping out with the Elders.* [Rosa Mantla, October 17, 2019]

Both projects also involved youth travelling in by bus to visit the camps. The lodge reproduction project allowed these students to try hide scraping—an important part of processing the hides.

> *Barb Cameron and Rosa Mantla ensured that busloads of school children came almost every day. These visits were important because not only did the children get to learn through direct experience of how hard it was to scrape caribou hides, Elders were given an opportunity to teach traditional practices in a traditional setting.* [Tom Andrews pers. comm. 2020]

Another essential part of these projects was the chance to hear Elders' stories about life on the land, the use and construction of these material objects, and the significance they held (and still hold) for Tłı̨chǫ ways of life. Storytelling took place at all stages: at the work sites, during production, project generation, and exhibition of the final products. Reflecting on the birchbark canoe project, Rosa Mantla said,

> *It was a lot of time spent with the Elders. Between their breaks, the Elders would tell stories about their experiences of how the birchbark canoes were made. But in the old days—they talked about how fast some people*

made the birchbark canoes. To make them quick to meet with the Traders or to catch up with [them]. [Rosa Mantla, October 17, 2019]

George Mackenzie also reflected that,

> *Through all this, the Elders have taught us—[with] the two projects and many other trips we do on the land personally—they always taught us to pay respect to the land, the water. So, wherever we travel, we hunt, on wintertime by skidoos or dog team days, by canoe, boats, we always pay respect to the water, to the land. And when we put an animal down, we thank the Creator and do an offering to that area. We do an offering through feeding of the fire. That's how we were taught to respect the Creator, that—whatever he gave us, we all do the offering. So, it was all this philosophy, teaching is the part of the two projects that the Elders emphasized.* [George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019].

It was sometimes difficult to hold apprentices' attention for the duration of the project (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). However, their close involvement in these projects exposed students to traditional learning styles and ensured access to Elders' stories about life on the land—both of which are important for cultural education.

Each reproduction project (canoe and lodge) also produced a short film to showcase the work (Woolf and Andrews 1997; Woolf et al. 2000), as well as hours of archival footage detailing the Elders' knowledge and processes that have been archived for the community. By fully documenting these projects on video, in photographs, and in field notes, the organizers ensured that they could be useful for the education of future generations. For example, Giselle Marion talked about the potential of an online platform to showcase them.

> *A lot of those people have passed away now, so it'd be great to have videos of those Elders talking about the project and put them online to share. What is to be shared, you know, what they feel is appropriate of course. But it'd be nice to see that promotion of pride, in the project, in today's time. …*
>
> *This is why I think... a digital museum is important. If you go to the heritage shows you will see a lot of the printouts from the Tłı̨chǫ history website. Because we lack space or a museum in every community, really our only way of promotion is through a digital online platform. So, this, I think is important to continue […] the celebration of the Tłı̨chǫ people from history. Now, we're coming [up on the] 100-year anniversary [of Treaty 11] in 2021. And what are we doing about that?* [Giselle Marion, June 24, 2019]

Today, Tłıchǫ continue to share their stories via videos. A Vimeo page (Shopify 2017; Giselle Marion, June 24, 2019) and new projects like story animations (Tony Rabesca, July 4, 2019; see Ruiz 2017) bridge recent shifts in generational learning styles and offer examples of how these collaborative heritage revitalization and repatriation projects can be shared in the future. The video footage from the canoe and lodge reproduction projects, by capturing moments and people in time, have ensured their usefulness for future learning opportunities.

The "Strong Like Two People" ideology that underpins Tłıchǫ pedagogy today emphasizes the need to continue to teach and learn traditional practices and stories, in addition to external, Western education. Integrating cultural programming and curriculum has been a priority for Tłıchǫ for many years and educating youth in traditional stories and culture has been a driving reason for Elders' involvement in the PWNHC collaborations and in other traditional knowledge work (see Legat 2012; Walsh 2015b). Thus, revitalization and repatriation work are inextricably tied to cultural education; an essential element integrated into each collaborative project discussed above.

Political Effects

Repatriation work frequently requires the involvement of official community governance bodies to work with institutions, and potentially submit a formal request for return. It involves revisiting and re-evaluating historical events, and deep consideration of their impacts. Repatriation work can be one avenue for Indigenous nations to assert sovereignty and contribute to nation-building. This makes efforts to return Indigenous heritage and/or revitalize traditional cultural practices necessarily political. In the North, heritage work cannot be extricated from ongoing modern treaty negotiations (Andrews 2004:310–311). The return of the Tłıchǫ caribou skin lodge exists within an ongoing political history and Tłıchǫ resurgence in the face of colonial occupation. Here, I identify the political intersections of this repatriation in two ways: 1) the repatriation's connection to times of great political change for the Tłıchǫ; and 2) political uses of the community lodge replica.

Political Connections

Both the 1893 lodge and its repatriation are connected with great political changes for the Tłıchǫ. The lodge itself has a clear and definitive connection to an important

political figure in Tłı̨chǫ history (K'aàwidaà). It was also made and used before Treaty 11 was signed and before attendance at residential schools was required. The nineteenth century was a time of shifting priorities, when the expansion of the fur trade greatly benefitted many Tłı̨chǫ. K'aàwidaà's lodge can thus be understood as a tangible link to Tłı̨chǫ life on the land and traditional socio-political systems.

The lodge's repatriation occurred during a specific socio-political context as well. Discussions on its return took place alongside ongoing negotiation for the Tłı̨chǫ Land Claim and Self-Government Agreement (finalized in 2003). The shared stewardship agreement, signed between the Tłı̨chǫ and the PWNHC at the exhibit opening in 1998, can be understood as a recognition of the Tłı̨chǫ's status as an independent political entity. Similarly, the raising and celebration of the two replica lodges at the Tłı̨chǫ Annual Gathering in 2000 demonstrated their political role as well. Such objects cannot fully be removed from the ongoing political climate. Thus, the lodge can also be a link or touchstone to these important shifting political times.

Objects as Political Ambassadors

Pride in Tłı̨chǫ culture and skills underpins the use of objects as "ambassadors," as discussed by Chantal Knowles (2011) in her reflection on the NMS collaboration with the Tłı̨chǫ. Over the course of that project, Knowles noted that Tłı̨chǫ representatives were comfortable with the NMS's continued stewardship of the collection because they would "function as 'ambassadors' for their Nation" (2011:232). This idea of an object acting as a representative for the Tłı̨chǫ can be extended to the various uses of the community lodge.

As described above, the community lodge has sometimes been used to represent and share Tłı̨chǫ culture, both locally and internationally. At local and Dene Nation events, the lodge represents a tangible connection to traditional life on the land for Tłı̨chǫ, and a celebration of their ancestors' skills. At other public and international events, it becomes a way to showcase Tłı̨chǫ culture and pride. For example, the story of the repatriation and the reproduction project has travelled to conferences and events around the world. On the trips to Scotland and Norway discussed above, the erected community lodge became a key feature or object of interest. Andrews reflected on the pride felt by Tłı̨chǫ participants at the Tromsø event,

> *It was really interesting to see Sam and Allizette's [Drybones] proudly standing beside this beautiful object. Having all of the conference attendees help erect the lodge—the last of the traditional lodges to be erected—was a moving moment and one that Sam and Allizette cherished as they led the effort.* [Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019]

This representational role of cultural objects is also evident in the seamstresses' intentions for the museum lodge during the reproduction project. Knowing that one lodge was intended for a permanent display at the PWNHC, the women decided to include a decorative fringe that runs around the whole lodge, rather than the usual three smaller tassels to match the original 1893 lodge (see Figure 4.7 above). To them, this was a "special tipi" that would positively represent Tłı̨chǫ culture to the museum's visitors. In each of these examples, the replica lodges functioned to represent the best of Tłı̨chǫ culture to non-Tłı̨chǫ audiences. In doing so, they also showcased Tłı̨chǫ pride in their Nation, culture, and history.

Economic Effects

Direct economic impact from the repatriation of the 1893 Tłı̨chǫ caribou skin lodge, both positive (revenue) and negative (costs of return), appear to be minimal given the prominent role the PWNHC played in the negotiations and in the years since. The lodge's accession into the PWNHC collections has ensured that it is stored in climate-controlled environment without additional storage costs. However, this means that it is not located on Tłı̨chǫ territory, limiting opportunities for economic benefit (e.g., cultural tourism). That said, the future potential for a tourism economy in places like Behchokǫ̀ exists. Many of the individuals I spoke with expressed an interest in developing a Tłı̨chǫ museum or cultural centre that has the capability of storing and showcasing important Tłı̨chǫ objects.

> *I personally think we should have our own museum. Run it by our self and our own staff. And be proud that we have a museum where people can come and observe. I know there's some museums down south that are like that. I think we have to seriously look at it to make that happen* [George Mackenzie, July4, 2019]

The Tłįchǫ Online Store[114] has begun to explore the benefits of cultural tourism for the Tłįchǫ. For Giselle Marion (Director of Client Services for the Tłįchǫ Government), replica souvenirs can be both an innovative way to represent Tłįchǫ culture and a potential revenue stream,

> *They found a copper knife in Wekweètì when there were making the Wekweètì airport, the runway, right? So, they had to do an archaeological [excavation] because they found items there. And so, we took the knife and we redesigned it into a copper necklace that we sell today. … Such a great idea. So, what can we do to celebrate past products? Not just like educational-wise, but economic-wise and training-wise, right? Like, how do we incorporate these and all our facets.* [Giselle Marion, June 26, 2019]

The reproduction project brought some revenue for participants and suppliers. The long-term implementation of cultural programs like these is highly desired among individuals I spoke to. However, Jim Martin reflected on how challenging that would be,

> *So, to me it was not just important to do those two projects. It was to do many projects like those continuously, year in and year out. You know? To keep doing things like that. And that's a challenge. I mean, they're...depending on the people you've got in principal positions, and superintendent positions, and teaching positions…the energy they've got, the commitment they've got. It can be difficult, sometimes, to do those things.* [Jim Martin, July 4, 2019]

The logistics involved in managing these projects were complex and demanded a great deal of time, attention, and funding from external and internal sources (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). It is important to consider such details when considering long-term cultural programs like this.

Chapter Reflections and Summary

Three main areas of impact and influence of the Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge's repatriation appear to be (1) repatriation as an opportunity to celebrate and connect with Tłįchǫ culture, (2) repatriation as a source of pride in Tłįchǫ community and culture, and (3) repatriation as a vehicle for reconnection and education. The restorative aspects of repatriation are clearly the most important: bringing back cultural and historical

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[114] The Tłįchǫ Online Store (https://onlinestore.Tłįchǫ.ca/pages/about) was established by the Tłįchǫ Government and the Tłįchǫ Community Services Agency, to promote awareness of the Tłįchǫ culture and peoples. In 2020, the Store opened a storefront in Behchokǫ̀.

knowledge, reconnecting with familial lineages, and restoring pride in culture that was often "educated out" in residential and day schools.

As a vehicle for reconnection and education, the repatriation and subsequent reproduction project provided opportunities for storytelling and on-the-land education. In this way, the projects helped to reconnect Tłı̨chǫ with the land and their stories, essential pieces of Tłı̨chǫ cosmology. George Mackenzie summarized this when asked to reflect on the importance of repatriation,

> When you say, "returning things back," I'm not too clear on what you mean by that but the way I understand it is, returning things back means returning it back to our culture, returning it back to our young generations to know that this is how things were done in the past. We don't have a museum now, but it's been returned back to our communities through school. It's being displayed in the school environment, for the young people to be used as a lesson plan and as in-a museum piece as displayed in school. And that way the material is being returned back.
> [George Mackenzie, July 4, 2019]

Lessons learned from the repatriation of the Tłı̨chǫ caribou skin lodge and subsequent projects can contribute to an expanding program of cultural protection and promotion. An autonomous Tłı̨chǫ cultural facility, with the ability to house and showcase historical artifacts like the 1893 lodge, would allow Tłı̨chǫ to fully control and capitalize on their heritage. Taking advantage of the growing tourism market in the NWT offers a potential revenue stream as well (Giselle Marion, June 24, 2019). However, the realities and logistics of repatriation and reproduction projects must be carefully considered. They are often expensive and time consuming to undertake, and are also subject to other limitations, such as declining caribou populations.

Chapter 5.

The Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project

From 2000 to 2003, the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute undertook an ambitious project to replicate a traditional-style outfit made in the mid-nineteenth century and owned by the Canadian Museum of History (CMH) since the 1970s.[115] The goal was to make five replica outfits, using traditional methods and materials, to display in Gwich'in communities. The Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project (hereafter the "Gwich'in Clothing Project" or the "Clothing Project") was a partnership between the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, and the CMH. It employed over 40 Gwich'in seamstresses to make the outfits.

For the Gwich'in and other Dene groups, clothing was an important part of their lives, protecting them from sometimes-extreme weather conditions and serving as a reminder of their connection to the land (Thompson 1994, 201:3–4). However, sweeping changes brought about by European contact resulted in traditional-style clothing not being made or used by Gwich'in for nearly a century. The Gwich'in Clothing Project sought to remedy this. It evolved from the community's desire to reclaim control over their heritage, ancestral knowledge, cultural self-esteem, and identity (Kritsch 200:108). A key aim was to reconnect Gwich'in seamstresses with the methods and materials needed to make traditional-style, caribou skin clothing. To learn more about this project and its effects, I completed nine interviews and examined archival records. I interviewed several Gwich'in seamstresses and others involved in the project to understand their experiences building and carrying it out, and to consider its impact.

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[115] At the time of the Clothing Project, the museum was known as the Canadian Museum of Civilization. However, in this chapter and others (i.e., Chapter 2), I use its current name, the Canadian Museum of History. The CMH has undergone several name changes: the National Museum of Canada (1912–1956) divided into two branches, the National Museum of Man, and the National Museum of Natural Sciences (now the Museum of Nature), in 1956. In 1986, the National Museum of Man is renamed the Canadian Museum of Civilization; it moved to its current location in Gatineau, Quebec, in 1989. In 2013, the Canadian Government again renamed the Museum as the Canadian Museum of History. For more information see https://nature.ca/en/about-us/history-buildings/historical-timeline

In this chapter, I examine the repatriation of traditional skills and associated knowledge in the Gwich'in Traditional Clothing Project. As discussed in Chapter 1, knowledge repatriation projects such as this offer an opportunity to explore repatriation from a different angle. Instead of the physical return of belongings, here, access to cultural materials and associated records in museum collections fosters the return of traditional skills and knowledge needed to revive past cultural practices. It is important to note that the Clothing Project is situated within a network of ongoing projects that seek to protect and develop Gwich'in culture, language, and ways of life. I begin by introducing the Gwich'in and their history. I then describe the work of the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute and then the Clothing Project. Next, I review what happened after the project ended. Finally, I explore the Clothing Project's legacy and effects on Gwich'in communities.

The Gwich'in People

The Gwich'in live in the Western Subarctic and are the most northerly of the Dene groups.[116] Historically known as the Loucheux or Kutchin, the Gwich'in also refer to themselves as *Dinjii Zhuh* ("the inhabitant of") (Clark 2007; Agnes Mitchell, July 27, 2019). Their traditional territory extends from the interior of present-day Alaska, through the Yukon Territory, and into the Mackenzie Delta region of the Northwest Territories (NWT). Gwich'in oral history documents their presence in this region since time immemorial. Archaeological evidence traces Dene ancestors in the region for thousands of years (Hanks 1997:178; Kofinas 1998:77–78; Kritsch et al. 1994).

At the time of contact in the late eighteenth century, there were nine regional groups living across Gwich'in traditional territories.[117] Today, there are approximately 6,000 Gwich'in living in Canada and the United States. Many now live in towns and

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[116] Spelling of Gwich'in varies (e.g., Gwich'in [NWT], Gwitchin [Yukon] see Heine et al. 2007:50–52). Other Dene groups in the NWT include the Tłįchǫ, Sahtú Dene, Dehcho, and Akaitcho. The Gwich'in are also a member of the Dene Nation, which supports Dene interests and rights in the NWT (see https://denenation.com/).

[117] These groups were known by the region and landscapes that they occupied. For example, the Vuntut Gwitchin, living in present-day Old Crow, Yukon Territory, are the Crow Flats people, after a specific area of their territory (Heine et al. 2007: 50–52; Thompson 2013: 182).

settlements in the NWT, Yukon Territory, and Alaska.[118] In the NWT, where this study is focused, there are nearly 3,300 Gwich'in living in four communities: Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Inuvik, and Tsiigehtchic (formerly Arctic Red River).[119] There is also a significant Gwich'in presence in Yellowknife (NWT), Whitehorse (YK), and Edmonton (Alberta). In 1992, the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement returned control over nearly 24,000 km^2 of their territory—including lands in the Yukon—to the Gwich'in Tribal Council (representing Gwich'in peoples in the NWT). It has also ensured their rights to resource management there continued (Figure 5.1; Clark 2007; Gwich'in Tribal Council n.d. "Land Claim").

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[118] Gwich'in communities retain strong ties across these borders, maintained in part through a biennial Gwich'in Gathering and international advocacy efforts, such as the Gwich'in Council International (https://gwichincouncil.com/gwichin; see Olson 2005).

[119] The Gwich'in living in these communities are also known respectively as Ehdiitat Gwich'in, Teetł'it Gwich'in, Nihtat Gwich'in, and Gwichya Gwich'in.
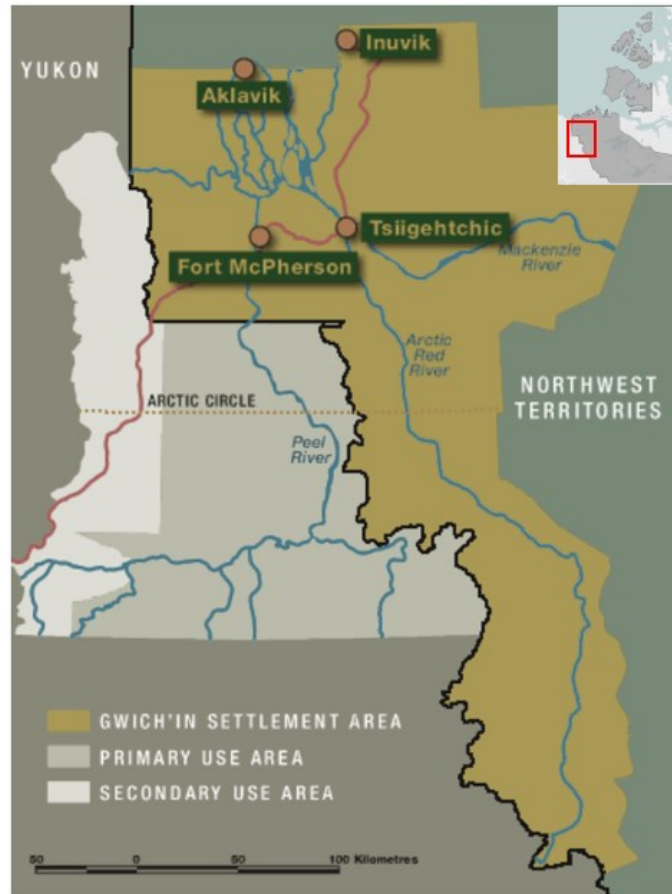
Figure 5.1. The Gwich'in settlement region.
The GSR includes the Gwich'in settlement area, primary use area, and secondary use area, as defined in the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement, 1992 (Source: https://gwichin.ca/gwichin-settlement-region)

Traditionally, Gwich'in were highly mobile, travelling and adapting to resource availability, which varied seasonally. Such extensive travel meant they developed a deep land-based knowledge—a relationship that continues to ground Gwich'in worldviews today. Their traditional territories encompass the northern boreal forest, the Richardson Mountains along the NWT-Yukon border, and several major waterways, including the Yukon, Porcupine, and Mackenzie Rivers. Important resources included caribou, moose, rabbits and other small mammals, fish, birds, and local plants such as birch trees, berries, and wild rhubarb (Parlee et al. 2005, 2014; Wray and Parlee 2013). Many of these remain important today. Gwich'in have also taken a strong position on environmental protections in their territories, working to protect local caribou herds and other traditional resources from climate change and resource extraction initiatives (Benson 2011, 2015, 2019; Gill and Lantz 2014; Hovel et al. 2020).

Gwich'in Worldview and History

Gwich'in worldviews are informed by their deep connection to their lands and the many beings that inhabit them. In the past, Gwich'in lived in small, family-based groups that spent much of the year travelling (Benson 2019:61–64). Summers were often spent with larger groups; fishing and gathering berries and plant medicines as needed. In the late fall and winter, hunting moose and caribou, and trapping fine furs brought them to the mountains and other areas. Work undertaken to document Gwich'in Traditional Ecological Knowledge demonstrates just how important these resources and relations were (and are) to Gwich'in worldviews (see Andre 2006, 2012; Benson 2019; Gill and Lantz 2014; Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board 1997, 2001).

Beliefs in the spiritual realm are not as strong today as they were when people lived on the land year-round. The introduction of Christianity and other colonial policies severely restricted traditional practices and beliefs of medicine power and spiritual beings (Alestine Andre, pers comm. 2022). The result being the teachings about *Ts'ii dęįį* ("early") days can be difficult to explain today.[120] Elders' stories about those times refer to the close relationships between people and the land, and everything and everyone else (Aporta et al. 2014:233). The natural environment, including the landscape, animals, and other elements, is understood to be alive with spirits—both good and bad—that can judge, advise, help, and/or harm people while they are on the land (Fast 2005:815). Important human-animal relationships, such as their close connection to the caribou (see Benson 2019; Wray and Parlee 2013), continue to inform Gwich'in land and resource management decisions in their territories.

Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge is often focused by these relationships, with many stories identifying good behaviours that will ensure survival. The *Ts'ii dęįį* stories are sometimes grouped into three sets: those describing animal-animal interactions (e.g., the story of Raven and Loon [Heine et al. 2007:8–9, 342–343]), animal-human interactions (e.g., stories of the great Dene traveller, *Atachùukąįį* [PWNHC n.d.]), and

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[120] There is no clear translation for *Ts'ii dęįį*, though some translate it as the "stone age" in their history (Kritsch and Andre 2002). Nonetheless, Elders often say these stories are very old (Heine et al. 2007). Oral narratives that record the *Ts'ii dęįį* ("early") days, describe stories and events from the earliest days of the land until the time of contact with Europeans, when things began to change (Gwich'in Tribal Council n.d. "Gwich'in History")

human-human interactions (e.g., the Boy in the moon [Horowitz et al. 2018]).[121] Many record events where animals and people could talk to each other and were equals (GTC website n.d.; Heine et al. 2007:3).

In the past, these stories were an important part of travelling and life on the land; Gwich'in children learned them from their Elders while on the trails (e.g., Heine et al. 200:56–57). Place names described the importance of a location and identified important resources and/or events that are tied there, anchoring Gwich'in stories and history to the landscape (Aporta et al. 2014:233–236; Kritsch and Andre 1993:21–22, 57–61).[122] The repercussions of colonialism and the changing lifestyles of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have meant that there are fewer opportunities for traditional, on-the-land learning. Thus, Gwich'in Elders have often recognized the importance of recording their knowledge for future generations to use and learn from (Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute 2016a).[123]

Contact with Europeans

The presence of Europeans in the Western Subarctic was likely felt before their actual arrival due to the extensive Indigenous trade networks that already existed across the north (Helm 2000:108–109). The Gwich'in first encountered Europeans in the late eighteenth century, when explorer Alexander Mackenzie arrived in their territory in 1789.[124] His arrival was only the first in a series of expeditions to the region that would significantly transform the lives of local peoples (Thompson 2013:182–187).

After the Hudson's Bay Company merged with the Northwest Company in 1821, it had a virtual monopoly over the fur trade in the north. Gwich'in and other Dene groups were highly valued trading partners, and many prospered. Trading posts were established along important waterways, including the Bluefish Post on the Bluefish River (1806, later Fort Good Hope), Peel River House near present-day Fort McPherson (1840), Fort Yukon (1840s), and The Flats, near present-day Tsiigehtchic (1901,

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[121] *Atachùukąįį* is a figure common to many Dene stories, though he appears by different names depending on the group (i.e., he is *Yamǫ́rıa* for the Sahtú Dene, and *Yamǫǫ̀zha* to the Tłįchǫ). See https://www.nwtexhibits.ca/yamoria/; also, Andrews 2011; Heine et al. 2007.

[122] This is similar to other Dene cosmologies as well (see Andrews 2004).

[123] See examples in Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board 1997, 2001; Heine et al. 2007; McCartney and Gwich'in Tribal Council 2020.

[124] Mackenzie set off down the present-day Mackenzie River in 1789, looking for a passage to the Pacific Ocean that would open up new trading opportunities (Marshall and Mercer 2021).

1902).[125] Gwich'in groups would visit these posts as part of their seasonal travels, trading meat and fur for European goods.[126] At the end of the nineteenth century, the discovery of gold in the Yukon resulted in the Klondike Gold Rush (1896). This brought a huge influx of outsiders to Gwich'in territory, along with new trading and employment opportunities.[127] By the early twentieth century, the region was a target for mining and oil extraction projects.

Christian missionaries from Roman Catholic and Anglican churches had also arrived in the region by the mid-nineteenth century. Records show that the two groups were often in competition and thus, many Dene groups were quickly converted (Helm 2000:115; Mishler 1990).[128] Ingrid Kritsch and Alestine Andre (2002:214) noted that these efforts in Gwich'in territories resulted in the largely Catholic population in Tsiigehtchic and the largely Anglican population in Fort McPherson.

Churches and mission schools from both denominations first appeared in the NWT after 1850, established at Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, and Hay River (TRC 2015d: 14–15).[129] All were quite far from Gwich'in territories, and children were often away for five years or more. As elsewhere, students were required to learn and speak only English or French, participate in religious activities, and contribute via manual labour. There have also been many reports of physical and sexual abuse from residential school survivors, and illness and epidemics at the schools were common (TRC 2015d: 27–31).

This period brought significant changes to traditional lifeways in the north and the legacy of things like the residential and day school systems continue to be reckoned with today (Osgood 1936; TRC 2015). Diseases, including scarlet fever, influenza, and tuberculosis, were particularly devastating to the Gwich'in and other Indigenous communities. Epidemics led to significant population declines, some estimated to be 60–80%, from the 1830s–1880s (Krech 1976 in Fast 2005:816; see also Helm 2000:192–

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[125] In 1825, the Bluefish Post was moved to Gwichya Gwich'in lands across from Thunder River. (Heine et al. 2007: 199). The Hislop and Nagle Trading Company established the first trading post at Tsiigehtchic in 1901; the Hudson's Bay Company followed in 1902 (Kritsch 2020).

[126] Glass beads were of particular interest, especially blue ones (Krech III 1987). One Gwichya Gwich'in Elder, Billy Cardinal, remarked that they "were just like diamonds to the people in those days" (Heine et al. 2007:182).

[127] Kritsch and Andre have also noted that it was the miners and prospectors who first introduced the Gwich'in to the existence of money (2002:215).

[128] Though Mishler (1995: 125) notes that this was likely due to individual personalities/rhetoric of missionaries, rather than specific religious ideology.

[129] Schools were later established in Aklavik, Inuvik, and Yellowknife as well.

219). The loss of so many people, and so quickly, had deep impacts on the transmission and continuation of Traditional Knowledge and language.

From Treaty 11 to a Comprehensive Land Claim

After the Klondike Gold Rush and the subsequent discovery of oil in the region, economic interest in the north increased substantially and required an active presence from the Canadian government (Fumoleau 2004:24, 193–196). Treaties would transfer control of the land to the Canadian Government, which would in turn provide necessary services for Dene groups (i.e., annual payments, education, and medical services). Treaty 11 was signed by the Teetł'it Gwich'in in Fort McPherson and the Gwichya Gwich'in at Tsiigehtchic, in late July 1921 (Fumoleau 2004:236–244; Gwich'in Tribal Council n.d. "Gwich'in History;" Heine et al. 2007:237).

The Government did not meet many of their Treaty promises, and Dene groups have long contested the interpretation of Treaty 11 as a cessation of title. In response to these issues, the Gwich'in lobbied for change, first with the Inuvialuit and Métis groups living in the Mackenzie Delta (as the Committee for Original People's Entitlement [1970]), and later as part of the Dene Nation.[130] Their efforts contributed to the recognition that modern treaty and land claims negotiations were needed (Fumoleau 2004:273–276).[131]

In 1988, NWT Dene and Métis groups successfully negotiated an Agreement-in-Principle with the federal government. However, in 1990, the Dene-Métis Assembly called for its re-negotiation, citing the need to recognize and retain their inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights (Gwich'in Tribal Council n.d. "Gwich'in History"). The government saw this as a rejection of the agreement. The Gwich'in withdrew from the Assembly shortly thereafter to negotiate a separate land claim.

In April 1992, the Gwich'in Tribal Council signed the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (GCLCA) in Fort McPherson. The GCLCA outlines the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA), which includes the communities of Aklavik, Inuvik, Fort McPherson, and Tsiigehtchic. It established a modern territory for the Gwich'in including 22,422 km^2 in the NWT (including 6,158 km^2 of subsurface rights) and 1,554 km^2 in the

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[130] The Dene Nation was established as the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories in 1969; they officially became the "Dene Nation" in 1978 (https://denenation.com/about/history/).
[131] Several modern Land Claims have since been negotiated and finalized in the NWT.

Yukon (Figure 5.1; Gwich'in Tribal Council n.d. "Land Claim").[132] The GCLCA also included a cash payment, a share of federal resource royalties in the NWT, a commitment to self-government—which remains under negotiation today[133]—and the exclusive rights to commercial wildlife activities on Gwich'in lands.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC) is responsible for the implementation of the GCLCA (Land Claims Coalition n.d.).[134] Several co-management boards were established to manage wildlife, land, and natural resources in the Gwich'in Settlement Area.[135] The GCLCA also outlines many responsibilities related to the management, protection, and documentation of Gwich'in culture and heritage. In 1992, shortly after the GCLCA was signed, the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute was established to carry out much of this work.

Gwich'in Heritage Work

The Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement notes that Gwich'in heritage resources, including places, artifacts, objects, and archival records, "…provide a record of Gwich'in use and occupancy of the settlement area through time and are of spiritual, cultural, religious, and educational significance to the Gwich'in (25.1.2)." It then stipulates the active role that Gwich'in representatives must play in the management and conservation of these resources (25.1.3-6). As with other modern land claims and treaty agreements, the GCLCA also includes direction for the repatriation of Gwich'in heritage resources, noting that

> In appropriate cases, artifacts and records relating to Gwich'in heritage
> which have been removed from the settlement area should be returned to
> the settlement area or the Northwest Territories for the benefit, study and

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[132] An accompanying transboundary agreement means that the whole of Gwich'in territory covered by the GCLCA (including lands in both the NWT and Yukon Territory) can be referred to as the Gwich'in Settlement Region (Ingrid Kritsch pers. comm. 2020; see also Yukon Transboundary Agreement Lands 1997).

[133] A Gwich'in Self-Government Agreement in Principle was approved by GTC Board of Directors in 2016, it is currently under community consultation and review (Brackenbury 2021).

[134] There are Designated Gwich'in Organizations (DGOs) in each of the four Gwich'in Communities in the Mackenzie Delta region. Each has an elected President and Council who deliver GTC programs and services locally (http://gwichintribal.ca/dgos).

[135] For example, the Gwich'in Settlement Corporation, the Gwich'in Development Corporation, the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board, the Gwich'in Land and Water Board; and the Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board (https://gwichintribal.ca/co-management-boards).

enjoyment of the Gwich'in and all other residents of the Northwest
Territories (GCLCA 25.1.11).

In this section, I briefly review the history and work undertaken by the Gwich'in Social
and Cultural Institute.

Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute

The Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute (GSCI) was established by the Gwich'in
Tribal Council in response to concerns about the decline of Gwich'in culture and
language. It administers the GCLCA's heritage resources chapter (Chapter 25) in
collaboration and consultation with the GTC and Gwich'in communities (Kritsch and
Andre 1997; GTC Department of Culture & Heritage 2016b). In 2016, the GSCI became
the Department of Culture & Heritage. It now operates within the hierarchy of the
Gwich'in Tribal Council.[136]

The GSCI's mandate has been to document, preserve, and promote Gwich'in
culture, language, traditional knowledge, and values (GTC Department of Culture &
Heritage 2016b). It is responsible for providing input into the development of territorial
and federal heritage-related legislation, heritage site designations, and archaeological
work undertaken in the GSA. The GSCI also advises the GTC (from a heritage
perspective) on all proposed development projects (Ingrid Kritsch pers. comm 2020).

The GSCI has conducted and collaborated on over 150 research projects since it
was established.[137] Research has included oral history and traditional knowledge
documentation, heritage resource inventories, cultural revitalization projects,
ethnobotanical research, and genealogical work. They have worked with Gwich'in Elders
and other community members to carry out this work and ensure Elders' stories and
knowledge are available for future generations.

Traditional Knowledge, Place Names, and Oral History Work

The documentation of Traditional Knowledge, place names, and oral histories is a
foundational part of the GSCI's work in the Gwich'in Settlement Region. For example,
oral histories from the Gwichya Gwich'in Elders have identified place names and oral

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[136] Given that much of the work covered in this chapter was completed before this shift, I primarily
refer to the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute or GSCI.

[137] See a list of their research publications and reports here: https://www.gwichin.ca/publications.

narratives along *Tsiigehnjik* (the Arctic Red River), *Nagwichoonjik* (the Mackenzie River), and other local waterways and trails (Andre and Kritsch 1992; Freeman 2005; Heine 1997; Kritsch and Andre 1993, 1994, 1997:130–132, 2002:212; Kritsch et al. 1994).[138] An edited compendium of Gwichya Gwich'in oral history and stories published by the GSCI in 2001 documented the Elders' knowledge, stories, and experiences living on the land in and around Tsiigehtchic (Heine et al. 2007[139]).

Similar work has been undertaken with Gwichya Gwich'in and Inuvialuit Elders living in Inuvik (Kritsch 1994), Ehdiitat Gwich'in Elders living in Aklavik (Greer 1999), and with Teetł'it Gwich'in Elders living in Fort McPherson (Kritsch et al. 2000). Together, these projects have informed subsequent archaeological, historical, and life history work in the GSA (e.g., Greer et al. 1995). A recent publication, *Our Whole Gwich'in Way of Life Has Changed/Gwich'in K'yuu Gwiidandài' Tthak Ejuk Gòonlih*, showcases the biographies and stories of 23 Gwich'in Elders from across the GSA (McCartney and Gwich'in Tribal Council 2020).[140] Recent collaborations have also sought to document and examine Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge associated with ethnoastronomy (Horowitz et al. 2018).[141]

Much of the GSCI's place names and oral history work, which involved over 74 Elders from Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Inuvik, and Tsiigehtchic, was compiled in the Gwich'in Goonanh'kak Googwandak: The Places and Stories of the Gwich'in project (2010–2012 [Aporta et al. 2014]).[142] This project resulted in *The Gwich'in Place Name and Story Atlas*, which is an online platform that allows users to virtually access and interact with places and stories across the GSA.[143] It identifies nearly 900 Gwich'in place names, associated stories, and Elders' pronunciations as recorded by the GSCI (Aporta

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[138] This work has also contributed to the recognition of several Territorial and National Historic Sites in the GSR (Ingrid Kritsch pers comm. 2020).

[139] The first edition was published in 2001. It was so popular that the GSCI ran out of copies and published a second edition in 2007. The GTC Department of Culture & Heritage is currently fundraising to publish a third (Ingrid Kritsch pers comm. 2020).

[140] See also https://gwichin.ca/Elders-biographies.

[141] This work has complemented research with Alaskan Gwich'in groups examining Traditional Knowledge around important constellations (Cannon and Holton 2014, Cannon et al. 2019).

[142] In 2020, the GTC Department of Culture & Heritage won the Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming for their work on *Gwich'in Goonanh'kak Googwandak: The Places and Stories of the Gwich'in* (https://www.canadashistory.ca/awards/governor-general-s-history-awards/award-recipients/2020/gwich-in-goonanh-kak-googwandak-the-places-and-stories-of-the-gwich-in).

[143] https://atlas.gwichin.ca/index.html

et al. 2014:242). The *Gwich'in Atlas* represents a new and innovative way to ensure that Traditional Knowledge about life on the land and its role in Gwich'in history and culture can be available for and accessible by future generations.

Heritage Resource Inventory Work

The GSCI has conducted many heritage resource inventory projects in the Gwich'in Settlement Region. This includes several community-based ethnoarchaeological projects to inventory heritage sites. For example, the Tsiigehnjik Ethnoarchaeology Project (1994–1995; Kritsch and Andre 1997:132–135) recorded traditional place names, knowledge of land-use activities, 12 archaeological sites, graves, and important trails along the Tsiigehnjik (the Arctic Red River). This project brought Gwichya Gwich'in Elders and youth together to document and record sites, hear stories about these places and people who had lived there, and experience traditional cultural activities, such as tanning hides, making snowshoes, and gathering traditional medicines (Greer et al. 1995; Kritsch and Andre 1997:135).[144] This project offers but one example of many undertaken by the GSCI. Similar work has subsequently been undertaken in Fort McPherson (Fafard 2003; Fafard and Kritsch 2005) and elsewhere in the Gwich'in Settlement Region (e.g., Andrews et al. 2016; Benson 2008; Proverbs et al. 2020).

The GSCI has also been involved in the inventory of natural resources that are of cultural importance to the Gwich'in.[145] Trail surveys with Elders in the Gwich'in Territorial Park (south of Inuvik) has identified important plants, trees, roots, and berries (Andre 1995, 2012). These have also documented Traditional Knowledge about important plants and their uses in the GSA—as food, medicine, shelter, and tools (Andre and Fehr 2002).[146] Other work around berry harvesting with Teetł'it Gwich'in women has identified important values around land and resource use, well-being, and cultural and spiritual continuity (Parlee et al. 2005; see also Murray et al. 2005). Projects like these have also deepened knowledge around the important roles Gwich'in women play in culture and

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[144] This complemented other, earlier work that documented place names and oral history along the river (Kritsch and Andre 1993). Video footage shot as part of the Project continues to be available online (see https://www.gwichin.ca/publications/tsiigehnjik-life-along-arctic-red-river).

[145] The GSCI has carried out or partnered in traditional knowledge research for the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board and others on a variety of species of importance to the Gwich'in (e.g., caribou, grizzly bears, wolverines, insects) (Ingrid Kritsch pers comm. 2020).

[146] See Andre 2006 and the GTC Department of Culture & Heritage's online plant inventory (https://gwichin.ca/plants).

community—which has often been noticeably absent from early ethnographic accounts (Parlee et al. 2014:221–222).

In the 1990s, the Government of the NWT (through the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre [PWNHC]) contracted the GSCI to identify and survey cultural institutions holding Northern Athapaskan and Métis objects in their collections, then develop a guide presenting the survey results (Kritsch and Kreps 1997).[147] The land claims process had demonstrated the importance of repatriation for northern Indigenous groups, and the project was meant to identify potential materials that should be returned. The GSCI identified and contacted 160 institutions around the world that were likely to be holding relevant collections. Of these, 71 were located in Canada, 47 in the United States, 5 in Russia, and 37 across Europe (Kritsch and Kreps 1997:2, app. B). The project team received responses from 89 institutions. Of particular interest to Gwich'in communities were examples of traditional clothing. This project directly informed later ones, including the Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project.

Repatriating Traditional Knowledge and Skills

One of the largest and most ambitious projects undertaken by the GSCI was the Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project. From 2000 to 2003, over 40 Gwich'in seamstresses from Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Inuvik, and Tsiigehtchic (and some living in Yellowknife), were employed by the GSCI to make five replicas of a traditional-style man's summer outfit. The project was a collaboration between the GSCI, the PWNHC, and the Canadian Museum of History in Ottawa. In this section, I describe this project in detail, beginning with some historical context on the roles that caribou skin clothing played for Gwich'in cultures at and, likely before, contact.

Caribou Skin Clothing in Gwich'in Culture

In accounts of early explorers and traders from the western arctic, it is common to find descriptions of Indigenous clothing styles. Alexander Mackenzie, who encountered the Gwich'in in 1789, wrote that the men's shirts were tapered, fringed, and embellished

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[147] This was similar to an earlier project carried out by the Yukon Government in 1988–1989. The Yukon Project sought to identify and survey cultural institutions holding materials relevant to Yukon First Nations and Yukon history. It has since developed into a publicly available database ("Searching for Our Heritage" https://yukon.ca/en/searching-for-our-heritage).

with decorations like berries, and women's garments were similar, only longer (Mackenzie 1789, cited in Thompson 2013:183; see Osgood 1936). This is a distinctive style that is unique to the Gwich'in (Thompson 1994:29; 2013). Other historical accounts and oral traditions indicate that caribou hide clothing had both functional and social roles in Gwich'in society.[148]

These styles helped Gwich'in people to survive in a challenging landscape (Thompson 1994:38–39). Summer outfits were made of de-furred, tanned caribou hides, while winter garments featured furred hides that were tanned only on one side. The tanned hide was soft and comfortable, but also waterproof; fringes were decorative and deterred bugs; the V-shaped cut of tunics and dresses ensured both comfort and flexibility; and the cut of sleeves (wide at the shoulder and narrow at the wrist) and combined trousers-shoes enabled easy movement while still offering protection from the elements (Thompson 1994:29; 1999:49; 2013:10, 189; Thompson and Kritsch 2005).

Clothing also had social functions in Gwich'in and Dene societies. Making it was a time- and labour-intensive activity. Thus, when gifted, it signified a significant relationship (Thompson 2013:12–13). Well-made clothing demonstrated the success of both the wearer (in hunting or trading) and the maker. Intricate quillwork and other decoration also showcased the artistic and creative talents of seamstresses (Thompson and Kritsch 2005:15; Thompson 2013). Helm noted that, in southern Dene communities, men's clothing was a domain where women could show off their skills (Helm 1989, 2000:335–336; Thompson 1994:38–39; Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019). Given that women's work has often been overlooked in historical and ethnographic accounts, clothing can be a significant reminder of the essential roles they play.

Contact and trade with Europeans brought many changes to Gwich'in lifestyles, including clothing styles and decoration (Osgood 1936:170; Thompson 1994:53–55; 2013:189–190). Thompson (1994:60–61) described a number of hybrid styles that incorporated traditional elements with more modern ones (e.g., European-style jackets made of caribou hide).[149] However, traditional clothing and accessories were still a popular trade item, and communities would sometimes make outfits for sale or on

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[148] For detailed discussions and analyses of Gwich'in and other Dene clothing, see Thompson 1994 and 2013.

[149] These continue to be made and worn for special occasions, such as weddings (Thompson 1994:102–103).

commission (Lindsay 1993:80; Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019; Agnes Mitchell, July 27, 2019; Thompson and Kritsch 2005:2). This means that examples of Dene clothing exist in museum collections today, though provenance information may be lacking (Kritsch and Kreps 1997).[150]

For Gwich'in, caribou skin clothing also demonstrates their close connections to the land and to the caribou. Caribou, or *vadzaih*, are one of the most highly respected animals in Gwich'in culture. In the *Ts'ii dęįį* days, Gwich'in had a special relationship with caribou and could talk to one another. Anthropologist Richard Slobodin described it this way:

> Kutchin [Gwich'in] have a particular affinity with caribou. In mythic time, the Kutchin and the caribou lived in peaceful intimacy, although the people were even then hunters of other animals. When the people became differentiated, it was agreed that they would now hunt caribou. However, a vestige of the old relationship was to remain. Every caribou has a bit of the human heart…in him, and every human has a bit of caribou heart. (1981:526)

This account demonstrates the close and reciprocal relationship the Gwich'in have with caribou, a relationship that continues to be strong today. In his speech at the installation of one of the project outfits in Tsiigehtchic in 2005, then-Chief Peter Ross reinforced this, saying "I feel it is fitting that this garment is produced from the caribou: one of our traditional animals that has provided food, tools, clothing and security since the beginning of time for our people..." (cited in Thompson and Kritsch 2005:56). Gwich'in peoples remain steadfast advocates for the protection of the caribou herds within their territory, with whom they have interacted with since time immemorial. Reconnecting with traditional caribou skin clothing is often an emotional experience for Gwich'in for many reasons, one being the reminder of this close and lasting relationship.

Methods and Materials

Traditional Gwich'in clothing was typically made of tanned caribou hide.[151] Caribou were most often hunted in the fall when hides were quite thick. Depending on the season, the fur would either be removed or left on. Hides were processed by groups of

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[150] Thompson and Kritsch (2005:2–3) note that there are 25 known examples of Gwich'in summer clothing in North American and European museums.

[151] Thompson (2013:41) notes that moose hides were also used but were not as light or as warm as caribou.

women who worked together to scrape, wash, soak, brain tan, stretch, and scrape again (Thompson 2013:41–43).[152] They were then cut for the garment pattern (a multi-piece summer outfit would typically require 8 hides [Thompson and Kritsch 2005:38]) and sewn together with caribou sinew, which was processed from the back tendon of the animal (Thompson 2013:59).

Outfits were then often elaborately decorated with dyed porcupine quills, dried silverberry seeds (*Eleagnus commutata*), caribou hide fringes, and, often, red ochre. To make the fringes, Thompson (2013:60, 69) notes that seamstresses would cut the tanned, de-furred hide into narrow strips and sew the band onto the garment. Fringes were often decorated with silverberry seeds. The silverberry seed is encased in a fruitlike berry that grows across the subarctic. These are boiled to extract the seeds, which are then pierced and threaded onto the fringes (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019; Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019; Thompson 2013:56).[153]

Porcupine quills were another common decorative material for Gwich'in clothing and other items, like mitts and moccasins (Agnes Mitchell, July 27, 2019). Quills were plucked from the animal, washed several times in very hot water, then dyed. Before contact, Gwich'in used bark, flowers, lichens, roots, and berries for dyes (Thompson and Kritsch 2005:17–18). However, the arrival of traders brought commercial dyes, which were preferred for their more vibrant colours (Thompson 2013:54–55). Quills were then wrapped around fringing and/or woven into decorative bands. Because of their intricacy, these bands and the fringes were often prepared separately, then sewn onto the garment when completed (Thompson 2013:60). Quillwork decorations are highly time-intensive; in later garments (i.e., post-contact), they were sometimes replaced with beading.

Finally, many Gwich'in garments also include markings in red ochre. Ochre is important for Gwich'in and other Dene groups, with vital cultural and spiritual uses. Because it is considered to be so powerful, its collection and application often required strict ceremonial protocols (see Andrews 2013:37–39; Helm 1994). On clothing, ochre was used to draw patterns on hides, preserve clothing, smudge fringes, and provide

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[152] For a more detailed description of the tanning process, see Lucy Vaneltsi's account in Thompson and Kritsch (2005:39).

[153] In some cases, the seeds are pierced with a sharp needle when freshly gathered (Ingrid Kritsch pers comm. 2020).

spiritual protection for the wearer when it was applied around garment openings and seams (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019; Thompson 2013:57, 69).

The Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project

By the 1930s, traditional caribou skin clothing was no longer worn in many Gwich'in communities that were near trading posts (Thompson 2013:91–92). While handmade and decorative items were still made as gifts and for special occasions, very few people were using traditional materials and methods to make clothing (Thompson and Kritsch 2005:3). Gwich'in seamstresses Karen Wright-Fraser and Ruth Wright recalled that while growing up in Inuvik, their idea of "traditional clothing" was limited to jean jackets (Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019; Ruth Wright, July 24, 2019).

While consulting with Gwich'in communities to identify priority areas for their work, the GSCI discovered that there was a strong interest in historical materials that were held in museum collections, and especially traditional clothing. The museum survey project had also identified several collections that held examples (Kritsch and Kreps 1997). With this in mind, the GSCI set out to build a collaborative project to identify, examine, and, eventually, replicate Gwich'in clothing that was no longer made or accessible in Gwich'in communities.[154]

In early 2000, the first phase of the Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project (the Clothing Project) began. Co-ordinating with project partners at the PWNHC and the CMH, the GSCI organized a trip to Ottawa and Washington, DC, to visit the collections of the CMH and the Smithsonian Institution, respectively (Halifax 2000a,b).[155] At both institutions, the Elders and team members interacted with many examples of Gwich'in clothing. Encountering the outfits was a poignant and emotional moment for everyone, and especially those Elders who had no memory or experience with hide garments (Kritsch 2001:107; Thompson and Kritsch 2005:31; Karen Wright-Fraser, June

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[154] For detailed accounts of the project and its various phases, see Kritsch 2001; Kritsch and Wright-Fraser 2002; Thompson 2001; Thompson, Hall, and Tapper 2001; Thompson and Kritsch 2005; Wright-Fraser 2001.

[155] Trip participants were: Gwich'in Elders, Rosie Firth, Rosie Stewart, and Renie Martin; Gwich'in seamstress and sewing co-ordinator, Karen Wright-Fraser; Filmmaker, Dennis Allen; PWNHC curator, Joanne Bird; CMH curator, Judy Thompson; and two GSCI staff members, Research Director Ingrid Kritsch and Heritage Researcher Alestine Andre.

23, 2019). Ingrid Kritsch (2001:107) described the groups' first interaction with the men's multi-piece, decorated summer outfit at the CMH:

> The group enters the Ethnology Division storeroom and sits down. Moments later, a trolley is wheeled in, and a man's caribou skin outfit, heavily decorated with porcupine quills, silver willow seeds and fringes, is carefully laid out on a table in the storeroom. A hush falls on the room. The three Gwich'in Elders' eyes open wide, and a collective sigh is expressed–"Ahhhh!!" Others in the room exclaim, "How beautiful!" as they admire the elegant lines of the clothing, the vibrant colours of the quillwork, and the small, neat stitching–stitching so neat and fine, that you can barely see it. The garments are over a hundred years old, and this is the first time the Elders have seen this type of clothing. It makes them feel close to their ancestors. They feel honoured to be able to see it and touch it, and they are grateful that the museum has taken such good care of it over the years.

Upon returning to the north, the plan was to make four replica outfits based on a man's summer outfit from the CMH (Figure 5.2), a woman's summer outfit from the Smithsonian, a boy's winter outfit from the CMH, and a girl's summer outfit from the Royal Ontario Museum (Kritsch 2001:110). The intention was to eventually display one in each of the four Gwich'in communities.

Figure 5.2. Gwich'in man's summer outfit, c. 1876–1900.
(Canadian Museum of History, VI-I-73/IMG2009-0063-0074-Dm)

Funding for the Clothing Project came from the Department of Canadian Heritage's Museums Assistance Program, the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Education, Culture, and Employment, and the Gwich'in Tribal Council. Some government funds obtained were dedicated to the implementation of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement as well (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019).

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Unfortunately, a shortfall in their initial budgets meant that the GSCI needed to adjust their original plans (Kritsch and Wright-Fraser 2002:206; Thompson and Kritsch 2005:34–35).[156] It was decided that the Clothing Project would make five replicas of one outfit, then display one in each of the four Gwich'in communities and at the PWNHC. The man's summer outfit from the CMH (Figure 5.2) was selected for three reasons. First, it included several traditional materials and techniques that could enhance existing knowledge on Gwich'in clothing. Second, the outfit had also been closely studied by then-CMH curator Judy Thompson, and former Royal Ontario Museum curator Dorothy Burnham, who was an expert in textile analyses. Burnham had produced detailed patterns for the outfit, including sewing and quillwork techniques, which proved to be essential for the Clothing Project. Lead seamstress and sewing coordinator, Karen Wright-Fraser reflected that it wouldn't have been possible to complete the outfits without Burnham's patterns and diagrams, saying that

> *We knew it was going to be a difficult project. The reason being, it's an outfit from—it was a hundred and thirty years back then, hundred thirty years ago…When we see these outfits in the museum…[and] how the techniques were done. We don't know how to do some of those techniques. There's nobody today, because…there's nobody that we could ask…So, it was going to be tough.*
> [Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019][157]

And finally, the CMH outfit was more easily accessible for the project team. Ingrid Kritsch reflected that to access the outfit from the Smithsonian Institution, team members would have had to navigate the complexities typical of international loans and repatriation projects, which would likely have increased both the project timeline and costs (pers. comm 2022).

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[156] Ingrid Kritsch (then-GSCI Research Director) estimated that they had received only half of what they had applied for through the Museums Assistance Program (Kritsch and Andrews interview 2019).

[157] Karen has also been working on another replication project, independent of the Gwich'in Clothing Project. She first discovered examples of her people's traditional clothing in Judy Thompson's book, *From the Land: Two Hundred Years of Dene Clothing*. In 1999, she wrote to Thompson at the CMH, asking to view one of their tunics to make a pattern from it. She travelled to Ottawa with Gwich'in Elder, Mary Kendi, and filmmaker Denis Allen, shortly thereafter. While she has had to put that project on hold a few times due to other commitments, she remains excited and determined to finish it (Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019; Wright-Fraser 2001).

The Original Outfit

The original outfit (CMH VI-I-73; Figures 5.2 and 5.3) was acquired by the Canadian Museum of History in 1973 from a family in Ontario that had ties to the HBC.[158] It is thought to have been made sometime between 1876 and 1900. The multi-piece outfit includes a hood, bi-pointed tunic, pants, mitts with string, a knife sheath with string, and a decorative garter. Table 5.1 indicates the different elements of the outfit and what materials they are made of or incorporate. Figure 5.3 includes separate images of each element.

Table 5.1. Elements of a Men's Summer Outfit (CMC V1-1-73).[1]

Item	Material	Decoration
Hood	White, tanned caribou hide; sinew thread	Quillwork band; fringes
Bi-pointed tunic	White, tanned caribou hide; sinew thread	Quillwork bands; fringes; wrapped porcupine quills; silverberry seeds
Trousers	White, tanned caribou hide; sinew thread	Quillwork bands; fringes
Mitts	White, tanned caribou hide; sinew thread	Quillwork bands; fringes; Split bird feather-quill wrapped lines
Knife sheath	White, tanned caribou hide; sinew thread	Quillwork band; fringes; wrapped porcupine quills; silverberry seeds; split bird feather-quills
Garter	White, tanned caribou hide; sinew thread	Porcupine quill; fringes; silverberry seeds; split bird feather-quills

[1] Sources: PWNHC collections file (see link in footnote 161); Clothing Project Seamstress Guide 2000 [assembled by Ingrid Kritsch and Judy Thompson).

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[158] Source: PWNHC collections file. See https://www.historymuseum.ca/collections/artifact/37960

Figure 5.3. Elements of the original Gwich'in men's summer outfit.
Clockwise from top left: Shirt (Canadian Museum of History, VI-I-74 [a]); Pants (Canadian Museum of History, VI-I-73 [b], CD1995-0713-004); Hat (Canadian Museum of History, VI-I-73 [d], IMG2012-0200-0003); Garter (Canadian Museum of History, VI-I-73 [c], D2003-11086); Mittens (Canadian Museum of History, VI-I-73 [e], IMG2012-0200-0004); Knife Sheath (Canadian Museum of History, VI-I-73 [f], CD1995-0713-019).

The tunic, combined moccasin-trousers, mitts, hood, and knife sheath were made from white, tanned caribou hides, and sewn together with sinew. The different elements are decorated with a band of dyed porcupine quills and has caribou fringes across the chest and back. Fringing is also present along the bottom of the tunic. The moccasin-trousers are decorated with a single band of dyed porcupine quills and a few fringes down the front of each leg. While the moccasins are attached, the soles are made of a separate piece of caribou hide and would thus be easy to replace, as necessary (Thompson and Kritsch 2005:15).

The hood, mitts, and knife sheath also feature bands of dyed porcupine quills.[159] The caribou hide strings attaching the mitts, the knife sheath strap, and the garter all feature dyed and wrapped porcupine quills. Each item also has fringing. All fringing on the outfit is decorated with wrapped, dyed quills, and silverberry seeds.

While the outfit's history is largely undocumented, there are several old, handwritten labels glued into each item that provide some provenance information.[160] These labels include references to "Loucheux" and "H.B.Co." "Loucheux" was a common name for eastern Gwich'in in the nineteenth century. "H.B.Co" likely indicates that the outfit was a trade item of the Hudson's Bay Company. After 1840, Fort McPherson was the principal HBC trading post for eastern Gwich'in groups (Thompson and Kritsch 2005:2). It can thus reasonably be assumed that this outfit was made and/or purchased in the Gwich'in Settlement Area in the NWT. The lack of evidence for previous wear or use, also supports the idea that this outfit was made for trading purposes—something that some Gwich'in groups undertook in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[161]

The Reproduction Project

Karen Wright-Fraser was hired on to co-ordinate the sewing by the seamstresses alongside then-GSCI Research Director, Ingrid Kritsch (project manager), and then-PWNHC curator, Joanne Bird.[162] In fall 2000, the GSCI posted an advertisement looking for seamstresses. The ad mentioned the skills they were looking for, some information

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[159] As noted in Table 5.1 above, the CMH also includes "bird quills" in their description of several of the outfit pieces. However, it is unclear if these were actually used.

[160] As noted in the collection notes. See https://www.historymuseum.ca/collections/artifact/37960.

[161] Sarah Simon, a well-known Gwich'in Elder from Fort McPherson, recalled a story from her grandmother, Catherine Stewart, that described her making traditional-style summer garments for trade (Thompson and Kritsch 2005:2; Lillian Wright, July 24, 2019).

[162] All three women have since retired.

about the project, and the amount of time that they would be expected to dedicate to this work. The original timeline was for a four-month time commitment, something that Ingrid Kritsch recalled with some incredulity, since the project ultimately took three years to complete (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019). A core group of eight Gwich'in seamstresses, including both Elders and young adults was selected (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2. Seamstresses from the Gwich'in Clothing Project, by community.
(Core team names in bold).

Community	Seamstresses		
Aklavik	**Audrey Snowshoe** Catherine Semple	Bella Jean Stewart	
Fort McPherson	**Ida Stewart** **Elizabeth Colin** **Rosie Firth** **Mary (Blake) Clark** Shirley Stewart	Maureen Koe Martina Norman Jane Charlie Sr. Effie Bella Snowshoe	
Inuvik	**Lillian Wright** Ruth Wright Billie Lennie	Trina Nerysoo Gail Ann Raddi Donna Firth	
Tsiigehtchic	**Agnes Mitchell** **Maureen Cardinal-Clark** Rita Carpenter Mary Andre Stewart Alice Andre Lisa Andre	Mavis Clark Bella Norman Irene Kendo Joyce Andre Virginia (Benoit) Cardinal Rose Clark	Donna Norman Carol Norwegian Terry Remy Sawyer Leslie McCartney Misty Anderson
Yellowknife	**Karen Wright-Fraser** Cheryl Moore Karen Colin Maureen Beauchamp	Patsy Krutko Emily Francis Lucy Ann Yakeleya	

The project team then set out to gather the materials needed to complete the project. They estimated that a single replica outfit would require eight hides, over 4,000

porcupine quills, and approximately 400 silverberry seeds (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019; Thompson and Kritsch 2005:38). Home-tanned hides were difficult to acquire in Gwich'in communities, since many women no longer undertake this time-consuming and specialized work (Kritsch and Wright-Fraser 2002:207). However, they were able to purchase several white, tanned hides from a Tłįchǫ seamstress, Bernadette Williah, a tannery in Whitehorse, Yukon, and a fur and hide shop in Edmonton, Alberta. Wright-Fraser was able to acquire some of the porcupine quills needed from a roadkill and picked silverberries alongside Kritsch and their families near Yellowknife (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019; Thompson and Kritsch 2005:35–38). After deciding that natural dyes wouldn't give a bright enough colour, the quills were dyed using commercial dyes. Wright-Fraser then processed the berries to remove the seeds and drill holes into them using a drill press (Thompson and Kritsch 2005:38).

In December 2000, the GSCI, in collaboration with the PWNHC and the CMH, hosted their first workshop in Yellowknife (Barrera 2000). Then-curator Judy Thompson travelled north with the original outfit so that it could be closely examined by the seamstresses to make a pattern for the replicas (Figure 5.4). The seamstresses used enlarged versions of Dorothy Burnham's sewing patterns for the original outfit to trace, cut, and hand-sew the different elements together, using sinew thread and a Glover needle (Thompson and Kritsch 2005:40).[163] They also began learning about the decorative techniques: cutting fringes, porcupine sewing and wrapping techniques, and how to thread the silverberry seeds. At the end of the workshop, the seamstresses were given the paper patterns, a reference manual compiled by the project team, and a package with caribou hide, dyed quills, and silverberry seeds to begin working on their community's outfit at home.

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[163] Glover needles are a heavy needle with sharp points, meant to pierce tough materials like leather or hide more easily (e.g., https://prairieedge.com/glover-needles/)

Figure 5.4. Ida Stewart (Fort McPherson) cutting hides. PWNHC workshop, Nov-Dec 2000.
(Photo credit: Ingrid Kritsch, GSCI photo).

Early in 2001, the GSCI hosted two-day quillworking workshops in each of the four Gwich'in communities. Led by Karen Wright-Fraser, these were not limited to the seamstresses involved in the Clothing Project. A key aim of the project was to teach these forgotten skills in the hope that community members would incorporate them into their own work and teach them to the next generation, thus carrying them forward. There was significant interest in these workshops in Inuvik, where students from the Aurora College took part alongside Gwich'in Elders and Inuvik band members.

A second workshop was held at the Tl'oondih Camp near Fort McPherson in September 2001, during the GSCI's annual Gwich'in Science Camp there. As part of the week-long workshop, the ladies worked together to sew and decorate the new outfits. Each outfit was slightly different; the ladies used different colour schemes to make them unique. It was also decided that because the quill work was taking a very long time to do (estimated at 1 hour/1 inch), they would also use non-traditional materials for some of the decorative work (Kritsch and Wright-Fraser 2002:209; Thompson and Kritsch 2005:45, 49). As a result, instead of quill wrapping, fringes were wrapped in embroidery thread; the strings for the knife sheath and mitts were wrapped in wool; and the

decorative bands on both the tunic and pants were done in beading. The knife sheaths, mitts, and hood would all still incorporate the traditional porcupine quillwork. This decision sped up their work significantly. The result was five very unique outfits that blended traditional with modern materials (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019).

It was difficult to maintain momentum while the women were working in their respective communities. So, in March 2002, the GSCI hosted a third workshop for the project, this time in Aklavik (Figure 5.5). The seamstresses worked hard to help each other make progress. They completed two outfits during this time, those for Inuvik and Fort McPherson. A final workshop in Tsiigehtchic in July 2002, saw the completion of the Tsiigehtchic and Aklavik outfits (Figure 5.6). The fifth outfit was completed by women in Yellowknife (Thompson and Kritsch 2005:46; Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019).

Figure 5.5. Seamstresses working on the decorative bands at the Aklavik workshop, 2002.
(Photo credit: Leslie McCartney, GSCI photo).

Figure 5.6. Carol Norwegian and Ruth Wright working with the mitt string loom. Tsiigehtchic workshop, July 2002.
(Photo credit: Gilad [Gadi] Katz, GSCI photo).

Alongside these workshops, the GSCI interviewed Gwich'in Elders in all four communities and recorded their knowledge around sewing, decorations, and resource gathering. Many people in the communities would drop by to see the seamstresses' progress, tell stories, and learn about the techniques they were using. A chance encounter during the Tsiigehtchic workshop also identified a model for the seamstresses to see their work worn (Figure 5.7). Ruth Wright, who was working on the Inuvik outfit, recalls meeting Charles (Chas) Saddington and the powerful moment when he tried on the Inuvik outfit,

> *Here was this young man over there. And I thought he was a tourist because…he had one of those little hats with a mosquito netting at the back, and I thought, truly a tourist [laughs]…I said, "So, where are you from?" He said, "Here." I said, "No, no, where are you from?" He said, "Here. I was born in Inuvik, but my mom is from Arctic Red River." I said, "No way!... Just wait, we need you!"*
>
> *He kind of looked frightened. [laughs] There's this strange little lady [and she's saying] "we need you!"*

And I said, "Just wait, we're making an outfit. You could come up and try it on. Honest-to-goodness, it would just fit you so!" …I was just all excited! Walking on the air. And we had to walk up the little hill…and I walked in, I said, "I found a model! He's just gonna fit into it!"

So anyway, we finished our outfit [Inuvik] before everybody else. That's where I was coming to. So, I got our outfit …He came back all showered and everything… And I said, "Here, try it on, this is how it works" ...

And [when he came out] I said, "Oh my God, you look—you look even better than the picture!" I mean, honestly!... I said, "You guys [to the other women] this is our model." …

And they all looked over as he walked in and they just about, you know, fell over themselves trying to get their cameras. And one old lady was just about, you know, hyperventilating and crying because he looked so, so like the picture. It was just like...He came up here to find his family, and he found his roots from 200 years ago, you know? It was so cool. [Ruth Wright, July 24, 2019][164]

Figure 5.7. Seamstresses after the Tsiigehtchic workshop, July 2002.
(Photo credit: Gilad (Gadi) Katz, GSCI photo).

This was the perfect conclusion for the workshops. When they saw Saddington in the Inuvik outfit, many women commented on the pride they saw in his face. He himself said it was an unforgettable experience (Lau 2003). He had travelled north to reconnect

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[164] The photo Ruth refers to here is a historical drawing of a Gwich'in man wearing similar clothing. See Wright-Fraser's account of the seamstresses encounter with Saddington in Thompson and Kritsch 2005:52–53.

with his Gwich'in roots and fortuitously became part of a project that was seeking the very same thing. Wright-Fraser noted (in Thompson and Kritsch 2005:53) that in that moment, the project had "come to life. It was a moment most of us will have in our hearts forever."

What Happened Next?

In March 2003, the five outfits were completed, and the seamstresses were ready to share them with the public. The GSCI and PWNHC hosted a fashion show to celebrate. The event was so popular that the room was full and there were lineups out the door to get in (Andra-Warner 2003; Budak 2003; Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019). In the auditorium at the PWNHC, to an overflowing crowd, fifteen of the project's seamstresses were able to show off their incredible skills. While there were some modern materials used to decorate the five outfits, including glass beads, wool yarn, and embroidery thread, they still followed traditional design patterns and locations on the outfit. As Thompson and Kritsch noted in their retrospective, "the 'look' was true to their ancestry" (2005:49).

Five young Gwich'in men were recruited from Gwich'in communities for the event. Ryan Vittrekwa, Brandon Albert, Adolphus Lennie, Ryan Moore, and Chas Saddington (whom the seamstresses had met in Tsiigehtchic) modelled the outfits for Fort McPherson, Aklavik, Yellowknife, Tsiigehtchic, and Inuvik, respectively (Figure 5.8). A video captured this momentous event.[165] It was the first time in over 100 years that Gwich'in men wore traditional-style clothing like this. Thompson and Kritsch reflected that it was a "heartwarming and memorable experience" (2005:51), with Kritsch noting that many people were brought to tears seeing the young men so proudly wearing the outfits (p. 51).

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[165] "The Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project Unveiling" (2003) can be viewed on the GTC Department of Culture & Heritage's YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGz4ChbMGf4

Figure 5.8. The Clothing Project team with Gwich'in men modelling the outfits. PWNHC, March 2003.
Front row, L-R: Judy Thompson, Karen Wright-Fraser, Ingrid Kritsch, Joanne Bird. Back row, L-R: Adolphus Lennie (PWNHC outfit), Brandon Albert (Aklavik outfit), Ryan Vittrekwa (Fort McPherson outfit), Ryan Moore (Tsiigehtchic outfit), Charles Saddington (Inuvik outfit). (Photo credit: Thomas D. Andrews).

Installation in Gwich'in Communities

In 2005, four of the outfits were installed as single exhibits in each of the four Gwich'in communities in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA). Designated Gwich'in Organizations in each community were consulted and signed a loan agreement with the GSCI, which outlined requirements for their display (e.g., conservation concerns like sunlight exposure [Ingrid Kritsch pers comm. 2020]). They sponsored the exhibit installations and insured each outfit (Sharon Snowshoe, pers. comm. 2019). In Fort McPherson and Aklavik, the outfits were installed in local schools, and the Tsiigehtchic outfit was prominently set up in the band office. The Inuvik outfit was originally meant to stand in the local library, but conservation and space concerns resulted in it being moved around more than the others. In the past, it had also been displayed in the Capitol Suite hotel but is today in the Inuvik Band office, with plans to move it into a school (Figure 5.9; Edward Wright, pers. comm. 2019).

Figure 5.9. Community outfit exhibits for the Fort McPherson (R) and Inuvik (L) outfits, 2019.

The GSCI worked with the PWNHC to acquire the right-sized cases and install each outfit, which took some time.[166] They also collaborated with both the PWNHC and the CMH to develop educational kits and interpretive materials to accompany these small exhibits. Each outfit is accompanied by two placards (one in English and one in Gwich'in) that identify the seamstresses who created it, provides details on the project, and describes the significance of caribou hide clothing for Gwich'in ancestors.

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[166] Ingrid Kritsch recalled that this was because the original cases were the wrong size. Such displays typically do not need to account for mannequin heads, but the Gwich'in outfits included a hood. Thus, taller cases were needed (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019).

Museum Exhibitions

The Gwich'in Clothing Project has been featured in several museum exhibitions since it was completed. From 2007 to 2008, the PWNHC developed an exhibit in their North Gallery titled, *Long Ago Sewing We Will Remember*, which chronicled the Clothing Project.[167] The Yellowknife outfit was displayed prominently alongside the original outfit from the CMH, and panels told the story of the seamstresses' work. Seamstress biographies, photos, a video, and stories were also featured as part of this exhibit.[168]

The Yellowknife outfit was featured at the PWNHC again in 2015 in the exhibit *Rediscovering Caribou Skin Clothing*.[169] It was displayed next to an example of traditional Inuvialuit caribou skin clothing that was the product of another reproduction project the PWNHC was involved in. The exhibit materials described the collaborative nature of both projects and their intentional promotion of the skills and knowledge needed to make traditional clothing.

The GSCI's earlier partnership with the CMH also resulted in several opportunities to showcase the Gwich'in Clothing Project. In 2012, the GSCI in partnership with the CMH and the Heritage Branch of the Vuntut Gwitchin Government (Yukon), launched an online exhibit, *Gwadàl' Zheii: Belongings from the Land*.[170] It includes a video introduction by Gwich'in seamstress, Karen Wright-Fraser, historic and contemporary photographs, and stories told by Gwich'in Elders. It also features nine Gwich'in artifacts from the CMH's collections, including a child's winter outfit, snowshoes, a willow-bark net, dog pack, and a man's summer outfit.[171] The man's summer outfit page includes quotes and videos from women involved in the Clothing Project and links the reader to the GSCI website, where the project's story is told in full.

Similarly, in 2017 and 2019, an exhibit at the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) in Ottawa, *Canadian and Indigenous Art: 1968 to Present*, displayed the Yellowknife outfit

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[167] This exhibit was collaboratively designed and created by the GSCI, PWNHC and the CMH. See more here https://www.pwnhc.ca/item/long-ago-sewing-we-will-remember/

[168] This video recounted the project's story using footage from GSCI and CBC North. It aired on CBC Northbeat before the official unveiling in 2003 (Ingrid Kritsch pers comm. 2020).

[169] See more here https://www.pwnhc.ca/item/rediscovering-caribou-skin-clothing/

[170] See the online exhibit here https://www.historymuseum.ca/gwichin/

[171] Each item includes high-resolution images, audio of the corresponding Gwich'in word, catalogue data from the museum, quotes from Gwich'in Elders about traditional uses or meanings of the object, and other relevant linked material.

alongside nearly 800 items from their collections for a national audience to mark the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation in 2017.[172] The inclusion of Indigenous artists' work alongside settler Canadian art pieces was intended to create dialogue on Indigenous peoples' relationships with settler Canada (see Huard 2017). The exhibit specifically featured and acknowledged the work of women artists and, importantly, Indigenous women artists, and all descriptions were in English, French, and the artist's regional language (Huard 2017; NGC 2017).[173]

Repatriating Traditional Gwich'in Skills and Knowledge: A Pilot Project

In 2006, archaeologist and oral historian Natasha Lyons undertook a pilot project with the GSCI to develop another knowledge repatriation project. Working with GSCI employees Kristi Benson and Alestine Andre, Lyons sought to connect Gwich'in Elders with artifacts and belongings from museum collections and document the Elder's stories and knowledge of them.[174] There was a clear connection to the earlier Clothing Project. This project was to proceed in two phases. Phase 1 was a one-day workshop with Gwich'in Elders. Phase 2 was intended to be a reproduction project, similar in structure to the Clothing Project.

In March 2007, the GSCI and Lyons organized the workshop and invited six Elders from Fort McPherson to participate.[175] Lyons had acquired images of Gwich'in and Dene materials from the collections of the PWNHC and the McCord Museum in Montreal. The GSCI also gathered several traditional objects from community members, including a caribou leg skin mattress pad, and a set of miniature objects (including a pair of snowshoes, a toboggan, and dogwhip, all produced by Robert Francis). The Elders were given time to view, hold, and reflect on the photographs and objects (2007:7). They

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[172] To mark "Canada 150" in 2017, the NGC transformed its Canadian and Indigenous Galleries to showcase Indigenous-settler relationships. See https://www.gallery.ca/magazine/exhibitions/ngc/ten-things-to-know-about-the-new-canadian-and-indigenous-galleries

[173] A review of the NGC exhibit on social media highlighted the Yellowknife outfit's panel, which named the seamstresses who worked on it (@JMLoyer [Twitter] August 28, 2018).

[174] The aims of this project are similar to those of the Inuvialuit Living History project, which Lyons directs. (Arnold 2014; Inuvialuit Living History n.d.; Lyons 2013; see also Hennessy and Lyons 2016).

[175] Elders Mary Firth, Dorothy Alexie, Alice Blake, Eunice Mitchell, Neil Colin, and Walter Alexie attended.

discussed the uses and manufacture processes for certain objects, described them in Gwich'in, and told stories to situate the objects in their historical context (2007:8). All discussions and names were recorded.

During the workshop, Elders selected several objects that they wished to repatriate and reproduce, including a caribou leg skin bag and a caribou leg skin sled, both sewn with sinew and babiche.[176] Unfortunately, a lack of funding meant that Phase 2 never materialized (Sharon Snowshoe pers. comm. 2019). However, the knowledge and stories gathered during the Fort McPherson workshop have nonetheless increased understanding of several traditional objects and practices.

Ongoing Gwich'in Craftwork and Garment-Making

The main aim of the Gwich'in Clothing Project was to repatriate skills and knowledge around caribou skin clothing. It was the first known time in over a century that Gwich'in seamstresses produced a traditional caribou skin garment, and the first time in nearly 50 years that porcupine quillwork was used as decoration (even partially) (Kritsch and Wright Fraser 2002:205). In the years since the Clothing Project concluded, the GSCI has received several requests from community members for the pattern, including one from Gwich'in Olympian skier Sharon Firth (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019; Sharon Snowshoe pers. comm. 2019). Others have used the pattern to make traditional-style clothing for weddings or other events, though often had to be reminded that the pattern was for a man's summer outfit (Alestine Andre, September 12, 2019).

The core group of seamstresses were provided with a reference manual that featured close-range photos of the original outfit, contextual material compiled by the GSCI and CMH, the outfit pattern, and Dorothy Burnham's drawings, which depict the sewing and quilling techniques (e.g., Thompson and Kritsch 2005:19). Several women interviewed for this project continue to reference and use these materials in their contemporary work and said that the skills they learned have sometimes been integrated in their other craftwork.

In 2019, after 26 years of working with the GSCI as the founding Executive Director and then Research Director, Ingrid Kritsch retired. Her husband, Tom

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[176] Babiche is made from strips of caribou or moose hide. It is used as rope, twine, or string in snowshoes, dog harnesses, or snares (Parlee et al. 2014:239).

Andrews,[177] contacted one of the seamstresses on the Clothing Project to commission a retirement gift for her: a doll wearing traditional caribou skin clothing based on the outfits produced during the Clothing Project (Figure 5.10; Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019).

Figure 5.10. The doll wearing traditional caribou skin clothing, made by Gwich'in seamstress, Lillian Wright.

Lillian Wright, the seamstress Andrews commissioned through Karen Wright-Fraser, recalled making the model using the reference manual that she'd received at the Yellowknife workshop,

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[177] Andrews was the Territorial Archaeologist for the Government of the Northwest Territories, working out of the PWNHC for 27 years (1990–2017, see Chapter 4).

I made a small doll! …I had to keep looking at the pattern, try to figure it out, use old material, and then try to put it together. Finally figured it out.

…They wanted a doll about 18 inches [indicates] And I thought...well, even that was lots of work. Because I had to keep making patterns to, you know, to downsize it. … [I] made it out of old material and fit it over this doll. And then, finally, I got it. And they wanted quills! I used a little bit of quills, then I switched to these beads that were tiny. I had some tiny beads and I used that instead because it was taking too long.
[Lillian Wright, July 24, 2019]

Her niece and Wright-Fraser's sister Ruth Wright helped, noting the potential to make more for her grandkids,

We did make a doll with it. Yes…I think it was a present for one of the ladies who helped in the Gwich'in Social and Cultural [Institute]. She was the head of it for quite a number of years. And then she finally retired, and we made her a doll…I think it was just a tad more difficult because it was tinier. But at the same time, it was way easier because we already did it
[Ruth Wright, July 24, 2019]

Karen Wright-Fraser has also continued to use the skills used and taught during the Clothing Project in her current craft work, noting,

I make vests and ribbon shirts and everything, and I put that scoop in the back, you know? And I use quills in some work… Those silverberry seeds, I use those in some work. And I have seen some of the ladies use some of those techniques. [Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019]

She also talked about how much the beading and sewing community has grown online, driven largely by younger people.

…what I do notice is through social media, mostly Facebook… in the north, is that young people are really being interested in beading and…with the hide and the birch bark, and all these traditional materials... Because…somebody's showing their grandma's work or their Auntie's. And then a young person will start and say, "Wow, look what I learned." And all their friends say, "Whoa." Then…I see all these young people are picking up these skills that were slowly, you know…they weren't interested before. Now I see it, and it's awesome. It's beautiful. [Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019]

One of the younger women involved in the Clothing Project, Maureen Cardinal Clark, has also made a concerted effort to incorporate the skills she built through the project into her current craft work. At the Yellowknife workshop in 2000, Cardinal-Clark modelled the seamstresses mock-up and found she liked the fit:

When we were out in Yellowknife, and they made a mock pattern of this one [the original outfit] and sewed it together. And I tried it on, and it was a perfect fit! ...I still wanted to make this pattern of the design. If I [can] do it with this modern-day material, then I want to make more…so that I'll make myself one. [Maureen Cardinal-Clark, July 27, 2019]

She recently sewed a new tunic, using the pattern from the original outfit, from a modern suede-like material (Figure 5.11).

Figure 5.11. Gwich'in seamstress Maureen Cardinal-Clark's in-progress tunic.
From L-R: The tunic pattern cut from modern synthetic suede fabric. Then, the same tunic pattern sewn together. The tunic is based on the original Gwich'in outfit but made with modern materials. (Photo credits: Maureen Cardinal-Clark).

Cardinal-Clark is also working on incorporating traditional quillwork into her crafts as well. She makes buttons with small quillwork details and is planning to make earrings using quills as well (Figure 5.12). During the Clothing Project, she worked on the quillwork band for the Tsiigehtchic outfit, recalling that,

*I was doing the band and I did about...I would say about eight inches—
No... six to seven inches in length of that [indicated quillwork]. But it was
lots of hours. And I was a mom too, a stay-at-home mom. So, it was like, I
think I only put in four hours a day.* [Maureen Cardinal-Clark, July 27,
2019]

Though she had to leave the project early due to other work commitments, Cardinal-
Clark recalled that she appreciated learning skills that her ancestors would have used to
make clothing. While it is still very time-consuming work, she sees the value in keeping
cultural traditions going and plans to teach her daughter and granddaughter these skills.
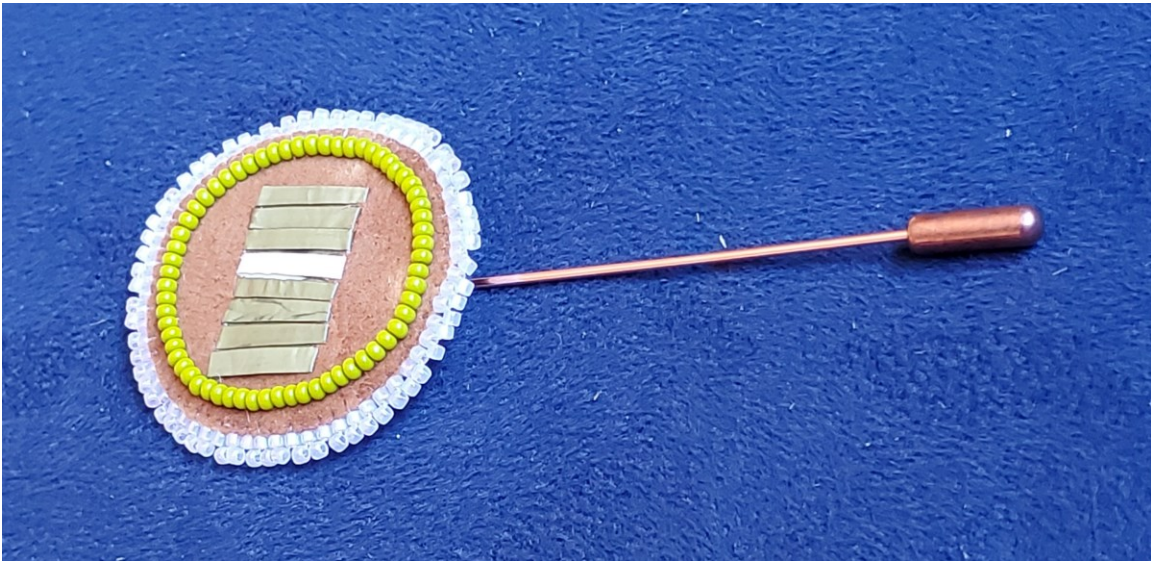
**Figure 5.12. Button with porcupine quillwork detail, made by Gwich'in seamstress
Maureen Cardinal-Clark.**
(Photo credit: Maureen Cardinal-Clark).

Another seamstress, Agnes Mitchell, had prior experience with quillwork, having
learned by watching her mother as a young girl,

*She was the one that made us all wraparounds. So, it's like this [indicates
moccasins] a little like a smaller upper. Not as big as mine. But just
around here were porcupine quills [indicates top front of shoes]. And of
course, it took me forever to learn how to wrap them and you know...wrap
them this way and then wrap them that way. It was crooked. I know it was
crooked. But I eventually picked it up. So, I made her a few and she made
moccasins for whoever she wanted to.*

*So that's where I picked up porcupine quills. How to work with them. But
that's the only thing I know, is how to make the upper for the moccasins. I
don't know how they make flowers and all [the] other crafts. … Yeah, so
that's why I learned how to do quills, and that's how I got involved in this
clothing project.* [Agnes Mitchell, July 27, 2019]

Her earlier experiences with quill working meant Mitchell already knew what to do for the Clothing Project, where she worked on the mitts for the Tsiigehtchic outfit (Agnes Mitchell, July 27, 2019). In the years since, she has been able to showcase her quill-working skills in other contexts. In 2018, Mitchell was invited to replicate her father's moccasins, which her mother made many years ago, for a travelling exhibition exploring the connections between Jewish and Dene communities during the Berger Inquiry in the NWT (1975–1976) (Livshin 2018).[178] While visiting Vancouver for the exhibition, she demonstrated her quill working skills for a local high school art class. In early 2020, she worked with Sharon Snowshoe on *The Old-time Moccasin Making Workshop*, where she taught participants how to make moose skin moccasins and decorate them with porcupine quills (Charlie 2020).[179]

Identifying Effects of the Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project

The Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project has left several legacies across different spheres of Gwich'in life. In this section, I identify and describe in turn the primary socio-cultural, political, and economic effects of the Clothing Project. As in Chapter 4, these discrete categories often overlap, given that this project was influenced by and related to other efforts undertaken by the GSCI to document, preserve, and promote Gwich'in culture, language, traditional knowledge, and values. However, given that my aim is to explore the different effects and intersections of repatriation across several examples, these categories were nonetheless useful for coding data.

Socio-Cultural Effects

Promoting, preserving, and documenting Gwich'in culture are an important part of the work the GSCI (now the GTC Department of Culture & Heritage) does. It underlies the structure of many of the projects that they undertook on behalf of the Gwich'in people, and the Gwich'in Clothing Project was no different. The project offered the opportunity to document and explore a specific realm of Gwich'in culture, while also re-

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[178] For more on the Berger Inquiry, see https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/mackenzie-valley-pipeline.

[179] Unfortunately, attendance was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw travel restrictions implemented the same week as the workshop (Charlie 2020).

learning traditional skills that were no longer common in Gwich'in communities. Here, I describe three socio-cultural outcomes: 1) the repatriation of knowledge and skills; 2) relationship-building among individuals, institutions, and across generations; and 3) the potential for present and future education opportunities.

Repatriating Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge and Skills

The main aim of the Gwich'in Clothing Project was to repatriate the knowledge and skills needed to make traditional clothing. It was successful in producing five outfits. However, these are not simply replicas of the original outfit. In many ways, the seamstresses working on them made them their own. They used different colour schemes for different outfits, and substituted beadwork and embroidery floss for some of the quills and berries—though the traditional placement and patterns remained the same (Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019). Ultimately, this resulted in five unique, traditional-style garments.

The Clothing Project also had a lasting impact beyond these outfits. Many of the seamstresses who were involved in the project have since integrated the patterns and decorative skills into their contemporary craftwork. A few who hadn't yet incorporated quillwork or used silverberry seeds said that they would be interested in eventually trying it out.[180] However, the substantial time it takes to sew the quills into large bands or other decorative styles has kept them from attempting it yet. Many said they would need "more time" to do it well.

Despite this difficulty and the time it took to complete the Clothing Project, most of the women I spoke to were also very interested in participating in a similar-style project, something to build their knowledge and ability in this or other areas. Ruth Wright, a seamstress from Inuvik, when asked whether she would like to see another project said,

> *Oh, darn right! Yes—Yes [laughs] If the stars aligned, yeah.*

> *…Like everybody who helped out on this first one, if it ever came around that we're doing a winter one. You wouldn't even have to ask, you would just say, we're doing another at this date. And everybody would be clamoring around, trying to get at it.* [Ruth Wright, July 24, 2019]

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[180] This included Audrey Snowshoe, Maureen Cardinal-Clark, and Lillian Wright.

This interest in future projects shows just how impactful the experience of the Clothing Project was for those women involved in it.

Another goal of the project was to return and reconnect with traditional knowledge around caribou skin clothing-making to Gwich'in communities. The project coordinators and the GSCI carried out interviews with the seamstresses and other, older Gwich'in Elders in addition to the reproductions themselves. These interviews recorded many previously unknown stories about caribou skin clothing in Gwich'in history—how it was made and what materials were used to dye the quills (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019). This afforded the GSCI to both direct their efforts recording Gwich'in oral history on a very specific aspect and gather external accounts and information around Gwich'in clothing to share with community members (e.g., Dorothy Burnham's patterns and sketches). These interviews were video recorded along with other project events. Together with the reproduction, these activities have built an extensive repository of knowledge specific to Gwich'in caribou skin clothing, that is available for current and future generations.

Building Relationships

A second area of importance was the Clothing Project's relationship-building aspects, at both institutional and personal levels, and across generations. The collaborative nature of the project strengthened and extended several institutional relationships. As discussed, the GSCI worked closely with both the PWNHC and the CMH to carry out this work and ensure that the Clothing Project was shared with both Gwich'in communities and the general public. The four museum exhibitions described above show that relationships between these groups have continued after it ended.

The Clothing Project also established and continued many personal relationships between individuals and communities (Figure 5.12). This was something several women commented on in their interviews. For example, when asked about her experiences with the group workshops, Audrey Snowshoe, a seamstress from Aklavik, remarked that,

> *Those workshops were really enjoyable because we all met from all communities, like Inuvik, Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson, and Aklavik. You had ladies from all those communities, and it was so good to see one another and to find out how to do what we were going to do. Like the sewing. And some of them were Elders and they knew more than we knew. So, it was a good experience to go to those workshops.* [Audrey Snowshoe, June 27, 2019]

Shirley Stewart, a seamstress who worked on the Fort McPherson outfit, reflected similarly that

> *I got to work with lots of other ladies. Like from Yellowknife and Aklavik, Inuvik, Tsiigehtchic. It was really good. We had lots of fun and good stories, good laughter amongst everybody.* [Shirley Stewart, July 5, 2019]

Ruth Wright noted that the group even embraced the help and participation of some people who were just passing through town or visiting, saying

> *Ruth: So, we went there, and we helped each other. The communities helped each other to try and get their project…Like, we were sewing it together now. Trying to get everything on the go…*
>
> *It was kind of cool to bring everybody together and even if they had it in Fort McPherson or Aklavik, I always got to go along because of my sister. It was so fun to be doing something that our people did. I really enjoyed that. …*
>
> *Chelsea: Was it like a camaraderie? Did you guys build like a network of seamstresses?*
>
> *Ruth: Yes! Well, to begin with, everybody was a little seamstress. There was one young lady there who was hitchhiking [Misty Anderson]. She had stayed here with me for a couple of weeks. And then she was hitchhiking back down, just happened to be in Tsiigehtchic when we did our workshop there. And so, we [said] if she could come in, she could have something to eat. Next thing, she's sitting there helping us. So, she ended up being a part of it. Her name is in there [the Thompson and Kritsch book].*
>
> *And it was good because you got to really meet and learn [from] all these other ladies from the different communities. So that was good.*
> [Ruth Wright, July 24, 2019]

Figure 5.13. Seamstresses at the Tl'oondih workshop, Sept. 2001.
(Photo credit: GRRB photo.MVC-007X)

Relationships established by the project also extended across generations. Many of the seamstresses, when discussing their experiences and memories of the project, recalled that they felt very connected to their ancestors while doing the work.[181] Inuvik seamstress Lillian Wright said that the most important thing for her was to learn more about

> *Their skill and knowledge, you know? How did they learn to cut the way they cut? The stuff they used too, like quills and berries—to work with it and learn how to decorate with it. And then, it's a community thing. So, everybody got together and worked on it. And our knowledge, where did they get their knowledge from?* [Lillian Wright, July 24, 2019]

She went on, saying that the main benefit of the Clothing Project for her was

> *To show the Gwich'in people how our ancestors used to sew and how they got their material. And how they worked together as a community to make that project. And then, the Hudson's Bay would buy it…[so] it's a way for them to make some money. It was hard work. They didn't have electricity, they used candles and probably worked in the summer, when there's lots of daylight. And they knew when to get the caribou, the hide.*

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[181] Sometimes this included women who had worked alongside them on the Clothing Project but have since passed away, or family members, like parents.

So, they had to [have] a lot of skills in making it. And how they learned to do the work with quills, I don't know. [Lillian Wright, July 24, 2019]

The work involved in creating the outfit, the intricacy of the seams and stitching on the original, and especially the effort required to sew and wrap the quills often impressed the seamstresses and inspired feelings of pride and respect for their ancestors. Shirley Stewart remarked that the Clothing Project was

…an experience. And it was good to know how my ancestors used to look after our men back in the day. How good they dressed them up. How many hours they worked. And man, not only hours, but months. For them, to clean and tan hides and... Like, for them to be fleshing hides, and cutting off the fur, and tanning hides, and then, preparing it for outfits like this for their husbands and sons and fathers. That's a lot of work. Not only that but to use the sinews and prepare all that, like, that's, might as well say, years of work just to do that. And then to go and find all these special little seed beads, to dry them out and drill all these holes, like that's lots and lots of work. Now you can just sit down and grab beads and thread, and sew away, and not worry about it. You know, and have it done in three-four hours. [Shirley Stewart, July 5, 2019]

To this day, Agnes Mitchell still finds the skills of her ancestors astonishing, especially given the conditions that they would have been working in. Thinking back to the first time she saw the original outfit at the PWNHC in Yellowknife, she said

It was so touching. I mean, you know, you just felt...All I could think about was how my Elders lived a long time ago. Yeah. I still do that nowadays, you know, with doing any kind of little work around here. I always wonder… They had, you know, they did everything by hand. No machines to do anything for them, you know, and they worked, they worked hard.

*So even making that outfit… Like I said, a whole outfit like that in what kind of light? So that's really...I think that's the main thing for me is just thinking back, how they used to do **so** much. And how long did it take them, you know, by the light they'd use?* [Agnes Mitchell, July 27, 2019]

The project also fostered a deeper relationship and connection to Gwich'in culture for many involved in the project. The impacts of colonialism and residential schools meant that traditional clothing styles hadn't been worn in Gwich'in communities in generations. In fact, as a young woman, Karen Wright-Fraser thought "traditional clothing" was a jean jacket (pers. comm. 2018; Wright-Fraser 2001). Her sister Ruth Wright echoed this, saying

Growing up here in Inuvik, you know, our "traditional clothing" was mitts, mukluks, a Parky, that was it. And then as we grew older, you know, you

look around, everybody's got traditional clothing, what happened to ours?
Like, you can't find nothing… [Ruth Wright, July 24, 2019]

Their encounter with Judy Thompson's book *From the Land: Two Hundred Years of Dene Clothing* (1994) was a highly emotional experience for the sisters. Karen recalled reading the book for the first time,

> *So, I sat down, and I started going through it when I was alone. And it was so beautiful, and I was enjoying all the pictures and the stories and everything. And then, I came across this traditional, like white hide outfit. And I just, I said, "**wow**". Then I read the little caption. It said, "a traditional Gwich'in tunic from 1875." And I thought to myself "[No]...that's a mistake, because we don't have traditional clothing." Because when I was growing up, I'd never ever seen a picture or heard a story or anything [about] Gwich'in traditional clothing. And so, I thought, "oh boy, they made a big mistake. I kept reading and it said, you know, "purchased in the 1870s, in Fort McPherson." And I couldn't believe it and I thought to myself, "Oh my God. This is from my people." And I just started to cry because I felt so good. I felt really happy to see such a beautiful outfit and that, way back when, our people probably had a strong culture. Like a strong tradition, which I didn't really see too much of ... And then, at the same time, I got angry. So, there was all these different emotions. And then, I almost had to grieve because I never did see it and that it was something almost lost*. [Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019, emphasis original]

Similarly, Ingrid Kritsch, Research Director for the GSCI at the time, recalled the reaction of the Gwich'in ladies when, during their first visit to the CMC, Judy Thompson brought out the traditional garments for them to see and examine,

> *Honestly, it was like, as soon as this came through the door, there was a big hush that fell in the room and… tears. You could see tears coming into the Elders' eyes; just from the presence of this garment and knowing it's over a hundred years old and had been made by their ancestors, by women, who could have been directly related. And it was just so beautiful, and the workmanship in it was so fine that they were just blown away. They'd heard about this kind of outfit, but they had never seen one before. So, it was a very, very striking moment for them.* [Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019]

An unexpected relationship also developed when the seamstresses encountered the young man mentioned above, Charles (Chas) Saddington, who was searching for his own connection to Gwich'in culture. He was a young Gwich'in man who had been adopted out of his community as a child and had returned to the GSA to find and reconnect with his heritage. The chance encounter with Ruth Wright in Tsiigehtchic led to him modelling the Inuvik outfit for the group (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August

171

1, 2019; Ruth Wright, July 24, 2019; Wright-Fraser in Thompson and Kritsch 2005:53–54). Ruth Wright recalled the moment he walked out with the outfit on:

> *They all looked over as he walked in, and they just about fell over themselves trying to get their cameras. One old lady was just about hyperventilating and crying because he looked **so** much like the picture. It was just like...He came up here to find his family, and he found his roots from 200 years ago. You know? It was so cool.* [Ruth Wright, July 24, 2019]

Saddington himself was interviewed about his experience shortly after, saying that

> Once they told me what the outfits were, I got prickly hairs on my back…I tried to gab a little extra so I could keep the clothes on longer. I wanted to get the feeling [of] what would it be like to wear this running through the lands... Not to romanticize it or anything, because that's a danger for me when I'm here, but it was an amazing experience." (Quoted in Lau 2002).

Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews also reflected that

> *Ingrid: You know, it was such a proud moment for the seamstresses but also for him [Chas], to be wearing some of this traditional clothing, and he was very, very moved by the experience as well. As were the seamstresses, when they actually saw it being worn.*
>
> *Tom: It was kind of a double repatriation, wasn't it? (Ingrid: Yes) Like, he was repatriated himself. (Ingrid: Yes, to his community, that's right) Coming back to his culture and stepping into his clothes. And, you know, what was so striking I think is the fact that he looks so much like the man in this picture with his long hair. He had long, black hair, that went down the middle of his back just like Gwich'in men used to wear. Every drawing you see is like that.* [Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019]

Similarly, another seamstress, Mary Clark, noted that when she joined the project, she was "still learning more about being a Gwich'in person. Still kind of learning. And to see something like the clothing part of the Gwich'in people was just...it was just amazing to see" (Mary Clark, August 29, 2019). These examples demonstrate that the Clothing Project was an emotional point of social and cultural connection and re-connection for many of those involved.

Education (Today and in the Future)

Cultural revitalization and knowledge repatriation are particularly important for cultural education. In this case, the Clothing Project was intended to return knowledge about and skills for the production of caribou hide clothing. Learning these skills was an

important part of the project for all of the women that I interviewed. Gwich'in seamstress Mary Clark said that she had wanted to be involved specifically to learn more about sewing. Similarly, Maureen Cardinal-Clark, a seamstress from Tsiigehtchic, described some of the techniques she enjoyed learning

> *I liked the skills that I gained from it. Which was quill wrapping—learning how to make the quills. And I also learned how to twist. They taught us how to twist, like, it looks like a weave…it's like a braid. And then just [to make] a clean edge. Because… nobody knew how to hem and stuff back in that time. So, what they did was, they took a long piece of caribou string and they just sewed it on the edge. So, it doesn't stretch out and it doesn't lose shape.* [Maureen Cardinal-Clark, July 27, 2019]

For the eight core seamstresses that had been hired onto the project and who travelled to Yellowknife for the first workshop, the reference book they were given remains an important part of their ongoing craft work. In fact, several of them brought the book to their interview to share with me while we talked about their experiences. Some continue to use the patterns and images in other work—as discussed above—while others just enjoyed reminiscing about their time on the project while looking through the pictures it included.

Another important element of the Clothing Project for cultural education was the educational and interpretive materials collaboratively developed by (and for) the GSCI, PWNHC, and CMH. These include information on the project, the steps involved in making caribou skin clothing, and its importance for Gwich'in historically and culturally (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019). Two of the four community installations are in local schools and have been used both for language instruction and to introduce students to their traditional material culture (Audrey Snowshoe, June 27, 2019). Museum exhibits have also featured the project in accessible ways and shared its stories to both Gwich'in and non-Gwich'in audiences.

Many of the women I spoke with were also interested in educating the next generation of Gwich'in about their heritage and suggested that the Clothing Project, with its documentation in books and on videotape, would be a good source of information for the future. Some have since taken on educator roles in their community. In Aklavik, Audrey Snowshoe has taught elementary school students how to sew traditional-style bags. Shirley Stewart is working with individuals in Yellowknife to teach them about Gwich'in sewing styles. Lillian Wright and Agnes Mitchell have been involved in workshops centred upon traditional arts and skills, both as students and teachers.

Maureen Cardinal Clark mentioned her ideas for teaching small children basic sewing skills:

> *I was thinking of making patterns out of construction paper. And just…punching holes on the edge… using page reinforcers and [applying them to] those holes. And then just get some lanyard string or something, and kids could practice. Like little, little kids could practice*. [Maureen Cardinal-Clark, July 27, 2019]

Many of those I interviewed lamented the increase in distracting technologies for younger people. They felt that collaborative projects like this one can create powerful connections between youth and Elders, so they should be prioritized and supported. Sharon Snowshoe, current Director of the Department of Culture & Heritage (previously the GSCI), commented that when opportunities to be with Elders in a learning environment are offered, there is often a lot of enthusiasm and interest from Gwich'in youth (Sharon Snowshoe pers. comm. 2019).

Innovative platforms for sharing knowledge across generations, such as the online exhibit on Gwich'in belongings in collaboration with the CMH, may be one way to bridge this gap. Recording traditional sewing and other cultural work in progress can produce an accessible and lasting educational resource, especially when uploaded to the internet.[182] Ingrid Kritsch noted that this was part of the impetus for video recording the project and its outcomes (pers comm. 2022). All stages of the Clothing Project were documented, from the initial visits to the CMH and Smithsonian museums, to the workshops, interviews, and resource gathering, and finally, the fashion show at the PWNHC.[183] Agnes Mitchell also has faith that younger generations will be interested enough to carry on these traditions, saying

> *Like I said, my daughter is embroidering. I have four girls. And one is interested in beading but she's not making moccasins or anything. And one is doing embroidery but there's no moccasins or anything like that… So, I just think that doing those projects like the clothing project or even [the] wraparounds [workshop]. Maybe once they see it, they'll say, "oh,*

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[182] Only if appropriate, as there are serious intellectual property and other concerns that need to be considered first. The GSCI has recently transferred most of its records, including videos and films relating to traditional knowledge and cultural education, to the NWT Archives. This will ensure that these records are preserved and maintained for future generations to access.

[183] Dennis Allen filmed the initial visits and project events, while Terry Woolf documented the fashion show. The GSCI, CMH, and PWNHC also collaborated on a 10-minute project video for the Gwich'in YouTube page (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_IYAlZzDEjw&t=49s). The nearly 21 hours of footage has been donated to the NWT Archives (Ingrid Kritsch, pers. comm. 2022).

you know that looks so nice. How can I learn? Where can I learn?"
[Agnes Mitchell, July 27, 2019]

Political Effects

The Gwich'in Clothing Project has had a number of intersections with political spheres. For instance, the support of Gwich'in leadership provided some funding for the project itself. Karen Wright-Fraser reflected on the reaction of Gwich'in Chiefs when they were invited to join the seamstresses during the Yellowknife workshop in late 2000,

> *At one point, there was a leadership meeting in town and all the Chiefs were here. So, we said, let's invite all those Gwich'in Chiefs to come and see this outfit, and to meet these ladies, tell them about this project. Because arts [are] usually at the lower end of…the priorities for the communities... So yeah, the Chiefs… were saying, "Oh, yeah, we're happy about it." But when they came and they actually [saw] this outfit [the original from the CMH], and they got to put those white gloves on and inspect [it]. And then meet these ladies and see that they were going to replicate [it] and bring it back to the communities. Well, the Chiefs were blown away. And they were super...**supportive**. And it was a really good move, they were so stoked and so happy about it. And you could just see that…there was a shift when they were in that room, to see it. It was really nice.* [Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019, emphasis original]

This support from Gwich'in leaders continued throughout and after the projects. When the outfits were completed and installations set up in the four Gwich'in communities, there were celebrations where the GSCI and local leadership would speak about the project and the meaning it holds for Gwich'in people. At the installation ceremony in Tsiigehtchic, then-Chief Peter Ross said

> Tonight, we have the pleasure of celebrating the efforts of many people in this room and throughout the Gwich'in region who worked together to research, produce, and preserve examples of our Gwich'in culture and heritage…This outfit represents the pride and skill that the Gwich'in people have practiced for thousands of years…

> The significance of this garment extends far beyond the work as a piece of art and culture. It speaks to the wisdom, pride, ingenuity and skill of our forefathers and mothers…

> As Chief, I shall ensure that this garment has a chance to be enjoyed by the entire community including our children. I shall see that it becomes a learning tool and reminder of the pride we all share as Gwich'in people... (cited in Thompson and Kritsch 200:56).

175

More than 15 years after the Clothing Project was completed, local leaders continue to voice their support and interest for the work the seamstresses did. Shortly after I arrived in Inuvik, I met with Chief Robert Charlie of the Nihtat Gwich'in Band. With the Inuvik outfit installation right next to our table, he expressed his deep admiration for the project and what it accomplished.

Pride in Gwich'in Culture and Heritage

As a nation-building exercise, the Clothing Project sought to build pride in Gwich'in communities and culture. For those who were involved in it, pride in their culture, ancestors, and heritage was evident throughout the project. The outfits that were produced became "tangible evidence of a life intimately linked to the land, and of the Gwich'in people's close relationship to the caribou" (Thompson and Kritsch 2005:31). Thompson and Kritsch (2005:46) also describe a series of community visits that allowed them to share photos of Gwich'in clothing and updates on the Project's progress. They note that people's pride in their unique cultural heritage and community identity was clear in every interaction.

Today, the Clothing Project and community outfits continue to function as a tangible example of Gwich'in identity. Featuring the outfit installations in local government and educational buildings clearly articulates these traditional garments as a representative image of Gwich'in culture. In these places, the installations are also representing Gwich'in culture and identity both to community members and visitors. Commenting on the Inuvik outfit's location, Ruth Wright said

> …Every time I see tourists, I inform them of it. I tell them where to go, and the office hours and everything… I still think it should be at the library, where it's open to the public and anybody could come and go... Because it was, at one time, way down at the other band office... [then] they moved it to the hotel. Yes, then a lot of other people got to see it, but it was on the second floor, hidden away. And it was like, no…they need to put it here [in the Inuvik library]. [Ruth Wright, July 24, 2019]

Making a similar point, Lillian Wright hoped that the Inuvik outfit will eventually be moved to a place where it can be used to teach youth and others about Gwich'in history and culture (Lillian Wright, July 24, 2019). There have been proposals to move the Inuvik outfit to a more publicly accessible location (e.g., the Inuvik library or international airport [Sharon Snowshoe, pers. comm. 2019]) but due to conservation concerns and other issues it remains in the Inuvik Band Office. In these ways, the outfits produced by the

Clothing Project can (and do) serve as local representations of Gwich'in culture and identity.

Outside the Gwich'in Settlement Area, the outfits have also served as "ambassadors" for Gwich'in culture. Similar to the idea of Tłı̨chǫ objects as ambassadors discussed in Chapter 4 (see also Knowles 2011), sharing the outfits at conferences or in museum exhibits has helped to showcase Gwich'in culture and heritage both within Canada and internationally. In 2002, Ingrid Kritsch and Karen Wright-Fraser travelled to the Ninth International Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies (CHAGS) conference in Edinburgh alongside the Tłı̨chǫ delegation (see Chapter 4). This trip gave them the opportunity to present on the Clothing Project and to showcase the first completed outfit.[184] Kritsch recalled an interesting interaction with scholars from Siberia who were drawing comparisons between the Inuvik outfit's style and local styles:

> *I think one of the most interesting reactions we had was from a group in- from Siberia, I think it was. They came up and they kept staring at this garment. And then they engaged us in conversation, and it was so neat because they said that it had so many parallels to their own traditional garments, but then they explained that they could tell from their garments exactly the status of the person and where there are from; and so, there's a lot of information embedded in the decoration on the garment. Unfortunately, that's not something we know anything about (Tom: but probably existed as well) it probably existed as well. And I would think, like, even the colours chosen by the seamstress today, I think might be more perhaps maybe community related but I'm not sure you know. But anyways, [it] was interesting that there was a lot of symbolism that was built, they said, into their clothing.* [Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019]

In this example, the Inuvik outfit—alongside interpretive materials about the project, GSCI, and Gwich'in—acted as an ambassador for Gwich'in people and culture, to an international audience. Similarly, the Yellowknife outfit and accompanying interpretive materials has been used to showcase Gwich'in culture and traditions at the PWNHC in Yellowknife, and in a national exhibition at the NGC in Ottawa (discussed in detail on p. 26–27).

For many seamstresses, their participation in the Clothing Project also brought them an immense amount of personal pride—in themselves, their abilities, and their culture. Lillian Wright said emphatically that "we have *art*. That's [the outfit] art!" Another

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[184] The Inuvik group was the first to complete their outfit (Lillian Wright, July 24, 2019).

seamstress said, "it almost feels like something alive, something inside you comes alive." Talking about visiting the Aklavik outfit in the Moose Kerr School, Audrey Snowshoe said,

> *I just think [in tone of awe], "Oh, imagine, I sewed on that." I think to myself and tell those people—like if there's kids around, I'll talk to them but if there's nobody around, I won't say anything. Yeah, but they know. They know that I was one of the sewers on it.* [Audrey Snowshoe, June 27, 2019]

Several of the women I spoke to explained that their reasons for getting involved in the Clothing Project was to inspire cultural pride in their community and, particularly, Gwich'in youth. Karen Wright-Fraser reflected that this was the main reason she participated (and why she is completing her own reproduction project):

> *I thought when I was young, growing up seeing a lot of stuff that [was] not too positive, I really needed to see this picture [of a traditional garment]. And I thought to myself, there are still children out there growing up the way I did, and they need to see this. So, they could feel good about their ancestors, about their people.* [Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019]

She went on to describe how empowered she felt when she encountered elements from the past like these outfits:

> *They brought us in the back [of the museum], and we got to see artifacts from our people. I was like, **whoa**! … It was really empowering just to know that you…—especially when we [found] out the dates, you know from 1870s…—it was very empowering. And it made me feel really good, knowing that there is another part of our history that I didn't really know back then.* [Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019]

While pride is sometimes a very personal and individual thing, it also has implications for nation-building. In this instance, the Gwich'in Clothing Project and the outfits it produced have contributed to both of these.

Economic Effects

The Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project has both direct and indirect economic implications for Gwich'in communities, and there are potential future benefits as well. While it was underway, the project provided an income for participants in four Gwich'in communities and Yellowknife, and it supported local suppliers wherever possible. However, the Clothing Project was also an incredibly expensive initiative to

178

undertake. Ingrid Kritsch estimated that the initial budgets were nearly $180,000. In the end, however, the GSCI had raised nearly $231,000 for the project (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019; Kritsch pers. comm. 2020).[185] Funding was acquired primarily from the Department of Canadian Heritage's Museums Assistance Program, the Government of the Northwest Territories (through the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment), and the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute's own budget. However, the initial amount they received to start the project was only half of what was applied for, so it had to be adjusted. Funding can be a serious limitation for important cultural initiatives like these; it can make or break a project (as was the case for the 2007 knowledge repatriation project). The discrepancy between the Clothing Project's initial budget and its true cost demonstrated that it is important to consider these issues at every stage of project development to ensure a beneficial outcome.

More indirectly, the local exhibit installations have the potential to support increasing tourism in the region. Three of the four Gwich'in communities in the Mackenzie Delta region have been connected to more southerly centres in the Yukon territory via the Dempster Highway since the 1970s (Kritsch and Andre 2002; see "The Dempster Highway" n.d.). More recently, the Canadian Government funded an all-season road connecting Inuvik (the last stop on the Dempster Highway) with Tuktoyaktuk (or Tuk, an Inuvialuit hamlet on the Arctic coast) (Government of the Northwest Territories n.d. "Inuvik…"). This extension has resulted in an increase in tourist traffic to the region (Gardiner 2019), which could benefit several Gwich'in communities. There are also opportunities to develop paid workshops and/or lessons centred upon skills like quillwork as part of cultural tourism packages, though careful consideration of what should/should not be shared is necessary.[186] However, if successful, such a venture could fund the development of more internal, community-based skills workshops involving Gwich'in Elders and youth.

One other indirect economic benefit of the Clothing Project has been the ongoing craftwork for sale and done on commission in Gwich'in communities. The examples identified above by seamstresses Audrey Snowshoe, Karen Wright-Fraser, Maureen

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[185] This does not include staff time for any of the partners (this was an in-kind contribution), the 2003 unveiling, or any of the subsequent PWNHC exhibits. Ingrid Kritsch estimated that with these, the true cost of the project was likely closer to $500,000 (pers. comm. 2020).

[186] For example, Inuvialuit tour company Tundra North offers several culturally-focused tour packages (https://spectacularnwt.com/operators/tundra-north-tours-ltd).

Cardinal Clark, Lillian Wright, and Ruth Wright demonstrate that traditional sewing skills learning during the project can have a personal economic benefit. Incorporating quillwork into things like buttons offers a way to earn income at local craft fairs or larger art shows.

Chapter Reflections and Summary

The three main themes that emerged from my examination of the Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project illuminate (1) repatriation as relationship- and nation-building work, (2) repatriation as active socio-economic work in communities, and (3) and repatriation as an important connection and reconnection to ancestors and pride in culture. The Clothing Project is also situated within other ongoing work by the GSCI (now the GTC Department of Culture & Heritage) to document, preserve, and promote Gwich'in culture. This has ensured that knowledge around caribou skin clothing (both Gwich'in and non-Gwich'in) will be preserved for future generations to learn from.

Importantly, the Clothing Project helped to restore traditional skills that were not commonly practiced by Gwich'in seamstresses. In doing so, the project "returned" the unique traditional clothing of their ancestors. Projects like these have the power to restore confidence and well-being in communities that have been deeply impacted by colonialism and residential schools. Karen Wright-Fraser makes a clear connection between this reclamation work and community pride and individual well-being, saying

> I think it's so important not to lose [these] skills…Sometimes the... politicians or some of the organizations, they leave arts or traditional things [at] the bottom of the priority list. Where I think a lot of arts [are] the heart of the well-being of the community. And if people learn different skills, their well-being will be enhanced and [the] community gets a little better, a little more well, and things like addictions might fall off… if people are feeling good about themselves. And I know arts and traditional skills will help that. [Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019]

Ingrid Kritsch also reflected that if the original outfit had simply been returned and put on display, the knowledge transfer that was the foundation of the Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project might not have been as rich (Ingrid Kritsch and Tom Andrews, August 1, 2019). While this case was not a true physical repatriation (i.e., the original outfit remained at the CMH), the repatriation of the intangible (including archival information and institutional or academic knowledge about collections) was equally as potent, especially because this work was directed by community interests and approached in a collaborative manner.

Chapter 6.

Returning Ancestors to Bkejwanong

In the summer of 2014, the remains of over 30 individuals were laid to rest in a cemetery along the Snye River in southwestern Ontario.[187] Excavated from several archaeological sites in the region, many of them had been waiting for reburial for nearly 40 years. Walpole Island First Nation (WIFN) worked for nearly ten years to ensure their respectful return to unceded *Bkejwanong* territory. As mentioned in Chapter 1, I was deeply involved in the return of these ancestors through my MA project at the University of Windsor, which documented the process (Meloche 2014).

As the research arm of WIFN, the Walpole Island Heritage Centre has become a leader in environmental justice and cultural stewardship in the region. The Centre is often consulted whenever ancestral remains are uncovered on their traditional territory, whether during archaeological excavations or development work. To learn more about the 2014 repatriation and its effects on the community, I reviewed archival and published materials centred on the excavations, revisited my own notes and records, and completed eight interviews with WIFN community members.[188] By these means, I was able to better understand the community's experience, consider what the benefits and challenges have been, and reflect on the ways that repatriation work continues to impact the community.

In this chapter, I focus on the repatriation of ancestral human remains to Bkejwanong in 2014. However, WIFN's efforts to return these ancestors are situated within other ongoing work undertaken by the Heritage Centre, including later efforts to return corn seed-ancestors. I first introduce the Walpole Island First Nation and its history. I then describe the history of the Heritage Centre and the work they do and provide an account of the 2014 repatriation. Next, I identify several relevant events and

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[187] Dean Jacobs noted that there are several rivers in southwestern Ontario known as "Snye" (pers comm 2021). This Snye River is also known as the Chenail Ecarté River.

[188] Interview participants and Elders, C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac passed into the spirit world before this dissertation was completed. I include their stories as they told them to me to honour their contributions to this project and their many years guiding repatriation and other cultural work for Walpole Island First Nation.

projects that have developed since the reburial. Finally, I consider the legacy of the Ancestors' return for the Walpole Island First Nation by examining socio-cultural, political, and economic effects.

Walpole Island First Nation

Walpole Island First Nation in southwestern Ontario is home to Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi peoples, collectively referred to as Anishinaabeg.[189] These groups share a common language (Anishinaabemowin[190]), heritage, and cultural and spiritual traditions. As early as the seventeenth century (and very likely before), they formed an alliance known as the Three Fires Confederacy, to support one another socially, politically, and spiritually (Bellfy 2011; Fixico 1994).[191] It is still active today.[192] Walpole Island First Nation, also known as the Council of Three Fires, represents a modern example of this alliance.

Walpole Island First Nation is centred on unceded Bkejwanong territory (Figure 6.1). Located at the mouth of the St. Clair River, *Bkejwanong* means "where the waters divide" in Anishinaabemowin. It encompasses six islands in the delta, on what is now the Canadian side of the border with the United States.[193] WIFN's homeland encompasses most of southwestern Ontario and extends west into what is now Michigan. It extends from Lake Erie in the south to Lake Huron to the north. It encompasses the Lake St. Clair watershed, the Thames, St. Clair, and Detroit Rivers, and extends into present-day Michigan (Dean Jacobs pers comm 2021; McNab 1992:36). Many community members still maintain connections to relations on both sides of the international border.

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[189] "Anishinaabe" describes a singular person, while "Anishinaabeg" is the plural. Each are variously spelled depending on community, location, or dialect (Hele 2020).

[190] Anishinaabemowin is part of the central Algonquin language family (Horton 2017).

[191] The three allied groups were often referred to as Brothers: the Ojibwe were the "oldest brother," responsible for medicines and teachings; the Odawa were the "middle brother," responsible for trading food and goods; and the Potawatomi were the "youngest brother," responsible for the sacred fire (Citizen Potawatomi Nation n.d.; Fixico 1994:5–6).

[192] A 2007 gathering on Ketegaunseebee Anishinaabe Territory at *Baawaating* (near present-day Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario) saw over 5,000 Anishinaabeg attend (SooToday.com 2007).

[193] These include Walpole Island, Potawatomi Island, Squirrel Island, Seaway Island, Bassett Island, and St. Anne Island. Three additional islands, Russell Island, Harsen's Island, and Dickenson Island are today located on the US side of the border, though they remain an important part of Bkejwanong territory (McNab 1999:157).
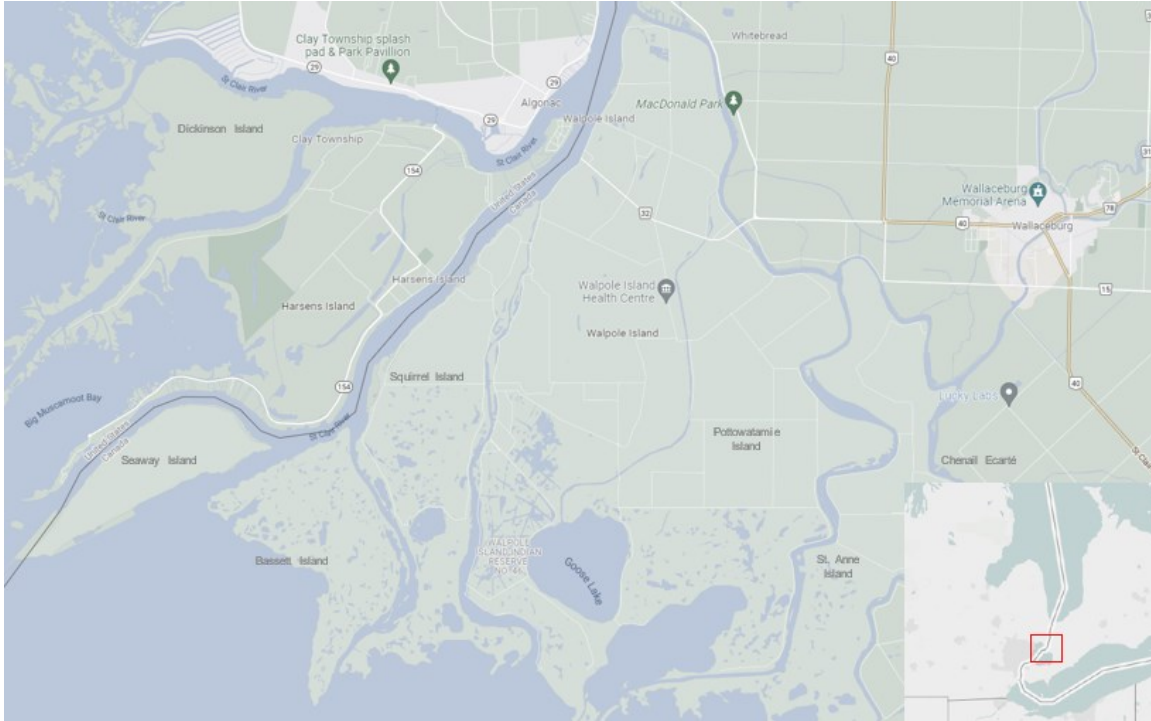
Figure 6.1. Map of Bkejwanong territory.
(Source: Google maps 2021).

     Bkejwanong is home to an ecologically diverse environment, with wetlands, marshes, forest, savanna, and prairie habitats hosting a variety of wildlife, including dozens of rare and endangered species (Beckford et al. 2010). Archaeological evidence has shown that the territory has been used for thousands of years.[194] Oral histories describe it as the third of seven stopping places for Anishinaabeg on their migration from the east coast of North America to the Great Lakes region (Bellfy 2011:xxxiv–xxxvi; Fehr 2010:17). Ojibwe storyteller and historian Edward Benton Benai described the third stopping place as on "where two great bodies of water are connected by a thin narrow river" (1979:98). Bkejwanong is a place of sacred fire and water, and thus has deep significance for those 1,500 peoples who call it home (D. Jacobs 1998; Jacobs and Lytwyn 2020; McNab 1998, 2001:237; 2004; Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987).[195] Importantly, it is *unceded territory*. While several treaties were signed with Canadian and US

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[194] Archaeological evidence supports occupation from at least the Archaic period (see Clifton et al. 1986; D. Jacobs et al. 2021; Munson and Jamieson 2013:13; Murphy and Ferris 1990; Spence et al. 1990; Warrick 2013, 2017).

[195] This population figure is from the 2016 census by the Government of Canada (2020).

governments in southwestern Ontario, Bkejwanong, its lands and waters, was never relinquished.

Anishinaabe Traditions and WIFN History

Anishinaabe tradition understands the world to be wholly relational. In this way, Anishinaabeg are part of the environment, not above it. Humans, animals, and all of creation—including other-than-human beings and what would be considered within a Western perspective to be inanimate objects—are connected through various relationships and responsibilities (Matthews 2016; McGregor 2009; Simpson 2008). Landscapes are full of life, Ancestors are ever-present spirits, and intermediary beings (known as *manitous*[196]) and other guardian spirits are abundant. Respect for all of these relations and environments is imperative. There are consequences if these relationships are not honoured; certain resources may disappear (Borrows 2002:20; C. E. Isaac Sr and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020 [see Fehr 2013:267–269 for an example]).

One way that these relations are maintained is through *Mino-Bimaadiziwin* ("the way in which one strives to live a good life" [Fehr 2010:2; also see Rheault 1999]).[197] It is an active process that involves the mind, body, and spirit, aimed at living a long and healthy life, maintaining good relations, and finding balance in the present (Bryan Loucks, March 13, 2020; Fixico 1994:11; Gross 2014:205). Anishinaabe scholar Lawrence W. Gross notes that

> For the old Anishinaabeg, bimaadiziwin informed the myths, fasting, relations with animals, health and healing, the Midewiwin, and relations with the dead. In the modern age, bimaadiziwin is helping the Anishinaabeg to reconstruct their worlds in the postapocalyptic period (Gross 2014:206).

This guiding principle influences individual daily habits and guides the development of respectful relationships, both socially and with the environment. It is thus embedded within and intersects with all aspects of life. For example, *Mino-Bimaadiziwin* has

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[196] *Manitous*, in Anishinaabe oral histories, "were and are the manifestation of intermediary beings that can transcend the earthly and spiritual realm" (Fehr 2010:80, see also Johnston 1995). An example is the well-known culture-hero, Nenabush (also spelled Nanabush [Fixico 1994] or Nanabozho [Clifton et al. 1986]).

[197] A variation of this concept is *bimaadiziwin*. Gross describes it "the good life," maintaining good relations with others and living a long and healthy life (2014:205–224). Here, I use *Mino-Bimaadiziwin* as this is the spelling used by WIFN.

informed the vision statement for the WIFN Council.[198] The most important spiritual society in Anishinaabe culture, the Midewiwin, is also rooted in this teaching (Gross 2014:210).

Importantly, Anishinaabe worldviews are grounded by the land and experiences on/within their territories, demonstrating the sacred role of place (D. Jacobs 1998). In the past, Anishinaabeg would have lived and travelled in small groups, moving with the seasons, and coming together at particular times and places. The political structure of these groups was largely egalitarian, organized by kin-based clans (Bellfy 2011:14–15; Clifton et al. 1986). Learning was (and is) rooted in the personal and individual, through mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional experiences, but is connected to the collective as well (Simpson 2000). Oral histories told by Elders and walking the land were the main ways of transmitting cultural knowledge. Stories were told seasonally and at regular gatherings to ensure they were passed on to future generations (Clint Jacobs, January 10, 2019). In these ways, for Anishinaabe, knowledge is gained through lived experience; the stories themselves are also "alive," performing specific functions in the everyday and ensuring connection among the people, the land, and other relations (Fehr 2010; D. Jacobs 1994; Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987; Gross 2014:250).

Contact with Europeans

Oral tradition, supported by historical and archaeological evidence, describes significant movement of Indigenous groups in southwestern Ontario both before and after contact with Europeans (Ferris 2009; Ferris and Spence 1995:116–122; Warrick 2013; Williamson 2013:55–56).[199] When Europeans arrived in the mid-seventeenth century, Anishinaabe peoples had mostly settled in the Great Lakes region. Traders and settlers often relied on Indigenous peoples for their knowledge of the land and their harvesting abilities.[200] When colonial conflicts emerged, the Great Lakes Anishinaabeg were particularly skilled at diplomacy and supported the different powers strategically (Bellfy 2011).

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[198] See it here https://wifn.civicweb.net/portal/
[199] See Ferris 2018 on the complexities of assigning ethnicity to southern Ontario assemblages.
[200] For example, the Odawa became deeply involved in the French fur trade (Bellfy 2011:18; Fixico 1994:14–15).

Missionaries travelled to the region as well.[201] An important example for WIFN was the arrival of Jesuit missionaries in 1844, who travelled, uninvited, to Bkejwanong territory, intent on building a mission church and converting the local peoples. The Jesuits settled at Highbanks and cut down sacred oak trees without permission.[202] This offense resulted in a theological debate between a council of local Elders and the missionaries. Records of this debate show the fundamental differences in understanding and beliefs between the two groups (Delâge et al. 1994:297; Fehr 201:62–74; D. Jacobs 1996:6–7; Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987:38–41). In 1849, their church was burned to the ground and the Jesuits left Bkejwanong.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Methodist and Anglican missions on Bkejwanong were more successful, working together to serve and convert the local community (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987:60).[203] They also operated local schools until residential schooling became mandatory. In southern Ontario, several Indian Residential Schools were in operation, including Mount Elgin at Muncey, and the Mohawk Institute near Brantford (TRC 2015e).[204] Children were removed from their communities to be educated in English (or sometimes French), work for the institution (e.g., farming), and convert to Christianity. As elsewhere, these schools were often characterized by terrible conditions, disease, and reports of physical and sexual abuse. They have left a lasting impact on survivors and have been an impetus for many Indigenous communities to press for self-determination in education.[205]

Treaty-making, Unceded Territory, and Self-Government

Anishinaabeg have a long history of treaty making, both after but especially before contact with Europeans. Anishinaabe scholar Leanne Simpson (2008) has argued that Anishinaabe traditions contain countless examples of agreements with other-than-

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[201] Methodists arrived in Bkejwanong in 1829, the Church of England in 1842, and a Pentecostal Church was established much later, in the 1950s (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987:38–41, 93).

[202] Highbanks, at the north end of Walpole Island, was (and is) a particularly important area; it is considered sacred, with important groves of oak trees and burial mounds.

[203] An interesting contrast to the competitive nature of missionary work in the Northwest Territories, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

[204] Some children from Bkejwanong were also brought to Shingwauk, an IRS school in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario (Dean Jacobs, pers. comm 2021).

[205] Walpole Island was one of the first Indigenous communities in Canada to set up its own education committee to shift schooling back to local control (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987:92). Today, WIFN operates a local daycare and elementary school on their territory. This ensures that students are educated in both their traditional teachings and within settler curricula.

human beings and relations, as well as within and between human groups. An important historical example is the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, between the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples (1701). It enshrined both groups' commitments to non-violence, appropriate protocols, and cooperation in their neighbouring territories, and remains an important agreement to this day (Glover 2020; D. Jacobs and Lytwyn 2020).[206]

Colonial polices in Upper Canada (now Ontario) and perspectives on Indigenous peoples radically shifted after the War of 1812. The Anishinaabeg and other groups were no longer needed as military allies; the new aim of colonial governments was to facilitate settlement. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 had established that all lands secured for settlement had to be acquired by the Crown and, importantly, reaffirmed Indigenous Title.[207] This meant that the Crown was the only body able to negotiate treaties for land surrenders. However, its implementation has rarely lived up to this ideal (Travers 2013:101–102). Several major treaties were signed with Indigenous groups across southern Ontario. Table 6.1 identifies those which are most relevant to WIFN.[208]

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[206] This Treaty was immortalized in a Wampum Belt that showcases a dish in the centre. Such belts were often used to record treaties or agreements among and between Indigenous groups, and with outsiders. Elaborately decorated with intricate beadwork designs, these were often collected by settlers and stored in museums, and thus, have been an important part of the repatriation movement in North America (see Becker 2016; Borrows 1997; Bruchac 2018; Sullivan 1992).

[207] The Proclamation remains a fundamental document for Indigenous Title in settler courts today.

[208] For more on this complex history see Fehr et al. 2019; D. Jacobs 1996; D. Jacobs and Lytwyn 2020; McNab 1992, 198, 1999; Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987.

Table 6.1. Relevant treaties and agreements made with Anishinaabe groups in southwestern Ontario, post-1763.

Sources: McNab 1992, 1996, 1999, 2001; Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987.

Year	Treaty	
1790	Treaty of Detroit/Cession #2	Sharing of land use in southwestern Ontario. Did not include waters of Lakes Erie, Huron, or St. Clair, nor the surrounding waterways and islands of Bkejwanong.
1796	St. Anne Island Treaty	An agreement between Anishinaabe groups and the Crown. Established protections for land, resource, and trading rights in perpetuity. Ignored and replaced by "Treaty #7." It remains unrecognized by Crown today.
1796	"Treaty #7"	Signed shortly after the St. Anne Island Treaty was agreed upon. Anishinaabe groups disputed its contents, arguing that they were not agreed upon.
1815	Treaty of Ghent	Signed by the United States and Britain. Established a firm international boundary from the St. Lawrence River to Lake Superior. No consultation with Indigenous groups. Russell, Harsen, and Dickenson Islands in Bkejwanong delta now within border of the United States.
1825–1827	U.S. Removals resettlement agreements	Resulted in settlement of several Potawatomi groups at Bkejwanong.[1]

[1] Notably, Anishinaabe oral tradition understands this to be a *return* of Potawatomi to the area, as they had travelled with Anishinaabe Ancestors to this sacred Third Meeting Place while on the great western migration centuries before (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987).

The first major treaty in southwestern Ontario (Treaty of Detroit or "Cession #2") was signed in 1790 between the Canadian Government and the Three Fires Confederacy. It allowed for European settlers to occupy land in what is now Essex and Kent Counties, though Indigenous rights to their territory would continue (McNab 1999:153). Importantly, it did not include Bkejwanong or the surrounding water bodies, rivers, and lake beds.

Another significant treaty for WIFN was the St. Anne Island Treaty (1796), which was a series of oral agreements between Anishinaabe groups and the Crown. It reaffirmed the relationship between the Three Fires Confederacy and the Crown, recognized Indigenous rights and independence, and ensured that their hunting and trading rights were protected (McNab 2001:237). These promises were documented in

transcribed speeches by hereditary chiefs from the Confederacy following the meeting (McNab 1999:155–156, 2001:238–243). However, the Crown representative did not include these in the written "Treaty #7" which was signed shortly afterwards.[209] The St. Anne Island Treaty remains unrecognized by the Crown today.[210]

With the formalization of the Indian Act in 1876, Indigenous peoples who practiced traditional forms of governance were required to conform to an elected band structure, overseen by a Crown-appointed agent.[211] In 1965, however, WIFN became the first Nation in Canada to remove the local Indian Agent—the last to oversee Walpole Island First Nation's activities. After the Indian Agent re-negotiated a lease without community consent, then-Chief Burton Jacobs and the Band Council petitioned Indian Affairs to remove them (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987:98–99). In the years since, WIFN has continued to leverage the tools available (within the existing systems of colonial governance) to benefit the community and return to self-sufficiency (Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019; Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987:100–102). This has included establishing local education and language revitalization programs; operating the community-owned Tahgahoning Enterprises to commercially farm Bkejwanong lands; and establishing a community-based research group.

Walpole Island First Nation Heritage Work

Since they removed the last Indian Agent, Walpole Island First Nation has continued to act in the best interest of the wider community. This has included the protection and management of both natural and cultural resources in Bkejwanong and their traditional territories. The work has entailed examinations of local histories to contribute to ongoing land claims. In the 1970s, the Chief and Council established a research group to support land claims and advocacy efforts for the community (D. Jacobs interview 2020; Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987). This group has since grown into an internationally recognized, multi-disciplinary, and community-based research program at

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[209] McNab notes that "Treaty #7"'s origins have not been identified, as there are no known records of its signing (1999:155, 2001:238).

[210] In 1999, a stone monument was erected on Walpole Island to honour and recognize the St. Anne Island Treaty.

[211] On Walpole Island, this meant that hereditary Chiefs were replaced by elected Chiefs and Councils. Two bands emerged: Ojibwe (or Chippewa, which included both Ojibwe and Odawa peoples) and Potawatomi. (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987:51–52). These two groups merged in 1940 to form the Walpole Island Band, known today as the Walpole Island First Nation.

the Walpole Island Heritage Centre. The Heritage Centre has led collaborative projects across a variety of topics and disciplines, including historical research, language documentation and revitalization, environmental justice and advocacy, documenting traditional knowledge, heritage management, and archaeological monitoring. Here, I provide a brief history of the Heritage Centre, and their work around environmental and heritage protection.

Nin.Da.Waab.Jig and the Walpole Island Heritage Centre

In 1973, a four-year project investigating historical records to advance Walpole Island First Nation land claims and treaty work developed into a local historical research centre. In 1983, the group became *Nin.Da.Waab.Jig.*, or "those who seek to find." Former Executive Director, Dean Jacobs reflected on the group's early days, noting that

> *Nin.Da.Waab.Jig was mostly around history, land claims, the protection of our homeland, and the protection of our species. So, the natural heritage and protection of our treaty lands, and advocating for our community within our homeland as well. It's not just the heritage and cultural. We've [also] been able to assist and support the political efforts of our government in advancing our assertions around land claims and treaties.*
> [Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019]

Their mandate was to support the community and work of the Chief and Council around land claims, environmental issues, and heritage protections. Initially, they operated out of the old Indian Agent office building, which was condemned at the time. It wasn't until 1989, that they moved into their present location at Highbanks, near the north end of Walpole Island.[212]

Nin.Da.Waab.Jig's approach has always been to work from community interests and concerns, while developing co-operative and collaborative partnerships with

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[212] The present building was a craft-making place in the 1970s. Its construction faced significant resistance, given its location: an important cultural place where several burial grounds (both ancient and historical) are located. In the early 2000s, calls were made for it to be torn down; however, they were unsuccessful. That said, Clint Jacobs (the current Executive Director) felt that eventually relocating may be in their best interest to avoid continuing disturbances to Ancestors in the area (January 10, 2020).

research institutions. The Heritage Centre's goals reflect this mission (D. Jacobs 2019:1):

- To preserve and restore the Walpole Island First Nation's natural and cultural heritage;
- To restore the rights and improve the capacity to manage and govern the Walpole Island First Nation and its traditional homelands, fairly, effectively, and efficiently; and
- To promote the sustainable development of Walpole Island for seven generations.

In the early 1980s, the Heritage Centre began to work closely with the University of Windsor on a series of projects. This partnership has continued to grow and develop for over 30 years (D. Jacobs 2019). The Centre remains an active member of the University's Aboriginal Education Council, and a Memorandum of Understanding between WIFN and the University (2007) has supported many graduate thesis projects. While the MOU expired in 2012, the two parties agreed that it was no longer necessary to "ratify [their] relationship" (D. Jacobs 2019:9). Similar partnerships have also been developed with Western University, the Province of Ontario, local municipalities, private contractors and companies, and others.

Environmental Justice Work

A major focus of the Nin.Da.Waab.Jig's work has been around the protection and management of Bkejwanong's unique ecosystems. The St. Clair River is a highly trafficked route within the Great Lakes region, with large cargo ships and other traffic bringing invasive species, oil spills, and other potential disasters to WIFN's doorstep. Upriver chemical plants in the Sarnia region have the potential to devastate the environment with a single spill.[213] Environmental advocates remain motivated to protect their homeland for the future (Beckford et al. 2010:243–244; D. Jacobs 1996, 1998:14).

The Environmental Protection Program at the Walpole Island Heritage Centre has continued to address these and other issues within their territory.[214] In the early 1980s,

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[213] In fact, in 1985, a spill by Dow Chemical formed a large mass under the water. The toxic mass became known as "the Blob" (CBC Archives 1985; Kula 2015). The WIFN community rallied to first understand, then respond to the situation and also be a part of the solution. This meant fighting for representation in the cleanup (Romphf 2020; VanWynsberghe 2002).

[214] Other community initiatives, like *Akii Kwe* (a local women's water advocacy organization), have also played important roles in these efforts (McGregor 2009:38–39).

research partnerships with the University of Windsor investigated various factors related to environmental management and development (D. Jacobs 2019:6). In 1995, their work received international recognition when WIFN received the "We the People: 50 Communities Award" from the Friends of the United Nations (D. Jacobs 1998:18, 2019:4). The ongoing relationship with the University of Windsor's Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research (GLIER) led to a course in 2019, on "Traditional Ecological Knowledge and the Environment," co-developed by current Heritage Centre Director, Clint Jacobs (Clint Jacobs, pers comm. 2021; D. Jacobs 2019:10; The Healthy Headwaters Lab n.d.).[215]

All environmental research initiatives undertaken by the Heritage Centre are grounded by community-identified directives and areas of interest or concern (Clint Jacobs, January 10, 2020). Concerns over water quality, local endangered species, and the importance of documenting traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of Elders and community members have all been raised (Clint Jacobs, January 10, 2020; Russell Nahdee, October 29, 2019). Institutional partnerships continue to assist the Heritage Centre in fulfilling these responsibilities. Researchers from the University of Windsor (e.g., GLIER), Western University (e.g., Huner 2021), and others (e.g., Fehr 2010; Herron 2002; Stephens and Darnell 2013) have often worked closely with the Heritage Centre to build a repository of local TEK. Such work has helped to address environmental impacts in the territory and build capacity among community members to do the work themselves in the future.

More recently, the Heritage Centre's focus has also included receiving, reviewing, and commenting on environmental assessments completed by prospective proponents of land alterations. Dean Jacobs (former External Projects Coordinator) reflected that this work connects to other projects at the Heritage Centre as well (e.g., archaeological monitoring [Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019]).

Heritage Protections and Revitalization Work

By the 1970s, WIFN recognized the importance of managing and protecting the culture and heritage of Bkejwanong. They have been involved in archaeological

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[215] The course is "a week-long exploration of the incredible floral and faunal diversity of Bkejwanong." See https://www.healthyheadwaterslab.ca/teaching/tek

monitoring and excavations in southwestern Ontario since at least the 1970s.[216] For example, when Essex County broke ground on the EC Row Expressway (1971) and encountered an unexpected series of burials, WIFN negotiated the reburial of those Ancestors in a protected area near where they were originally discovered (Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019). Dean Jacobs explained that Nin.Da.Waab.Jig's interest in learning more about archaeology has influenced the Heritage Centre's approach to research partnerships in general:

> *The land claims were important. When we were advancing our obligations and responsibilities in our treaty areas, the research was mostly historical, but we relied on a lot of archaeological research and evidence to complement our knowledge of our history from others. And that led to the determining that we wanted to become our own investigators and own our own stories. So, we started building our capacity in those disciplines— history and archaeology. Even though we don't have any professional archaeologists [in the community], we did take advantage of some funding that was available for the creation of Nin.Da.Waab.Jig, and our relationship with the University of Windsor. And then, a bit later, we [received] funding from the province to do an archaeological master plan for our community. We partnered with a research foundation in Kingston. And together, we were one of the first, if not the first, First Nation in Ontario to conduct an archaeological master plan.*
>
> *So that was kind of Baseline information, but it also showed that we are proactive in archaeology, both as Indigenous peoples but also trying to better understand the science of archaeology and the archaeologists that follow that discipline.*
>
> *We started forging relationships with historians and archaeologists, in trying to, like I said, to turn that around: instead of being the subject of research, we wanted to be the investigator. So, I think we have been successful in doing that... We brought those individuals that were researching and writing about us. We got them into our community, and I like to think that it provided [an opportunity for] some of the scholars to vet their research findings. But there was also an opportunity for our community to provide feedback on the research.* [Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019]

Dean also reflected on the importance of responding to those archaeologists who reached out in the early days and the ways that has continued to influence their approach today.

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[216] Archaeology and heritage management in Ontario have a complex history. See Dent 2012; Ferris 2007; Hamilton 2010; Meier 2020.

Most of the time, we had interactions with archaeologists who were proactive civil servants of the provincial government. They started reaching out—the local or regional or district archaeologist started reaching out to First Nations in our area. And I picked up the phone and said, "Yes, we are interested;" and started learning more about the archaeological assessment processes. And we became a go-to First Nation because we picked up the phone.

I say that because it's also a message to other First Nations. Because I still see that today in terms of the duty to consult and accommodate. The case law is very clear that First Nations have an obligation to come to the table as well. So, I know that often in the past our relationship with anthropologists and archaeologists wasn't the best. I understand that there are conflicts and…Indigenous people or archaeologists, nobody wanted or seemed to budge, or learn about the others, or work together. So, we started with trying to learn more about that science and, at the same time, we continued to learn more about our own history and heritage.

So, I think that at the end of the day we became better equipped because we know a little bit about Western science, and we know a lot about our old indigenous knowledge in our community. [Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019]

The Heritage Centre, through consultation and collaboration, has become a leading voice for archaeological consultation in southwestern Ontario. To this day, archaeological assessments and collaborative research partnerships around the archaeological history of the region is a big part of the Heritage Centre's work (Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019; David W. White, January 21, 2021). They continue to be called to consult on archaeological sites and especially on those which are found to contain ancestral human remains.

Caring for Ancestors

WIFN are stewards of their lands and thus, of those Ancestors found within them. The Heritage Centre seeks to ensure that all ancestral remains that are discovered in their territory (including those of nations that may have occupied or travelled these lands in the past) are treated with respect and dignity (Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019; David W. White, January 28, 2021). In all cases, the goal is reburial, to ensure that those Ancestors' spirits can rest again. However, Walpole Island First Nation has sometimes collaborated with researchers to learn more from their Ancestors before they are reburied.

One important example of this can be found in the archaeological investigation of the Johnson 1 site on Bkejwanong (D. Jacobs et al. 2021). The site was first recorded in the 1980s, during a survey for WIFN's archaeological master plan. In 2004, human remains were discovered there during agricultural work. WIFN member and the landowner, Joyce Johnson, felt that these ancestors had been uncovered by their own design; that they meant to share knowledge with their descendants (D. Jacobs et al. 2021:179–180).

The subsequent investigation showed that the site was repeatedly used across time.[217] Projectile points indicated that it was used as early as 3,500 years ago; while belongings found with the burials indicated that the earliest were over 1,000 years old (Jacobs et al. 2021:185–186). Importantly, there was also evidence for *re-burial*. The project team found that ancestors who had accidentally encountered earlier burials had reburied them with care—representing "an intentionally formal and respectful act to remedy the accident of displacement." (D. Jacobs et al. 2021:187). This project remains an important example of how collaborative research relationships can bring mutually beneficial outcomes for partners.

The Heritage Centre continues to advocate for the protection of archaeological sites in their traditional territories. Dean Jacobs sees things changing for the better in the region, as more and more municipalities are addressing archaeology in their planning.

> *I continue to be very interested in knowing more about our archaeological history. So certainly, I have worked with the provincial archaeologist [to learn] more about it and get more involved in their organization, as well the Ontario Archaeological Society and becoming an advocate…of archaeological protection.*
>
> *So much so that we've done the archaeological master plan and we've encouraged surrounding municipalities to have [one] in their official plan. We've had a lot of resistance but more recently, municipalities are coming around to understanding the value of and the importance of doing that. So that's a good news story. And it's a lot easier when we can show them that we have one.*
>
> *It's a tool for planning. So, instead of being on the ground and having the bulldozer there, it's having a way to incorporate archaeological protection and research in the planning process. So, it's not a surprise anymore—it*

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[217] The Heritage Centre worked with archaeologist Neal Ferris and physical anthropologist Michael Spence to organize the excavation and analyses. Both were employed at Western University at the time and had worked co-operatively with the Heritage Centre prior to this (e.g., Dewar et al. 2010; Spence 2013, 2017; Spence et al. 2014).

should be understood that indigenous peoples were here for a long time.
[Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019]

The Heritage Centre is a leading advocate for the protection of heritage and archaeological sites in the region. It continues to collaborate with other institutions (e.g., the Museum of Archaeology in London, Ontario) and has consistently supported the revitalization of local cultural practices. These experiences, along with their previous working relationship with the University of Windsor, meant that the Centre would be the main contact when Ancestors were discovered at the University in 2004.

Repatriating Ancestors

In 2014, the Walpole Island Heritage Centre organized a community reburial event to reinter the remains of a large group of Ancestors. Their remains had variously been uncovered on Walpole Island or excavated from archaeological sites in the surrounding regions (Essex and Kent Counties). In this section, I provide additional context for this repatriation before describing the work involved. My focus is largely on the group of Ancestors returned from the University of Windsor because it was a large and somewhat complex case.[218] Other Ancestors reburied as part of this event were already in the care or jurisdiction of WIFN. I also provide a detailed account of the planning processes and the reburial event itself.[219]

Ancestors from the University of Windsor

The University of Windsor operated as a provincial repository for excavated archaeological materials since at least the 1950s. During that time, materials excavated from approximately 100 sites were deposited or donated.[220] The Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology originally housed these materials, sometimes showcasing them in the "Museum of Man," which operated primarily during the 1970s

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[218] For a full accounting of these events, see Meloche 2014.

[219] Many of these are recounted from my own memory and notes. As an invited outsider, I was not involved in the internal planning of the event, nor do I include any detail on particularly sensitive cultural procedures that took place.

[220] Donated collections are included here as "sites," due to unclear provenience.

and 1980s.[221] Department faculty members working in archaeology continued to deposit excavated or donated materials until the 1990s.

Upon arrival to the University of Windsor as a new faculty member in 2004, physical anthropologist John Albanese found a number of ancestral human remains in the Physical Anthropology laboratory. Many of these were labelled "Rikley" and were assumed to have been associated with a site known colloquially as the Rickley site (AcHo-2) which had been excavated in the 1970s (Kroon 1975).[222] However, there was evidence that remains from other sites in southwestern Ontario were also present and potentially commingled while in storage. Albanese set out to learn as much as he could from other faculty and available records to determine where these remains were from and what to do next. His research indicated that many of the Ancestors likely came from the Rickley site, which had been excavated in the 1970s by University of Windsor faculty member, Leonard Kroon.

Excavations at the Rickley Site

In 1974 and 1975, Kroon directed two student field schools at a site in Kent County, Ontario. The site was first located in 1969 by an avocational archaeologist. However, it was Kroon's field schools that revealed the scale of the site. Over two seasons, teams uncovered several burials and a variety of cultural materials that indicated the site was in use from the Early to Middle Woodland period (1000 BCE–600 CE) until the Late Woodland period (600 CE–1400 CE).[223] Table 6.2 provides a list of materials recovered from the Rickley site.

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[221] Later the Anthropology Museum. The space has sometimes been used to showcase student-developed exhibits as part of an undergraduate class in the department (e.g., 49-338).

[222] "Rickley" has sometimes been spelled "Rickly" and "Rikley" (i.e., in various student accounts; Donaldson and Wortner, 1995; Spence et al. 1990). Here and elsewhere (Meloche 2014), I use the spelling used in the 1975 site report.

[223] Archaeological history in Ontario is typically organized into periods including Paleoindian (>11,500–8,500 BCE); Archaic (8,500–1,000 BCE); and Woodland (1000 BCE–1400 CE). For more general information, see Munson and Jamieson 2013:13.

Table 6.2. A summary of materials found at the Rickley site, 1974–1975.
Source: Kroon 1975.

Recovered Materials	Kroon's Observations
Ceramic materials	A variety of vessel types were present, mostly fragmentary.
Projectile points	Surface finds and a few found during excavation. One point suggested at minimum site use during the Middle Woodland.
Zooarchaeological remains	Animals represented included fish (perch, pickerel, and sheepshead), bird, and deer.
Bone tools	Two splinter bone awls.
Archaeobotanical remains	Several seeds were collected, though Kroon noted no evidence of cultigens. Some carbonized wood.
Burial belongings	Notable items included a vasiform pipe with a plug insert, a large double-walled pipe-form, a sandstone tubular object, and a green slate birdstone.

Student accounts of the two field seasons indicate that there was some animosity between Kroon and the avocational archaeologist who had discovered the site. During the 1975 field season, a unique multiple burial was uncovered that contained the remains of six Ancestors.[224] Shortly after its discovery, a birdstone—a significant and rare find—and several other artifacts were looted from the site and the excavations were terminated.

In his final report, Kroon (1975:15) notes that it was decided early on that "any skeletal remains would be pedestaled, thoroughly investigated, but not disturbed or collected." Thus, all burials were to be left *in situ* and then reburied with ceremony. However, at least some of these ancestors were removed and transported to the University. Unfortunately, there are no known records that identify who removed them, from where, when, or how they arrived. Given that Ancestors representing other sites in southwestern Ontario were present in the Physical Anthropology laboratory, it is

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[224] Several important belongings found with this burial (e.g., a birdstone) may indicate an earlier occupation at the site. Donaldson and Wortner (1995:37) also argue that the burial shows characteristics of the Glacial Kame burial complex, which dates from the Late Archaic (2500–1000 BCE) to Early Woodland (1000–200 BCE) periods. This and other analyses (i.e., Stanciu and Walker 1980) show the clear importance of the site for those who visited it.

assumed that either Kroon or Dr. Ripu Singh, a former physical anthropologist at the University of Windsor, removed them.[225]

Working Towards Repatriation

Upon realizing the likely origin of the Ancestors in his new laboratory, Albanese quickly contacted the University's Aboriginal Education Centre. Working with Aboriginal Education Coordinator Russell Nahdee, they contacted the Walpole Island Heritage Centre and began to develop a plan for repatriation (Russell Nahdee, October 29, 2019; Meloche 2014).

A small working group was formed, including representatives from the University of Windsor's Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology, the University's Aboriginal Education Centre, and the Walpole Island Heritage Centre. Their initial intention was to respectfully conduct anthropological analyses to learn more about these Ancestors, then return and rebury them at Bkejwanong. David W. White, then-Director of the Heritage Centre, described the impetus for this as a way to learn as much as possible to care for them as best as they could (January 28, 2021). This meant applying for the necessary funding and acquiring the support of university administration, both for monetary funds and in-kind support. However, due to a variety of setbacks and little support from university administration, these plans never fully materialized. University of Windsor Aboriginal Education Coordinator, Russell Nahdee recollected that

> *There were several things that happened along the way.*
>
> *Just different periods where nothing happened at all, over a number of years. So, we still kept in touch, and you know, there were still people asking what was going on. There were a couple of starts that just never went anywhere. And that was one of the questions when there was a sort of a small committee formed on campus—with people from Anthropology and Walpole Island Heritage Centre.*
>
> *That was one of the discussions that came up, you know, what about funding? How would it work? And there were talks of applying for research grants, SSHRC grants, all those sorts of things. And then, again, a number of other sort of gaps occurred as well. For various reasons.*
>
> *And we never got back to it till later. And—I wasn't involved in the actual details about that kind of planning. My role was specifically to just sort of*

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[225] Kroon noted in his site report that Singh visited the site during the excavations (1975).

facilitate and mediate those two groups coming together and observe, mostly. [Russell Nahdee, October 29, 2019]

Instead, students worked with the Ancestors to complete small research projects, learning a little at a time. For the WIFN community, as Dean Jacobs reflected, other work may have taken precedence but the obligation to "do the right thing" was always still there (Meloche 2014:53).

In 2013, after I completed a full inventory of the Ancestors from the Physical Anthropology Laboratory, there was a renewed attempt at building a research program. However, university administration—finally sensitive to the situation—brought all work to a full stop and formally consulted with WIFN on the next steps.[226] A new working group was established, including representatives from the Heritage Centre, and administration from the Department and the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. The group decided to wait on the outcome of a pending grant application, then work towards a full repatriation and reburial. In the meantime, funding was provided for the Department to digitize all known records associated with the 1974–1975 excavations at the Rickley site. These records were to be returned alongside the Ancestors when they were brought to Bkejwanong.

Other Ancestors

In addition to the Ancestors returned from the University of Windsor, several others were returned from Western University. Many of these were already under the jurisdiction of WIFN, cared for under research agreements. These included both those Ancestors that had been excavated from sites on Walpole Island (i.e., Johnson 1 [see discussion above and D. Jacobs et al. 2020]), and those from sites in the wider WIFN territory (e.g., Pain Court or Wallaceburg [Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019; David W. White, January 28, 2021]). There were also two individuals from the Rickley site that somehow came to be cared for at Western rather than the University of Windsor (Neal Ferris and Michael W. Spence, pers. comm. 2021). Finally, other Ancestors included those which were uncovered during local construction projects but were unable to be

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[226] While this was helpful and necessary in many ways, the administration's actions also undermined (to some extent) the work that had already been done between Albanese, Nahdee, and the Heritage Centre.

immediately reburied. They were cared for in the Heritage Centre in the interim (Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019; C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020).

Community Reburial

In 2014, delegates from Walpole Island First Nation ceremonially greeted the Ancestors held at the University of Windsor. Elder C. Eric Isaac Sr. recalled wanting to bring them home right then.

> *I think it was 32 altogether…We thought maybe we could put them in a truck [and] just bring them home but it didn't work out that way. Because they had to have this "transporting human remains" and they had to get like, this...It took several months before we could get the right permit.*
>
> *…Otherwise, we could have loaded them up right there. Took them out of the basement and put them in my truck or whatever...brought them all.*
> [C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020]

While the University addressed the legalities required to transfer custody over the Ancestors to WIFN, the Heritage Centre began to plan for their return. Given the number of Ancestors returning, the Heritage Centre decided to organize a community event to receive and rebury them. In April 2014, the Heritage Centre and its then-Director, Joyce Johnson, began consultations to plan the reburial ceremony.

Reburying the Ancestors

While not widely known, ancestral remains have been regularly encountered on Walpole Island. There is historical evidence for the excavation of grave sites by both settlers and archaeologists. Historian Michelle Hamilton described the excavation of the well-known, large mound at Highbanks in the late nineteenth century, which incited backlash from some community members (2010:91–92).[227] Similarly, outsiders have sometimes visited Bkejwanong (often uninvited) trying to find the grave of Chief Tecumseh (Hamilton 2010:96; St. Denis 2005).[228]

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[227] The mound, located at Highbanks, was bulldozed by WIFN Public Works in the 1950s. This is demonstrative of the ways that community conceptions of heritage landscapes can shift over time (Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019).

[228] Tecumseh was a well-known Shaunee Chief who fought alongside the British during the War of 1812. Many Anishinaabeg, including Walpole Island Chief Oshawana (John Nahdee) fought alongside him in his final battle (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987:25–26). The location of his remains became a source of fascination across southern Ontario for many years after. In 1931, the Walpole Island Veteran's Association decisively claimed that they had possession of

Ancestral remains have also been encountered by community members. David W. White recalled finding several burials eroding out of the banks near Highbanks when he was a youth (January 28, 2021). Later, while constructing the Heritage Centre building in the 1970s, workers encountered a burial. Each of these Ancestors were reburied shortly after they were discovered in a dedicated section of Highbanks Cemetery (just down the road from the Heritage Centre). Elders C. Eric and Patti Isaac also recalled that in their lifetimes, people were often buried close to home (January 13, 2020). In some ways, it may be inevitable that people breaking ground in Bkejwanong will encounter burials.

When Ancestors are found, the practice at the Heritage Centre has been typically to consult with knowledgeable Elders and then reinter the remains as soon as possible.[229] Dean Jacobs noted that while this generally works, each encounter requires its own "customized resolution" which makes developing an official policy or protocol complicated (November 1, 2019). However, in all cases, the Heritage Centre must work closely with Elders to ensure that the spirits of the disturbed Ancestors are properly acknowledged and able to rest again (C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020).

Addressing the discovery and reburial of Ancestors can thus be complex work, especially when faced with the return of so many. While the community had not hosted a reburial of this scale before, WIFN had been invited to attend a reburial in Michigan in May 2014, and several community members attended (C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020; Russell Nahdee, October 29, 2019). Those who I spoke to said that their experiences there helped to inform a lot of the planning for the WIFN event.

The 2014 Reburial Event

Drawing on their experience with reinterring individual Ancestors and the knowledge gained from attending the Michigan reburial, the Heritage Centre worked to organize a community-centred event to honour the Ancestors who would be returned to them. Russell Nahdee recalled

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Tecumseh's remains and had buried them beneath a local monument (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987:26; see St. Denis 2005).

[229] This approach was guided by the findings of the Johnson 1 investigation, where evidence of Ancestors caring for and reburying the remains of other Ancestors was found (D. Jacobs et al. 2021).

We involved ceremony makers, we had community members who came out. Then at the time that we were to repatriate to the First Nation, that very day we had people from the community come out and we had people do different [things] like smudging and all those sorts of things.
[Russell Nahdee, October 29, 2019]

Cedar funeral boxes were constructed by local craftspeople. Invitations were sent to neighbouring communities and relatives, including Caldwell First Nation and others, and the returning institutions.[230] Certain elements of this planning work involved community members only, while others invited the help and input of university partners.

In June 2014, the Ancestors held at the University of Windsor and Western University were ceremonially prepared, wrapped in blankets, and transported to Bkejwanong. They were received in ceremony upon their arrival. Where necessary, the Ancestors were then re-bundled and placed in the funerary boxes (Bryan Loucks, March 13, 2020; C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020).

The reburial event began with a sunrise ceremony and feeding the sacred fire at the Walpole Island Heritage Centre. Later, representatives from WIFN, the University of Windsor, and Western University delivered speeches, acknowledging the harms done and committing to moving forward in a better way. Attendees then worked together to carry the Ancestors in their funerary boxes to the Highbanks Cemetery, where several community Elders and knowledge keepers observed traditional funerary practices to lay them to rest. The cedar boxes were buried together, in a space dedicated to unknown and returned Ancestors (Bryan Loucks, pers comm 2021). Elder Patti Isaac referred to this space as a "special spot" for those people who are returned to Bkejwanong (January 13, 2020). While this area is not marked, Dean Jacobs said that a plaque would both designate the gravesite and honour the Ancestors there. He noted that it could also act as a monument to the many years of work by the Heritage Centre and others to fulfill their ancestral obligations and see these ancestors returned (pers comm. 2021).

What Happened Next?

Anishinaabe funerary traditions require feasting for newly buried ancestors (C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020). Thus, immediately following the reburial

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[230] The community decided not to involve any media and requested that all attendees refrain from photography or other methods of documentation during the ceremony.

ceremony in 2014, all attendees returned to the Walpole Island Heritage Centre for a community feast. Local women and families catered the event, making traditional foods and soups. Non-local attendees and institutional representatives had the opportunity to sit, eat, and talk with community members. While the day was somber and emotional, many of those present felt a sense of fulfillment for the work done. Elders who led the day's ceremonies spoke about other times they had been involved in work like this. In telling these stories, they often emphasized the obligations that Anishinaabe have for all of their Ancestors, and for those generations to come.

Feasting Ancestors as a Community Practice

In Anishinaabe teachings, feasting Ancestors is an important practice that should be done on a regular basis. A dish is made specifically for them, taken to the cemetery and/or offered to the sacred fire (Bryan Loucks, March 13, 2020). Feasting Ancestors ensures that the spirits are recognized and acknowledged, that the relationship between the living and the dead continues, and they can rest and be at peace (Bryan Loucks, March 13, 2020; C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020). In the past, communities would come together in large groups, at different times of the year, to honour their dead (e.g., Hickerson 1960). Unacknowledged spirits can cause mischief for the living. Elders C. Eric and Patti Isaac described several such instances on Bkejwanong after burials were disturbed.

> Eric: They seen this—a guy walking across the field, towards the mall over there. [near the bridge] He [Eric's son] said, "Hey, is somebody walking across the field?" Looked again, he's gone! Where'd he go?! [chuckles] But anyway, I think, he [the spirit] was… he was haunting that place at the mall.
>
> Patti: Well, yeah for disturbing! Of Course! [Eric: Yeah, when he was disturbed]. Well, I think even if they buried him, he'd still going to haunt. Yes [emphatic].
>
> Eric: And they had security cameras up there in the mall. And then these glasses [which were] all piled up. Looks like somebody—it started spinning around! Started spinning around. There was a pile of books on the rack there; [it] looked like somebody went out there and just pushed them off. And it showed up on the video camera.
>
> And another one was the janitor, after he got through mopping the floor, he could see somebody—not **see** him but [it] looked like somebody was walking on the wet [floor], you know? And that showed up on the camera.

So anyway, they got us and-the Elders, and they got the five ministers from all these churches. We had a meeting, walked up to the Pentecostal Church over here...

And showed the picture there, and "now what do you think? What do you think?" And I asked the minister, "how long do those spirits live?" I look straight at him, "how long do spirits live?" "Gosh, I don't know. Forever, I guess," he says. I say, "you guess?" I says, "some of these people are maybe about a couple thousand years and they're still..." I says, "your great-great-great-grandfather, great-grandmother is still up there in the spirit world." I says, "What do you preach in church? That's all you do-is those spirits, in that Bible," I said.

In the churches, they're talking about the spirits of these people. What they used to do. I said, "So, they're still out there." I said, "Now and then they'll come and remind you they're up there." So that's why you have to feast them. So that's all they want, a little attention, give them a feast. So that's [why] we feast them in the fall and in the spring, to take care of that.
[C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020, emphasis original]

Colonial assimilationist policy and efforts toward Christian conversion essentially outlawed many of these and other important traditions in the past. As a result, many fell out of common practice. Traditional practitioners, Elders, and others continue to feast their Ancestors on a regular basis but usually in their own homes (Bryan Loucks, March 13, 2020; C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020). The public ceremony for the Ancestors who were returned in 2014 was an opportunity for these practices to be shared with the larger community again.

Since the 2014 reburial, Elders continue to emphasize the importance of regular feasting to recognize and appease the spirits. In 2018, the Heritage Centre began biannual public events for community members to feast their Ancestors (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2. Poster for the Ancestors' Feast at the Walpole Island Heritage Centre, 2018.

Credit: Montana Riley, Walpole Island Heritage Centre.

Elder C. Eric Isaac Sr., who usually led these events, said

> *We have a feast in the Spring and in the Fall, for the people that we got from Windsor.*
>
> *And we usually [do] it in about October, before the first snow we do it eh? Because they use the snow as a blanket; they cover up and then they're quiet for the winter, because they got their feast, and we took care of it. Then, you know, in the spring, they get up [and] start doing things again. Moving chairs, slamming doors, and all that.* [C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020]

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the community to restrict these public events. They have still been held, but with COVID-19 safety protocols in place and fewer people in attendance (Clint Jacobs, pers comm. 2021). When restrictions are eased, the Heritage Centre plans to expand the events and enable more community members to attend.

Ongoing Cultural Stewardship

The Heritage Centre's long-standing relationships with both academic and professional archaeologists have meant that WIFN can learn from archaeological discoveries and use that knowledge to complement oral traditions and/or support ongoing land claims research (Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019; David W. White, January 28, 2021). For these reasons, WIFN continues to deploy archaeological monitors on excavations throughout their Territory, especially when ancestors are found. A recent example of this can be seen in ongoing development work near the Ambassador Bridge in the heart of historic Sandwich (now part of the City of Windsor in Ontario [City of Windsor n.d.]).[231] In recent years, several interesting and significant artifacts have been found at sites in this area (CBC News 2018; C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020). WIFN continues to be a key partner in these and other efforts, often consulting with the City of Windsor, other municipalities, and private companies on how and when to mitigate the destruction of archaeological heritage in the region.

Given their extensive experience in this area, WIFN also works with other Nations and communities with overlapping territories to address archaeological finds. Dean

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[231] The Ambassador Bridge is an international bridge that connects Windsor to Detroit. This area also encompasses an ongoing active land claim for Walpole Island First Nation.

Jacobs reflected on one example, working with Caldwell First Nation[232] on a recent find at Point Pelee National Park.

> *Another First Nation was involved, and this was the first time they ever experienced a canine burial. And so, they, of course, just wanted to stop everything to learn more about it because individuals don't know what to do. So, in their case, they wanted to know if there was a connection to human remains and if our Ancestors took the time to do a dog burial, [whether there] might be some significance to that. So that's still ongoing today, I think. We're still in the "learn more" phase of that situation.*
>
> *For me, I just know that those things [burial discoveries] happen, and [you've] got to look at the context and then determine next steps. Because we could probably do the same thing: disinter and re-inter the dog in some other place, or in a safe place at the national park.* [Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019]

The two First Nations maintain a working relationship around these and other issues. For instance, since 2020, they have been developing a joint management plan with Parks Canada for Point Pelee National Park (Dean Jacobs, pers comm 2021; see Parks Canada 2021).

Culture and language revitalization efforts are another area of growing importance for WIFN. Language reclamation is of particular concern to the community, as the number of fluent Anishinaabemowin speakers is steadily declining. Efforts to document and revitalize the language on Bkejwanong are ongoing, including local immersion programs, language camps, traditional knowledge documentation projects that record Elders' stories (e.g., a recent publication recorded stories from seven Bkejwanong Elders in both Anishinaabemowin and English [McGahey 2021]; also see Darnell and Stephens 2007), and holding public events to showcase and celebrate the language (e.g., Gough 2019).

Wiijnokiiying, the local Ontario Works office, provides additional support for WIFN cultural initiatives. The office has sometimes worked alongside grassroots groups and the Heritage Centre to develop programs to revitalize and reconnect with traditional practices and culture.[233] In recent years, for example, the community has organized

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[232] Caldwell First Nation is an Anishinaabe group in Essex County, Ontario. They settled a major Land Claim with the Canadian Government in 2011, and more recently secured a reserve near Leamington (Forester 2020).

[233] Ontario Works is a provincial program that offers help with financial and employment assistance (https://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/programs/social/ow/help/index.aspx).

projects to build a traditional birchbark canoe and a 25 m (80-foot) Potawatomi lodge at Highbanks. As WIFN community member and Wiijnokiiying employee Tanya Dodge reflected, the eventual goal is to build lodges for each of the Three Fires communities represented at Bkejwanong.

> *Part of the vision that we had for that was to build the Three Fires lodges here up at the point, because this is a sacred area here. And what we want to see is that we want to have those lodges here again, to restore sovereignty and to restore the things that we lost; our governance, our way of living, and everything.* [Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019]

Though some in the community were concerned about the responsibilities that go along with such structures, she emphasized that the lodge was built to help people reconnect with their land and with their culture:

> *But all this time, the whole intent of this Lodge was to bring us back to the land and to show everyone else that we're still here and we're still on the land, and we're still practicing our cultural ways. And that we have a place that we can have ceremony; we have a place that we can teach; we have a place that we can utilize for these outdoor activities; we have a place that we can educate others. And so that's the whole intent on that. It wasn't to be like Midewiwin Lodge. It was to be a place to teach and for us to learn.* [Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019]

Ongoing Repatriation Work

Aside from regular archaeological monitoring, WIFN also continues to be involved in the protection and repatriation of Ancestors when they are threatened or discovered. In 2015, the University of Windsor conducted a full inventory of the archaeological materials in its care.[234] Among these, several sites in southwestern Ontario were represented, from excavations undertaken at least since the 1950s, along with several collections that were apparently donated to the University.

In the course of this work, more ancestral remains were identified, though not nearly to the same extent as those discovered in 2004. Building from their previous experiences with repatriation, university administration worked directly with WIFN to return these ancestors. They were transported to Bkejwanong in spring 2019. The

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[234] This inventory was prompted by the need to move the collection, as the house it was stored in was being torn down. I was hired by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences in 2015 to complete the inventory, rehouse the collection, and coordinate the move.

Heritage Centre ceremonially reburied them in late 2019, though without another community event (Dean Jacobs, pers comm 2021).

This second repatriation from the University of Windsor re-emphasized the need for a community protocol to guide actions when Ancestors are uncovered or discovered in legacy collections. In 2014, then-Director Joyce Johnson had documented the Heritage Centre's efforts around the reburial event. However, issues with the local data storage system shortly after meant that many of the records for the 2014 event were lost. Current Director, Clint Jacobs noted that, with the turnover of staff in recent years and the expected retirement of others, the need to capture the institutional memory around these processes and approaches is essential for future work (January 10, 2020). Dean Jacobs reiterated this, saying that this memory is important, and it is the responsibility of those doing the work to share their stories, to ensure that they are not lost or forgotten (November 1, 2019).

In 2019, when the University of Windsor officially notified WIFN of the second group of Ancestors found in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology, I worked with the Heritage Centre to draft a basic repatriation protocol (Appendix G). Building on my master's work and incorporating knowledge of other repatriation events, it identifies key steps and advice to help guide future repatriation work in the community. Our aim was for it to be a flexible and general guide, one that could be adapted according to the community's needs.

Rematriating Seed-Ancestors

A significant project that WIFN community members and the Heritage Centre have been involved in more recently is a collaboration with the University of Michigan that seeks to grow then rematriate heritage seeds back to their source communities (Atalay et al. 2020; Michener 2017; Young et al. 2018). Anishinaabe communities understand seeds to be other-than-human relations, and a growing body of research has demonstrated the importance of reconnecting Indigenous communities with seed-relatives (CBC News 2020; Herron 2018; Hill 2017; McCune 2018).

This project grew from other repatriation work by the University's Museum of Anthropological Archaeology (UMMAA)[235] to return ancestral human remains under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act to Anishinaabe groups in Michigan. In the course of that work, a community member asked UMMAA representatives about their ethnobotanical collections and expressed a desire to see those seed-Ancestors returned as well.[236] This request sparked the development of a collaborative project between the UMMAA, the University's Matthaei Botanical Gardens (MBG),[237] and several Anishinaabe groups.[238] The Heritage Seeds for Sustainable Lifeways project aimed to share information about the UMMAA's ethnobotanical collections, try to grow selected heritage seeds from these, and then share any successful seed-offspring with community partners (Michener 2017; University of Michigan n.d.).

The University of Michigan hosted a meeting in 2017 to share information about the collections and develop a framework for the project with partner communities (Barton and LaPorte 2017; Michener 2017). In 2018, project members from Michigan planted a small garden in the Indigenous Communities Collaborative Garden at the MBG (Young et al. 2018). The garden featured many traditional staples, including corn, squash, Potawatomi watermelons, beans, sunflowers, and tobacco, and it served as a pilot study for the larger initiative. At that time, a variety of Walpole Island white corn from their collections was successfully grown and seeds were harvested, then shared with WIFN (Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019).[239] The collaboration is ongoing, though it has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–2021. Project partners are now working

[235] The UMMAA is located on the University of Michigan campus in Ann Arbor, Michigan. See https://lsa.umich.edu/ummaa.

[236] These are part of the UMMAA's Archaeobiology Collections, which also include zooarchaeological materials. The Archaeobiology 1 (Flora) Collection includes both archaeological and recent plant parts, and an ethnographic archive with information on how these were/are collected, stored, processed, and used. See https://lsa.umich.edu/ummaa/collections/archaeology-collections/archaeobiology-laboratories.html

[237] The Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum are located on the University of Michigan campus in Ann Arbor, Michigan. See https://mbgna.umich.edu/.

[238] Groups included Walpole Island First Nation; Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians; Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians; Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi; Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Pottawatomi; Pokagnek Bodewadmik Band; and the Saginaw-Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan

[239] These seeds had been collected at Bkejwanong as part of Scott Herron's doctoral research in the early 2000s (Michener 2017). See Herron 2002.

towards developing memoranda of understandings with each partner community to grow and, hopefully, rematriate other heritage seeds from the UMMAA collections.[240]

As partners in this project, members of WIFN were able to travel to the Matthaei Botanical Gardens and learn both about the UMMAA collections and information on traditional planting, harvesting, and caring practices for different seeds that was gathered alongside the seed collections. After receiving a braid of the Walpole Island corn grown in the project garden, WIFN member Tanya Dodge reflected that they were still learning how to take care of it before planting it locally:

> *We haven't gotten to the point of planting it yet because we're just learning about how to take care of the seeds and what the protocols are. But we understand, it's a lot of responsibility. It's just like taking care of a child, you have to be prepared, and you have to make plans, and then you have to do it in a certain way. So, the Elder that we asked to help us with receiving the corn, she's holding on to [it] for us right now.* [Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019]

She also made a distinction between the terms "repatriation" and "rematriation" as they related to this work.[241] During our conversation, Tanya often described caring for the corn in terms of a familial, and specifically motherly, relationship. She said,

> *I think it kind of means that we're returning things to our mother. You know? "Re-matriate." The Earth is our mother. This [return] is done in ceremony. It's done in it and there's that spiritual connection. It's an extension of our heart and it comes from the earth, and all of these things like that. So that's why I feel like that, "rematriate," because everything returns to the mother too.* [Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019]

For her, using "rematriation" was truer to what they were trying to accomplish.

Growing Corn on Bkejwanong

Community members that took part in this rematriation project have since begun to advocate for more local and sustainable agriculture that reconnects with culture around traditional approaches. A local group of WIFN women (some involved in the project,

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[240] This work has not been without its challenges. Tanya Dodge recalled a non-Indigenous participant who somehow acquired some of the harvested seeds and then planted them. It took significant effort to convey how inappropriate this was given that the project aimed to return these seed-ancestors to Indigenous communities; eventually, she returned the seeds she harvested to WIFN (Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019).

[241] There are important gendered elements or connotations to each of these terms. While an important question in repatriation studies, a full and appropriate discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this project.

some not) are working to return to self-sufficient farming and gardening to support the community and their cultural needs. In 2019, they worked with Tahgahoning Enterprises (a WIFN-owned and operated agricultural corporation [Fehr 2010; Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987][242]) to plant Oneida white corn that they would then harvest and share locally. White corn is necessary for corn soup, which is a traditional staple for WIFN. Tanya Dodge emphasized its importance to the community, saying

> *When we have ceremony and we have feast and things, even for people, you know, when people pass and different things, we always have our corn. We have our corn soup. That's part of our ceremony. It is one of the requirements that we have when we're putting out our spirit plates. And when we're asking for help, we put those things out.* [Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019]

The group treated this initiative as another opportunity to build their skills and knowledge around traditional planting, harvesting, and care practices (e.g., braiding corn). They hosted a community workshop before the 2019 harvest at which they taught people to husk and braid the corn, and then select seeds to keep for the next season (Montana Riley, November 1, 2019; Figure 6.3). Community members, local youth, and visiting school groups were invited to attend and help. Unfortunately, they were not able to harvest until December, which meant that not many people came out to help (T. Dodge pers. comm. 2020). However, they were able to harvest some seed and plan to continue planting, in smaller amounts, in the future (T. Dodge pers comm 2020).

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[242] Tahgahoning Enterprises is one of the first Nation-owned and operated agriculture businesses in Canada. In recent years, they have focused on cash crops, such as corn and soybean. While nation-run, they employ approaches to ensure the viability of large crops, including the use of pesticides (Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019).

Figure 6.3. Poster advertising the corn harvest workshops on Bkejwanong, 2019.
Credit: Tosonna Soney and Summer Garcia, Walpole Island First Nation.

In addition to revitalizing the local relationship with corn, the group has also established a community garden at the teaching lodge. In 2019, they grew Mohawk red corn, Ojibwe beans, Onondaga sunflowers, Potawatomi watermelons, squash, and tobacco (Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019; Montana Riley, November 1, 2019). Their aim was to share the food from the garden with anyone who needed or wanted it. However, there were not a lot of people who came to partake in the harvest. As Tanya Dodge reflected, there needed to be more promotion locally to ensure that the food was claimed (pers comm 2020). The group hopes that in the future they will be able to expand the garden and feed more of their people from it.

Identifying Effects of Walpole Island First Nation's Repatriation Work

The 2014 repatriation and reburial were deeply impactful events and experiences, not only for those directly involved but also for those community members who were unable to attend the ceremony. Efforts to repatriate Ancestors to WIFN have affected both the community and those doing the work in a variety of ways. Here, I identify and describe some of these. As in Chapters 4 and 5, I used the categories of socio-cultural, political, and economic effects to work through them. These discrete groupings are somewhat awkward given how deeply embedded these efforts are within ongoing heritage work by WIFN. The categories are nonetheless useful for organizing and comparing different case studies.

Socio-Cultural Effects

Repatriating Ancestors to Bkejwanong is an important social, cultural, and spiritual responsibility for those doing the work. It also intersects with other efforts to revitalize and reconnect with traditional practices and knowledge. Here, I consider four areas where the return of Ancestors (both human and other-than) have had an influence: 1) fulfilling ancestral responsibilities; 2) reconnecting with traditional practices; 3) cultural education; and 4) building relationships among individuals, groups, and institutions.

Fulfilling Ancestral Responsibilities

Many of the people I spoke to referred to the obligations that they have when their Ancestors are discovered during archaeological work or in museum collections.

Uncovering and disturbing burials means that the spirits of those Ancestors are now awake and can cause "weird things" to happen unless the proper protocols are followed. As Elder C. Eric Isaac Sr. explained, the importance of feasting Ancestors and maintaining relations with the dead is so that their spirits would be able to rest and not get into too much mischief (see also Gross 2014:212):

> *They're still out there… Now and then they'll come and remind you they're up there. So, that's why you have to feast them. That's all they want, a little attention. Give them a feast. So, we feast them in the fall and in the spring, to take care of that.* [C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020]

Those involved with the 2014 repatriation event and other (ongoing) work often described the importance of reclaiming and reburying Ancestors with respect and appropriate ceremony in terms of an obligation and/or a responsibility. For example, speaking on past experiences finding Ancestors during development in Bkejwanong territory, Dean Jacobs noted

> *One that I always talk about is that a homeowner ran into an ossuary of-of remains. And the Elder of the community, he just said, "Well, you didn't know it was there. It was an accident but now **we have to deal with it**." And he said [to the homeowner], basically, "We can disinter, and we can move the ossuary to the more protected place for the future, **or you take responsibility** for making sure that they rest in peace."* [Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019, emphasis added]

For Anishinaabe, working towards the Seven Fires Prophecy[243] and successfully moving into the time of the Eighth Fire requires people to "turn around to learn or pick-up what was put down or lost" before one can move on (Bryan Loucks pers comm 2021). Repatriation can be one method of fulfilling this responsibility. Bryan Loucks described it as fulfilling Anishinaabe law:

> *The other thing is **responsibility**. It's Anishinaabe Law for us to do what we're doing. It's part of our legal order to fulfill the mandate and responsibilities…— It's our Law that we must do that. We must do this for our Ancestors, for the children to come, for the Earth. That's the Law. There are different kinds of law. But for us, it's our way forward.* [Bryan Loucks, March 13, 2020, emphasis added]

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[243] The Seven Fires Prophecy are teachings that have guided Anishinaabeg through different eras of time. They predicted the arrival of Europeans and other significant events in Anishinaabe history. Benton Benai writes that the time of the Seventh Fire is characterized by a "New People," who will "retrace their steps to find what was left by the trail" (1979:91–93). This work is said to support the rebirth of the Anishinaabe people.

He went on to elaborate:

Our Ancestors are here to help us. Through collection, and to some extent archaeology in general… they've become separated from us. And right now, for those of us that are in this day and age, we need all the help that we can muster in order to mend the circle of life.

And that includes those remains and articles to the extent that they will be able to help us to do our work, which includes our rights and responsibilities. **Our work is both right and responsibility***. To fulfill our responsibilities as being—in my case, as Anishinaabe living at this time and place of the Seventh Fire. So, to the extent that museums and collections and governments and organizations can facilitate the healthy return of those articles and remains when people are ready to accept the responsibility that that entails, then that needs to be done. Which means that communities need the capacity to be able to take care of those entities, in a good way.*

Families need to be able to take care of those individuals. Which, in many cases, requires unlearning. And it isn't just a matter of receiving it but recognizing that there is a reciprocity around the learning and unlearning that's required to do that in a healthy, good way. [Bryan Loucks, March 13, 2020, emphasis added]

This familial responsibility also extends to the protection and care of other-than-human Ancestors. Montana Riley emphasized the shift in perspective that came with reconnecting to seed-Ancestors through rematriation work with the University of Michigan:

With the [rematriation project] at Michigan, I wasn't—Some people thought it was more important, bringing the seeds home. At first, I didn't really think of that; [of] them as a living being, until I had someone recently talk about [how] he hasn't had any children of his own, but the corn was—it was passed down from generations. And he's been growing it. And then, that really was an eye-opener for me because I thought we just didn't take care of the corn. And then, at the time when that botanist came and collected, we had lots, so they gave him one. But yeah, that was like an eye-opener when he talked about that. [Montana Riley, November 1, 2019]

Tanya Dodge echoes this relational responsibility when she talks about learning to care for the seeds that were returned before planting them locally:

So, with all of that, the University [of Michigan] grew the Walpole Island corn. They grew it and when it was done, they harvested it. And then they brought us a braid of it, and we received it through ceremony in the lodge. We haven't gotten to the point of planting it yet because we're just learning about how to take care of the seeds and what the protocols are.

> *But we understand, it's a lot of responsibility. And that **it's just like taking care of a child:** you have to be prepared and you have to make plans, and then you have to do it in a certain way.* [Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019, emphasis added]

She went on to talk about the urgency and complicated feelings around fulfilling these responsibilities:

> *Yes, because these things have Spirit. They have Spirit, each one of them … they can't live forever and that they need to be back in the ground. …*
>
> *So, I feel an urgency. But yet, I have to respect my Elder and what she's feeling—she's waiting, I think she's kind of waiting for us to be ready. And maybe I need to go communicate to her, you know some of the urgency and find out what she thinks about it. We trusted her to take care of it …. She has a lot of space at her home, and she has a wood stove, and we were thinking, okay, well that would be a nice place. …so, we trusted her to keep it and take care of it.* [Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019]

Repatriation work offers some personal sense of accomplishment as well, as Dean Jacobs noted:

> *Well certainly for me, there's a personal…not reward, but just knowing that I've done my share in making sure that [they] are treated properly and with dignity, and [that] something's being done is the most important thing—that we're doing something.* [Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019]

These responsibilities—to speak and care for their Ancestors—have deep roots in Bkejwanong and are supported by archaeological evidence. As discussed above, excavations at the Johnson 1 site identified secondary burials, where ancestral remains had been uncovered at some point in the past and then reburied (D. Jacobs et al. 2021). To members of WIFN, the message was clear: at some point in the past, their ancestors had intentionally and respectfully reburied other, likely older ancestral remains when they encountered them. Descendants continue to shoulder this responsibility today. These findings, and those from other projects (e.g., at the Pain Court site [David W. White, January 28, 2021), have both reinforced and informed WIFN obligations to care for their Ancestors.

Reconnecting with Traditional Cultural Practices

Another important effect of repatriation for WIFN is the opportunity to share and showcase traditional practices that may not be widely known due to colonial policies that restricted cultural practices (e.g., the 1885 Indian Act amendments that outlawed

ceremonial practices). Reflecting on the restrictions and loss of traditional practices, Bryan Loucks noted that

> *The repatriation of articles from, for example, the University of Windsor, was significant for continuous and sustainable practice, I guess, a sustainable practice to continue. In the sense [that], we always used to offer food for our Ancestors and recognize them. And those Spirits are understood to exist beyond the physical plane. So those practices, as certainly you can appreciate, in some cases, went underground by some families at Walpole. In other cases, families abandoned those in favor of what would be interpreted as Christian practices.* [Bryan Loucks, March 13, 2020]

The clandestine nature of "underground" traditions was done away at the 2014 public event for the repatriation and reburial of Ancestors. It featured traditional funerary practices and ceremony that community members (and others) who attended were able to witness and take part in (where appropriate). Bryan went on to emphasize the importance of this:

> *[For] young people, not having grown up with that, it may be considered an extraordinary practice. So, anything that sort of normalizes the practice of Anishinaabe ways, whether it be young or old has meant unlearning or decolonization of peoples' way of thinking about the land, and our spirits, and Ancestors, and ultimately repatriation.*
>
> *…Let me put it this way. When I pass, which I will do—hopefully, it's not for a little while but nonetheless I'm going to—I would hope that my children will put out a little bit of food for my spirit.* [Bryan Loucks, March 13, 2020]

The repatriation, in this case, facilitated the promotion and "normalization" to some extent, of previously common traditional practices like funerary rituals. The public nature of the reburial ensured that community members, especially local youth, were able to experience and connect the returned remains with Ancestors-as-beings, important to the fabric of everything.

Reconnection to traditional practices is a common outcome of repatriation work and it can again be seen through the rematriation of seeds to Walpole Island. The rematriation project and subsequent planting efforts have also helped to promote and normalize traditional agricultural ideas and care practices. Tanya Dodge reflected that

> *What we're learning about the corn is that it has a spirit and we're supposed to take care of it at a certain way. There's protocol on how you take care of this corn. It's like—we're finding out that [the] people that*

keep this seed, they're almost like midwives. It's like a Midwifery. So, these seeds, you're taking care of these little babies there. It's just the same thing, and they're your children. You're taking care of them; you're preparing the soil so that they can grow. So, like with children, you're preparing—you know, you're pregnant, you start preparing, you start nesting, you start doing all the things you need to do for when that baby's coming because there's no turning back, right? There's a responsibility with that. So that's what we're learning. [Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019]

This understanding of the seeds-as-Ancestors and as living beings was particularly challenging when community members sought to "practice" growing the Oneida white corn, in preparation for eventual planting of the returned Walpole Island white corn (Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019). While they decided to plant the Oneida white corn commercially (the former caretaker had already done so), the group had serious reservations around, for example, the use of commercial pesticides. The dilemma itself demonstrates that the women had begun to think about the corn in a new way, as a living relation, one with Spirit (Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019). It demonstrated the power of relearning the importance and values around seedkeeping for Anishinaabe and particularly for those individuals involved in the rematriation work on Walpole Island.

This has continued to develop through now-annual planting and harvesting of white corn, which the group hopes will eventually become a community-wide initiative. Local efforts toward self-sufficiency through large scale agricultural efforts and small-scale, local gardening have begun. The small group that was involved in the rematriation project and other heritage work (e.g., the lodge construction), have also hosted corn harvesting workshops and planted a community garden at Highbanks. It is hoped that their efforts will also eventually foster the return or resurgence of traditional care practices for other-than-human relations like the corn. As Montana Riley reflected,

I guess my great-grandmother it would have been, would like, do the drying and lying the corn. But I don't really think anyone does that anymore. So, maybe if we start bringing the corn back, then that old practice will come back too. [Montana Riley, November 1, 2019]

Cultural Education

Repatriation work has also been a vehicle for cultural education at Bkejwanong. It is inextricably connected to other cultural heritage work undertaken by the Heritage Centre and others, as noted above. Reconnecting with Ancestors also involves reconnecting with cultural practices, traditional perspectives, and, often, language. In

these cases, it has also involved a very direct connection to the land through the digging and refilling of graves and gardens. In this way repatriation work can be similar to land-based learning projects, like their birchbark canoe and lodge constructions. Bryan Loucks also noted that repatriation can be "an opportunity to unlearn too" [March 13, 2020]. Ultimately, this means that the reconnection to traditional ways of knowing and understanding the world through repatriation can also initiate and more often, require the unlearning of colonial frameworks, like shame or fear of ceremonial practices.

For those involved in these projects, the work has also been an opportunity to share cultural knowledge and connect across generations and sometimes between communities. Because of this, it is imperative that Elders take the lead in repatriation discussions and decisions, for as Clint Jacobs noted, they have a wealth of knowledge to share (January 10, 2020). This understanding was common among participants, many of whom talked about learning from their Elders and how important it was for them and the work that they are now doing. For example, C. Eric Isaac Sr. was taught by his grandfather from a young age. Reflecting on how he learned the importance of feasting Ancestors, he said,

> *And my grandfather, the little bit of food we had those days, he'd just-had a plate. He'd put little bit of this, little bit of that. After we eat, he'd put that in the fire. Put tobacco in there. Again, [he'd address] the four directions, put tobacco in there, and burn that.*
>
> *I used to wonder what the heck is he doing, burning [the food]. I'm hungry, what's he doing burning that food up?! But that's what he was doing. You know? Later on, I found out why it was being done.*
> [C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020]

Tanya Dodge similarly recounted that her experiences with the rematriation project have often connected to what she learned from her Elders:

> *I grew up with my grandparents, so I was fortunate to have that. I didn't know that's what I was getting at the time, but now that I'm older and I'm being educated a little more and finding out that hey, even though I was raised in a Christian home, we still had these cultural things that we did. We still had ceremony because we still prayed, we still did all these things at a certain time of year or so, and we connected to the land when we were planting gardens, and tapping the trees, and fishing, whatever else we were doing.* [Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019]

Those I spoke to emphasized that it is equally important to involve younger generations in the activities around repatriation. The involvement of youth can ensure

that the knowledge of what needs to be done is transferred to the next generation—as has been done for generations (Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019; Bryan Loucks, March 13, 2020; Russell Nahdee, October 29, 2019; David W. White, January 28, 2021).

Since repatriation inherently requires descendant communities to work with settler and colonial institutions, it can also be an opportunity to share and/or communicate culture with non-Indigenous communities and individuals. For example, when consulting on archaeological excavations, WIFN Elder C. Eric Isaac Sr. makes sure to educate those who are uncovering Ancestors about the consequences of their actions. Similarly, there has been a concerted effort to involve both local and non-local school groups (including both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students) in the 2019 corn harvest and workshops. Those involved in the planning of that project emphasized their desire to both return to traditional practices and share that knowledge so it could be of benefit to the wider community (Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019; Montana Riley, November 1, 2019; Russell Nahdee, October 29, 2019).

Building Relationships

Walpole Island First Nation's repatriation work has also been an opportunity to build relationships, both locally and outside of the community. This was something I observed during my Master's thesis research during the 2014 repatriation (Meloche 2014). It was re-emphasized by many participants, that repatriating these Ancestors (and later, rematriating the seed-Ancestors) helped to foster relationships between individuals, between individuals and Ancestors' spirits, and between institutions.

While the Heritage Centre has existing relationships with local universities (Windsor and Western), the work involved in the 2014 repatriation also developed and strengthened these. David W. White, a former Heritage Centre Director, has said that repatriation offers an opportunity to continue to build these types of relationships, to learn as much as they can from and about their Ancestors (January 21, 2021). He continues to work with researchers and cultural resource management firms to uncover the past, respectfully learn from it, and then protect it so that future generations can benefit as well.

There have also been international relationships forged through this work. As a border community, WIFN members often have relations and connections to communities living across the river (i.e., the border with the United States). The seed rematriation

project has allowed some to connect and reconnect with relations from Michigan. However, those involved in this work have also spoken of the complexities and challenges that come with cross-border and international collaboration. For example, unclear and limited communication from institutional partners can result in miscommunications when formalizing research relationships. Such issues can result in considerable frustration over lack of project control (T. Dodge and S. Garcia, pers comm 2021).

Political Effects

As with my other case studies, the work undertaken to repatriate Ancestors to Bkejwanong has been inherently political and thus, has implications in the political sphere as well. For instance, many community members I spoke to were interested in working towards a formalization of repatriation work in the community. While this work has been and continues to be undertaken by the Heritage Centre, some mentioned that a local committee should be established, and many others were interested in the development of a community-informed policy or protocol to guide the work. Other community members highlighted the potential around the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and wondered how it could support their efforts.

Everyone I spoke to, both formally and informally, felt that this should be the next step; that establishing a local committee could help in the search for important belongings that have long been rumored to be held by various institutions (e.g., C. Eric Isaac Sr. mentioned a gold war medallion that was taken to the Museum of Natural History in the United States). The political nature of repatriation work today (especially in regard to important belongings and archival materials) may require the formalization of repatriation work in communities like WIFN, whether through a dedicated employee or committee. Thus, the need to record the existing procedures and protocols more formally from individuals doing the work remains a priority.

Asserting Sovereignty

WIFN sovereignty is also recognized and reasserted through stewardship over those Ancestors discovered in their traditional territory . Archaeology has often been used as a resource to support land claims and responsibilities in treaty areas and was

223

an early focus for the work of Nin.Da.Waab.Jig (Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019). As Dean Jacobs recalled, WIFN became a significant player in this arena because the Heritage Centre "answered the phone" when called to consult. The early development of an Archaeological Master Plan for Bkejwanong was another significant step forward. It has allowed WIFN to work more easily with other municipalities in the region and advise them on the benefits of developing something similar (Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019). Archaeological consultation and the transfer of custody over ancestors found within their traditional homeland is one way that settler governments and organizations recognize the sovereignty of Walpole Island First Nation over their traditional territories.

Collaborative approaches to repatriation work can be another way to assert sovereignty. As David W. White noted, research initiatives within the repatriation process can potentially support land claims (David W. White, January 28, 2021). He argued that mitochondrial-DNA and other analyses have the potential to link a living group to the territory across large stretches of time. One example he mentioned was DNA analyses conducted on Ancestors discovered in Windsor in the early 2000s. In this case, researchers were able to link these Ancestors genetically to older ones found at other sites in southwestern Ontario (Dewar et al. 2010). While such findings are necessarily complex (e.g., community identity does not necessarily equate to genetic identity [see Fforde, McKeown, Keeler, et al. 2021]), there remains potential for their use to support contemporary legal claims to land.

Building Pride

As discussed in earlier chapters, repatriation work has the potential to build both community and individual pride. In addition to the respectful reinterment of Ancestors, the 2014 reburial event was an opportunity to celebrate the successful conclusion of a nearly decade-long effort to return them. Reflecting on this, Dean Jacobs noted that

> *…for the repatriation of the remains from the University of Windsor, we wanted to celebrate that because that was a long time in coming. So that was more of a community event. So, I think that was a factor that created more of a community approach.* [Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019]

Reconnecting with Ancestors and ancestral knowledge can also build pride among youth (Montana Riley, November 1, 2019; Russell Nahdee, October 29, 2019). The discovery that ancestral remains and other-than-human Ancestors, like the corn seeds, are held in museum or research collections can inspire community members of all ages to get

involved. Doing the work of repatriation can reconnect them with traditional knowledge and practices that they may not have known about before. Experiences like this can build a strong connection with one's Ancestors and bring more awareness of the continuing roles that they and other relations play in contemporary life. In these ways, repatriation can work towards something bigger: pride in culture, and with this, a resurgence of traditional lifeways and ceremony.

Economic Effects

The relational nature of cultural work ensures that it is important and integrated into other work (e.g., governance, education, health care). However, somewhat counterproductively, it can also be siloed from other work, and too often underfunded (Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019). On its own, repatriation work can be very expensive, potentially becoming an economic burden on already stretched budgets. In many cases, repatriation projects are delayed because institutions first need to raise enough funds to cover their responsibilities, that often extend beyond transfer and transportation costs.[244]

Reliance on institutional partnerships for repatriation work and support can come with its own benefits and drawbacks. For example, while the University of Michigan partnership has led to the successful return of seeds to Bkejwanong, some of those involved have been frustrated by the little control they have over project details. Raising funds to support an equal partnership in the project may also be complicated by the international nature of the relationship.

Given that there are often very little (to no) dedicated funding options available to offset the costs of repatriation in Canada (see Chapter 2), descendant communities often need to find creative solutions. At the Heritage Centre, Clint Jacobs has been exploring the potential benefits of establishing an endowment fund to ensure that the Centre has funds to cover these and more projects, now and in the future.

Self-sufficiency

Another prominent theme was the return to self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency, or the ability to take care and maintain themselves without outside help, is an important part of

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[244] In some cases, returning institutions also cover costs associated with ceremony, including feasting and funerary materials.

WIFN's history. In the past, the community has often worked to support and manage their own (see Nin.Da.Waab.Jig 1987). Repatriation can stimulate local interest in heritage and culture. Through this, there is the potential to develop and capitalize on tourism. As with other communities, interest in building and running a museum to house and showcase local culture on local terms is high among the WIFN community priorities. This could benefit the local and regional economy.

The rematriation of corn seeds and the subsequent reconnection and reinvigoration of traditional horticultural practices has also been linked to self-sufficiency (Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019). The efforts of those women involved in the rematriation project and the now-annual corn harvests feel that locally grown foods would serve the community first. Getting more food to those who need it can contribute to a healthier community and address local issues of food insecurity due to poverty (Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019; Clint Jacobs, January 10, 2020). The work to return seed-Ancestors and reconnect with traditional care practices can thus have a potentially far-reaching impact for the community in general.

Chapter Reflections and Summary

The three main areas influenced by the return of Ancestors to Bkejwanong are (1) repatriation as responsibility, (2) repatriation as reconnection and reclamation, and (3) repatriation as relational, both to people and other heritage work. Here, repatriation has helped to create relationships both within and between communities, while also acting as a way that Walpole Island First Nation can reconnect to culture and assert their sovereignty. Overall, for most of those doing the work, repatriation's main potential is in its ability to foster a healthier community that is connected to their culture.

For participants, the responsibility to ensure that their Ancestors are well taken care of was most important—whether those Ancestors were human or other-than. Tanya Dodge emphasized that it is the act of bringing Ancestors home that is most significant:

> *So, I feel like when this corn came back to Walpole, it was coming home, back to its mother. That's how I feel. And then, even in our teachings, they—you know, they always say that you are totally in love with where you originated from, your home. There's no other place. Where you're born, where you grow up, that's home. So, we have that connection to the land. So that connection to the land is what-our mother takes care of us. So that's, that's the difference I see in it.* [Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019]

226

Returning and reburying Ancestors can be a very different course of action than repatriations that involve ancestral belongings, sacred materials, or other intangible heritage. Ancestral remains can carry with them a particularly tangible embodiment of the pain and traumas of colonialism and present society. Most often, Ancestors like those returned from the University of Windsor, are brought home and immediately reburied. For most academic accounts of repatriation, this is where the story ends. However, as this case study demonstrates, for those communities who have received their Ancestors through repatriation, a different narrative can be told. As Bryan Loucks reflected,

> *Our Ancestors remind us of our place in Creation and the rights and obligations that this entails. The repatriation of ancestral remains embodies narratives that speak to Anishinaabe sovereignty; the joyful unbroken Circle of Life; [our] relationship to the world; the seen and the unseen; the heard and the unheard; the past, present and future; body, mind, heart and soul–Mino Bimaadiziwin* [Bryan Loucks pers comm. 2021]

Thus, for WIFN, while those Ancestors that were returned in 2014 and at other times have been reburied, they are nonetheless still present in the community.

Chapter 7.

Exploring the Effects and Legacies of Repatriation

Repatriation is a process that is highly impactful on the spiritual, socio-cultural, economic, and political spheres of descendant communities (Atalay 2019; Colwell 2019; Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2012; Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020). Case studies have often focused on particular socio-cultural outcomes, such as the renewal of cultural practices (e.g., Conaty 2008, 2015), influences on community identity (e.g., Jacobs 2009; Thornton 2020), or the process of repatriation itself (e.g., Pfeiffer and Lesage 2014; Robbins and Kuwanwisiwma 2017). Deep ethnographies of repatriation have also shown just how complicated this work can be (e.g., Krmpotich 2014), while retrospective accounts offer critical insights on both the short- and long-term impacts of repatriation (e.g., Whittam 2015).

The aim of my dissertation is to understand the ways that repatriation can and do affect the receiving communities. In this chapter, I compare the three preceding case studies to identify important similarities and differences between them. In the first half of the chapter, I use the same categories as the individual studies (i.e., socio-cultural, political, and economic effects) to organize my observations in this cross-case study. Additionally, I consider the effects that repatriation can have on the health and well-being of those involved. In the second half, I identify three important elements within the work of repatriation that contribute to its impact in communities. I discuss the implications of these findings and reflect on the ways in which repatriation can contribute to resilience and healing.

Repatriation's Effects on Receiving Communities

This study examined three examples of repatriation and the experiences of those doing the work to investigate the ways that it can affect descendant communities. As discussed in Chapter 3, the case studies represent three different examples of repatriation and what was returned: the Tłı̨chǫ case study (Chapter 4) centred on the return of a material artifact or cultural belonging (i.e., K'aàwidaà's caribou skin lodge covering); the Gwich'in case study (Chapter 5) featured the return of traditional skills and

knowledge through a collaborative reproduction project; and the Walpole Island First Nation case study (Chapter 6) focused on the return of Ancestors to Bkejwanong, both ancestral human remains and corn seeds.

While the focus of each repatriation is different, these cases were nonetheless similar in process and outcome (Table 7.1). Each followed a case-specific, negotiated approach involving some level of partnership with the returning institution. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is the most common approach to repatriation both in Canada (Bell 2009; Young 2014), and for international claims (AAIA 2015).

Table 7.1. Comparison of case study repatriation processes.

Receiving Community	Material(s) Returned	Return Date	Returning Institution	Current Status of Returned Material(s)	Repatriation Process
Tłı̨chǫ	Caribou skin lodge covering.	1997	University of Iowa's Museum of Natural History	Stewarded at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.	Voluntary Proactive Negotiated
Gwich'in	Caribou skin men's summer outfit (temporarily). Associated archival and research information on how to make such an outfit.	2000	Canadian Museum of History	Original outfit remains at the CMH. Four project outfits on display in Gwich'in communities. One project outfit in PWNHC	Voluntary Responsive Negotiated
Walpole Island First Nation	Ancestral human remains.	2014	University of Windsor	Reburied on Walpole Island.	Voluntary Proactive Negotiated
	Heritage corn seeds.	2019	University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology	In the care of a WIFN Elder.	Voluntary Proactive Negotiated

Typically, in examples of negotiated repatriation, the returning institution responds to a request made by a descendant community (i.e., a responsive approach [Young 2010]). This was the case for the Gwich'in study, in which the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute (GSCI), working on behalf of the larger Gwich'in community, reached out to the Canadian Museum of History (CMH) to view Gwich'in clothing in their collections and to propose a collaborative knowledge repatriation project. The GSCI worked with the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC) and representatives of the CMH to negotiate the temporary return of a traditional nineteenth-century outfit which served as the baseline for their reproduction project.

Notably, for both the Tłįchǫ and the Walpole Island First Nation, repatriation was proactively sought by the returning institution. For the Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge, a representative of the University of Iowa's Natural History Museum (June Helm), took the initiative and raised the prospect of the lodge's return. As discussed in Chapter 4, K'aàwidaà's lodge had never been on display in the Museum, and likely would not. Helm felt that it would be better appreciated in the North and ultimately the university and museum administration agreed. Tłįchǫ representatives and the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre then negotiated its return with the university.[245]

Similarly, members of the University of Windsor (John Albanese, a physical anthropologist, and Russell Nahdee, the University's Aboriginal Education coordinator), proactively contacted the Walpole Island First Nation (WIFN) to notify them about the ancestral human remains in the University's collections. Albanese, cognizant of the political issues around Indigenous ancestral remains in anthropological collections, felt morally obligated to address the situation as soon as possible. Representatives of the WIFN Heritage Centre then worked with the University to explore potential options for research and negotiate the Ancestors' eventual return. Later, representatives of the University of Michigan would follow a similar process to return ancestor-seeds to WIFN.

Since my aim here is to better understand community experiences of repatriation—both during and after the work—I interviewed people who were involved in each repatriation project. A cross examination of the coded interview and case study data

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[245] While NAGPRA provides a legal process for repatriation within the United States, it does not apply to international repatriation claims. Thus, these are typically case-specific and negotiated (AAIA 2015).

indicated several areas where these experiences were similar and highlighted some important differences (Table 7.2). I discuss these in more detail below.

Table 7.2. Comparison of case study coding and thematic groups.

	Coding Categories	Tłįchǫ Case Study	Gwich'in Case Study	Walpole Island First Nation Case Study
Socio-cultural effects	New material culture	X	X	
	(Re) Connecting with cultural practices/knowledge	X	X	X
	Cultural education	X	X	X
	Cultural responsibilities			X
	Building/maintaining/strengthening relationships	X	X	X
Political effects	Pride	X	X	
	Nation-building	X	X	
	Sovereignty			X
Economic effects	Logistical challenges	X	X	X
	Economic self-sufficiency			X
	Future tourism/opportunities	X	X	X
Other effects	Health and well-being	X	X	X
	Environmental concerns	X	X	X

Socio-Cultural Effects: Relationships, Reconnection, and Education

Repatriation is a social and cultural practice for many Indigenous descendant communities, meaning that the work involves both social interactions/transactions and cultural practices. For example, handover ceremonies are typical of repatriation events. They re-introduce Ancestors and/or ancestral belongings that have been long absent from their home communities. Planning these events takes significant time and effort. For claimant communities, this involves liaising with returning institutions, other community representatives, and various groups within the receiving community (i.e.,

Elders, spiritual leaders, knowledge holders, political leadership, language speakers, etc.). Another common issue is that, for many communities, such ceremonies simply do not exist, or the knowledge required to properly receive and care for certain belongings is no longer held in the community. In these cases, significant cultural research also needs to be undertaken by community representatives, including community forums, consultations with knowledgeable Elders, and archival research.

For these reasons, discussions on repatriation have often emphasized its socio-cultural implications. Among the Blackfoot communities in southern Alberta, for instance, repatriation has become an important part of cultural revitalization and renewal. Conaty (2008, 2015) and others (Bell et al. 2008; Simpson 2009) have shown that returning sacred medicine bundles to community caretakers has ensured that important cultural practices continue within traditional social orders. These bundles include not only material objects but also, the associated songs, dances, knowledge, healing powers, rights, and responsibilities (Bell et al. 2008:203). When they are removed from the traditional spiritual societies that care for them, there are clear social and cultural implications: ceremonial services are no longer available, spiritual connections and responsibilities are disrupted, and knowledge cannot be transferred to new generations. Their return via repatriation can result in the reconnection to such knowledge and practices (e.g., Potts 2015).

Similarly, Haida efforts to return their ancestors to Haida Gwaii in British Columbia are guided by both traditional social concepts and cultural practices. *Yahguudang.gang* (or "the act of paying respect" [Collison and Krmpotich 2020:45]) is the foundation of the Haida Repatriation Committee and the Haida Gwaii Museum's work, ensuring that it is carried out with "mutual respect, co-operation, and trust" (Haida Nation Repatriation Proclamation 2000, cited in Collison and Krmpotich 2020:45). Haida Elders draw on traditional protocols and cultural practices for repatriation, adapting some as needed for modern circumstances (Collison and Krmpotich 2020:55). Haida youth also make button blankets and decorate the bentwood boxes to wrap and inter their ancestors when they are returned (Krmpotich 2011). In these ways, repatriation work connects Haida with their kin and culture across time and space. Their approach, grounded in the concept of *Yahguudang.gang*, also ensures that Haida repatriators build respectful relationships with returning institutions.

I observed a number of socio-cultural effects across the three examples of repatriation selected for this study. In the interviews I conducted, participants variously talked about reconnecting with relatives and their community, learning about cultural traditions from Elders and other knowledge holders, and committing themselves to passing on what they know to the next generation. There were also some important differences. For example, while the Tłı̨chǫ and Gwich'in projects resulted in the production of new materials for use or display in the community, the repatriation of ancestral remains to Walpole Island First Nation did not. However, the development of annual Spirit Feasts is one example of that repatriation's ongoing legacy in the community.

Two themes emerged across all three cases: 1) the development of personal and institutional relationships through repatriation work, and 2) the importance of reconnecting to culture for educational and spiritual purposes. I discuss each of these in turn.

Repatriation and Relationships

Successful repatriations—especially in a negotiated process—are closely aligned with the personal and institutional relationships that can develop. Because of the lack of repatriation-specific policy in Canadian heritage circles, having the "right people" involved in key institutional roles is important. However, this can also be problematic as it may leave repatriation negotiations vulnerable if these positions change (Tuensmeyer 2014:204). Nonetheless, in many instances, it has also led to the development of long-term, meaningful, and mutually beneficial partnerships.

The cases examined in this study show that repatriation work can build new relationships or help maintain and strengthen existing ones. In each, these occurred at both the personal and institutional level. This again emphasizes the importance of the individual participants within repatriation—which is often constructed as an institutional-level transaction.

Personal Connections

The work involved in repatriation—whether it be background research, oral history work, negotiations, or working out logistics—often requires deep involvement and long-term commitments from both the returning institution and receiving descendant community. This means that individuals work closely on these projects, often over long

periods of time. Undertaking such work can lead to social bonding, reciprocal learning, or simply enjoying each other's company. However, when challenges arise or negotiations do not go well, it can also lead to disagreements and/or tension between participants.

Many of the seamstresses involved in the Gwich'in Clothing Project were from different communities and while some already knew each other, it was the workshops that really brought them together. Several of the women I spoke with talked about how the work involved in creating and finishing the five reproduction outfits forged close bonds within the group. Seamstress Shirley Stewart remarked that working with the ladies from other Gwich'in communities was quite enjoyable. She said, "We had lots of fun and good stories, good laughter amongst everybody" (Shirley Stewart, July 5, 2019). Ruth Wright, another seamstress, echoed this, saying,

> *It was kind of cool to bring everybody together and even if they had it in Fort McPherson or Aklavik, I always got to go along because of my sister. Yeah, it was so fun to be doing something that our people did. Yeah. I really enjoyed that.* [Ruth Wright, July 24, 2019]

While the seamstresses no longer regularly see or speak to others involved in the project, they continue to interact through sewing circles and have a good time catching up. These lasting connections demonstrate the power of repatriation work to bring people together.

Connecting with one's ancestors was another common outcome of people's involvement in repatriation. In each case, individuals that I spoke to talked about the ways that their involvement helped them to connect with their ancestors. For Walpole Island First Nation participants, returning ancestral remains and seed-ancestors to Bkejwanong for burial or planting, respectively, required community members to physically work with and for them. Doing this work can make ancestral connections very tangible.

For those involved in the return and reproduction of the Tłı̨chǫ caribou skin lodge, the lodge and its story have become an important touchstone for Tłı̨chǫ history and culture, and for some, the lodge is an important link to family histories. Both Peter Huskey and John B. Zoe spoke about their families' connections to the lodge and the ways it has influenced them in the years since it was returned. In this case, the identification of its original owner, K'aàwidaà, through historical records, has provided

many Tłįchǫ individuals with tangible evidence of ancestral relationships. Such personal connections can inspire a deeper reconnection with culture and community.

Institutional Connections

The case studies also demonstrate the impact that repatriation work can have on institutionally based relationships, including the creation or continuation of working research relationships. For example, it was the existing relationship between the Tłįchǫ and the PWNHC (through individuals like Tom Andrews and John B. Zoe) that resulted in the return of K'aàwidaà's lodge. Their connection to June Helm at the University of Iowa was the first step in this process, as she was the one who facilitated its return. The relationship between the Tłįchǫ and the PWNHC was then deepened through the lodge reproduction project and other initiatives. In the years since, both have continued to work together and with other institutions to identify, protect, and learn from Tłįchǫ heritage.

Both the Gwich'in Clothing Project and Walpole Island First Nation's repatriation work were also grounded by institutional connections. The GSCI collaborated with both the CMH and the PWNHC to make the replica outfits and these connections have continued long after the Clothing Project was completed. For example, the CMH has worked with the GSCI on the development of the online exhibit, *Gwadàl' Zheii: Belongings from the Land,* which references the Project in some of the item descriptions and stories.

For Walpole Island First Nation, encountering and returning ancestral remains have often been seen as opportunities to learn more about their past. Close working relationships with both the University of Windsor and Western University have resulted in several archaeological and anthropological studies.[246] In fact, collaborative projects with Western University have undertaken bioarchaeological research on several ancestors found at archaeological sites, both on and off Bkejwanong (e.g., D. Jacobs et al. 2021). Before the 2014 repatriation, anthropological analyses were proposed but, when funding was denied, the community decided that the ancestors should be returned for reburial. In the years since, Walpole Island First Nation has continued to work with both universities in various capacities.

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[246] See for example Dewar et al. 2010; Huner 2021; D. Jacobs et al. 2021; Meloche 2014; Spence 2017; Spence et al. 2014.

Returning ancestral remains to Walpole Island First Nation also required the community to reach out to and work with neighbouring Indigenous communities, such as Caldwell First Nation. While the repatriation was not the first event to bring these communities together, it did offer an opportunity for collaboration. Members of Caldwell First Nation helped to prepare the ancestors for their journey to Bkejwanong and participated in the reburial ceremony. This relationship has continued in positive ways today, with both communities providing input and monitoring of ongoing archaeological projects in Essex and Kent Counties.

These examples demonstrate that repatriation work both builds on and creates relationships among those parties involved in claims. Personal connections between community members and ancestors are forged through the doing of repatriation work. Institutional relationships can also be built over lengthy and resource-intensive negotiations, or, where such associations already exist, repatriation work can build on and strengthen them. It is also important to note that while institutional relationships are often dependent on individual, personal connections, they can and do extend beyond these.

Reconnection and Cultural Education

Meaningful repatriations require significant investment of time, energy, money, patience, and good will from all parties. Returning institutions must ensure inventories are up to date and, in advance, gather as much information about collections' acquisition and tenure as they can. Communities must also prepare for repatriation. Cultural workers consult with Elders, revisit oral traditions, comb local historical archives, and seek out any necessary funding. Then they must prepare to receive the returned materials with the appropriate ceremony. For many of those I spoke with, participating in this work was understood as an opportunity to reconnect with cultural traditions, practices, and community histories.

Reconnecting with Culture

A key part of the Gwich'in Clothing Project was to document traditional knowledge from Elders on how to make caribou skin clothing, where to find and acquire the appropriate materials, and how such clothing items had been used in Gwich'in society. Similarly, historical research into the use and construction of caribou skin lodges, and K'aàwidaà's lodge in particular, provided information on the past use of these structures,

including when and why they were no longer used. For Walpole Island First Nation, the decision to organize a traditional reburial ceremony required community members to build funerary boxes, gather culturally appropriate materials, and participate in traditional funerary practices. Each project involved community members of all ages and genders.

Repatriation events (to receive, reintroduce, or rebury returned materials and/or human remains) were also seen as important opportunities for communities to reconnect with culture more broadly. Both the repatriation of ancestors and the later rematriation of corn seed-ancestors to Walpole Island First Nation were received in ceremony by the community. The reception event for K'aàwidaà's lodge was attended by Tłı̨chǫ Elders and community members from across their territory. A fashion show at the PWNHC celebrated the end of the Gwich'in Clothing Project and showcased traditional clothing styles through the seamstresses' work, with several seamstresses in attendance.

At each of these events, those community members not directly involved in the repatriation came together to learn about the returned materials and/or ancestors. Attendees heard stories, interacted with Elders and other knowledge holders, and witnessed traditional practices. In these ways, community members reconnect with their culture, history, and communities.

Cultural Education

Reconnecting with culture and community is an important part of repatriation work. But what many participants emphasized was that this was only half the story. The real power of repatriation and reconnection for them was the potential for cultural education, and through it, community resilience and resurgence.

In the case of the Tłı̨chǫ repatriation, cultural education had already been a priority for many years. Tom Andrews and John B. Zoe worked together to document and share Tłı̨chǫ land use and knowledge around important trails (Andrews and Zoe 1997), and an earlier ethnoarchaeological collaboration with the PWNHC produced a traditional birchbark canoe (Andrews and Zoe 1998). An important part of the canoe project was to document the processes and knowledge required to build it. Partners captured these

elements in a local exhibit, developed educational materials, and produced a documentary on the project (Woolf and Andrews 1997).[247]

After the University of Iowa returned K'aàwidaà's lodge, the Tłı̨chǫ took a similar approach to the canoe project and set out to create two replicas: employing a small group of knowledgeable Elders to process, sew, and assemble the replica lodges; involving local youth; documenting everything on film (Woolf et al. 2000); and working with the PWNHC to share what was learned. The project took place entirely on the land; Elders frequently told stories of the old days, often only in the Tłı̨chǫ language (Tłı̨chǫ Yatıì). Their aim for it was to preserve this knowledge so that future generations could continue to learn from their Elders.

Educational materials were developed on both projects and were featured in local exhibits and major exhibitions at the PWNHC. Similarly, the Gwich'in Clothing Project was exhibited at the PWNHC and the CMH. Local exhibits in each of the four Gwich'in communities continue to showcase the project outfits and include educational information. Much of the project was also documented on video. Filmmaker Dennis Allen was hired to film the project team's trips to visit collections and gather and process needed materials. He also recorded the skills workshops (e.g., pattern making; sewing; quillwork) and interviews with Gwich'in Elders. When the project ended, the celebration and fashion show were also filmed (GSCI 2003). All of this footage has been archived for future use and/or shared on public forums like YouTube or Facebook.[248]

The Clothing Project workshops emphasized cultural teaching and learning, both for participants and local community members who were able to visit them.[249] As discussed in Chapter 5, several women continue to use the techniques and skills learned in these workshops in their own craftwork, and some even teach them to others (Maureen Cardinal-Clark, July 27, 2019; Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019). Similarly, the now-annual corn harvesting workshops on Bkejwanong share knowledge learned through the seed rematriation project with the wider community. Tanya Dodge and

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[247] This work also informed the development of the Trails of Our Ancestors program, where groups travel by canoe to the Tłı̨chǫ Annual Gathering. On these trips, youth learn the skills and knowledge essential to maintaining a traditional Tłı̨chǫ way of life.

[248] See their YouTube page here https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNpX4dw4t9NyGOasznZ3p_Q, and Facebook page here https://www.facebook.com/GwichinCulturalHeritage.

[249] One of these was even held during a Gwich'in science camp, specifically for local Gwich'in students could learn about and help make the outfits (Ingrid Kritsch pers comm 2021).

others teach participants more about traditional harvesting practices, such as braiding and drying corn, and saving corn seeds, that honour the corn as an ancestor and relation (October 24, 2019).

In each of these examples, mobilizing repatriation work and outcomes for the purposes of cultural education and knowledge sharing was a major element. However, one important difference can be observed in the case of the 2014 repatriation of ancestral remains to Walpole Island First Nation, where there was no formal post-reburial project. Reburials of ancestral human remains are typically done as soon as possible, usually without a public event. This means that there is less chance for broader, community-wide interaction and education. However, Elder C. Eric Isaac Sr. and others continue to teach about traditional practices to honour ancestors whenever opportunities arise (C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020; Bryan Loucks, March 13, 2020). The annual Spirit Feasts also serve to both appease ancestral spirits and conduct traditional funerary practices more publicly (within the community). This ensures that youth and community members who may not have witnessed such rites before are able to participate and learn.

Across each example of repatriation examined here, the processes of repatriation work facilitated a reconnection to culture and cultural practices, and through this, created opportunities for cultural education and intergenerational knowledge sharing. For many Indigenous communities, this is essential work. Colonization often disrupted the transfer of cultural knowledge resulting in significant losses; repatriation can begin the process of reconnecting.

Political Effects: Building Pride and Asserting Sovereignty

Repatriation, whether it involves ancestral remains, cultural belongings, or other aspects of heritage, has always had a political dimension. In fact, the rise of repatriation movements around the world occurred alongside and within indigenous rights activism (see Chapter 2; Cooper 2008; Fine-Dare 2002, 2008; Fforde 2004). This is because repatriation can directly intersect with land claims, rights and title issues, sovereignty movements, and other rights-based activism (e.g., #idlenomore or, more recently, #landback). Moreover, claims to heritage, both tangible and intangible, are often part of the development of collective identities, which can be essential for nation-building efforts

(Blake 2011:204–207). For these reasons, repatriation work often involves many different political entities within a community.

The case studies examined for this project demonstrated that the political implications of repatriation can be quite different depending on the aims of the requesting community. Two important themes connect repatriation with (1) the assertion of sovereignty, and (2) cultural pride and community identity.

Sovereignty and Nation-building

Repatriation can also support nation-building work by creating a sense of community identity and bringing people together in solidarity for a larger cause (e.g., treaty-making). For example, the repatriation of the Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge brought the community together during a particularly complex political time (John B. Zoe, June 27, 2019). Treaty negotiations between the Dene Nation and the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories had been called off in 1990. But the return of the lodge and the reproduction project aligned with the negotiation of an Agreement in Principle for the new Tłįchǫ Land Claim and Self-Government Agreement (finalized in 2003). In fact, the reproduction lodges were unveiled at the Tłįchǫ Annual Gathering in 2000. John B. Zoe also made the important observation that repatriation for the Tłįchǫ was about more than simply returning things, it was also about reconnecting with their histories, culture, and the land to work towards bigger things, like treaty work:

> *We want to repatriate what we can, so that we have some semblance of life where we can keep our histories and cultures and our relationships to be developed. So, it is much more than just stuff.*
>
> *But through that repatriation is the reconciliation of the big stuff—the true negotiations of treaties today. And that's where you start [to] spell out how it's going to work.* [John B. Zoe, June 27, 2019]

So, while not directly connected to the repatriation itself, the confluence of these events with the ongoing treaty negotiations, the reconnection with an important figure in Tłįchǫ history, and the subsequent opportunities for gathering and celebration of Tłįchǫ culture, likely would have provided some tangential support for these efforts within the wider Tłįchǫ Nation.

The Gwich'in Clothing Project developed out of the GSCI's mandate, which was to document, preserve, and promote Gwich'in culture, language, traditional knowledge, and

values (GTC Department of Cultural Heritage 2016b). It was also an opportunity to implement a clause in the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (1992) that specifically references repatriation:

> In appropriate cases, artifacts and records relating to Gwich'in heritage which have been removed from the settlement area should be returned to the settlement area or the Northwest Territories for the benefit, study, and enjoyment of the Gwich'in and all other residents of the Northwest Territories. (Clause 25.1.11)

After consulting the community, traditional clothing was determined to be a key priority. The project was intended, in part, as an initiative to foster pride in Gwich'in culture and collective identity. The solidarity this generated was evident both at the fashion show event in 2003, and in the continued support, interest, and pride that many community members showed when discussing the project nearly 20 years later (some as former participants, others as observers). The Gwich'in Tribal Council's Department of Culture & Heritage continues to develop projects that have similar aims: to document and share Gwich'in cultural knowledge. Such work continues to contribute to a collective Gwich'in identity.

For Walpole Island First Nation, their repatriation work has significant implications for the assertion of their sovereignty in southwestern Ontario. Several participants explicitly connected the return and reburial of ancestors with ongoing/unsettled land claims. Research involving ancestral remains has also been viewed in these terms (though not exclusively). Community members recognize that analyses of ancestral remains (e.g., ancient DNA or isotopic studies) can indicate biological continuity through time. Such findings, while fraught with complications (e.g., Fforde et al. 2021; Walker et al. 2016), could potentially be useful in supporting land claims cases. In this way, stewardship over ancestors that are uncovered in their traditional territory can also be a way to assert their sovereignty in the region.

That the political implications of repatriation differ across the three cases is likely because the unique political histories of each Nation. Bkejwanong is unceded territory, and Walpole Island First Nation have governed themselves since 1965 when the community removed the local Indian Agent and began to work directly with the federal Indian Affairs department. Both the Tłı̨chǫ and Gwich'in Nations are signatories to Treaty 11 (1921). Their land claim agreements are fairly recent, and the Gwich'in's Self-

Government agreement is still under negotiation (Brackenbury 2021).[250] These factors—alongside the difference in materials returned and project aims—likely contribute to the difference in perspective around the political implications of repatriation work in each community.

Building Pride and Community

Involvement in repatriation work can increase awareness of culture and history, the latter of which may be contrary to, or at least different from what settler society and education has presented. Such awareness can contribute to the development of personal pride in one's culture and wider community. This has important implications both for the politics of repatriation within Indigenous communities and the potential for reconciliation and healing.

Both the Walpole Island First Nation seed rematriation and the Gwich'in Clothing Project demonstrated the impact that repatriation work can have on personal pride around one's culture and ancestors. WIFN members, Tanya Dodge and Montana Riley spoke of the pride they felt in reconnecting with the traditional knowledge needed to appropriately care for seed-ancestors (Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019; Montana Riley, November 1, 2019). Similar reflections were shared by seamstresses who worked on the Gwich'in Clothing Project. Both Agnes Mitchell and Shirley Stewart talked about the incredible awe they felt after seeing their ancestors' skills in the original outfit (Agnes Mitchell, July 27, 2019; Shirley Stewart, July 5, 2019), and Lillian Wright made the important observation that Gwich'in clothing is an example of Gwich'in *art* (Lillian Wright, July 24, 2019). For her, the work that went into processing the white caribou hides and completing the intricate porcupine quill decorations was something to be marveled at.

Pride in culture and ability was also evident in the Tłįchǫ study. K'aàwidaà's lodge, like most traditional lodges, features three small fringes, sewn around the middle of the structure (Andrews 2013:37–38; see Chapter 4, Figure 4.5). In the lodge reproduction project, however, the seamstresses who worked on the replica lodges took particular care to ensure that the lodge intended for the PWNHC was "special" (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). They sewed on an extensive caribou skin fringe that, when the lodge was assembled, ran around the entire structure (see Chapter 4, Figures

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[250] The Tłįchǫ Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement was signed in 2003, and the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement in 1992.

4.7 and 4.9). They knew that this replica was intended for a display at the PWNHC, and they wanted to showcase Tłįchǫ culture.

When the lodge replicas were completed, the community lodge and one of the Gwich'in outfits travelled to several international conference events. They were often featured exhibits at these events, accompanied by information on the history of each community, the projects, and the items themselves (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019). Community members described feeling pride when the items were admired or talked about, and the events were seen as opportunities to share both Tłįchǫ and Gwich'in culture with the world (Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch, August 1, 2019).

The return of ancestral human remains from institutional collections may not elicit the same sort of personal pride as projects that involve the return of cultural belongings or other heritage. However, many individuals from Walpole Island First Nation that were involved in this work described feeling a sense of accomplishment in fulfilling their cultural responsibilities to their ancestors (Dean Jacobs, November 1, 2019; C. E. Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020; Bryan Loucks, March 13, 2020; David W. White, January 28, 2021). It was clear in our conversations that this also contributed to personal feelings of pride in culture and ability.

In each of these cases, repatriation created opportunities to share and feel pride in one's culture and by extension, one's community. Feelings of pride and accomplishment can contribute to a stronger sense of identity—both personally and at the community level. Research has demonstrated the important roles that cultural identity and pride have for nation-building and collective solidarity efforts (e.g., Baird 2014). In contributing to these, repatriation can have important implications beyond the return itself.

Economic Effects: Recovering the Past to Build a Better Future

Repatriation work is notoriously expensive, and this is especially true for requesting communities. Financial costs associated with travel, shipping and transportation, funerary materials, ceremonial events, honoraria, fees for translators, consultants, or legal services, filming, and exhibitions can all be part of a single project. These are in addition to the extensive time commitments and in-kind resources that repatriation can require.

As discussed in Chapter 2, funds for repatriation work in Canada are incredibly limited. Given this, communities may struggle to support this work when more immediate and pressing issues are also prevalent (i.e., addictions, housing, environmental issues, lands protection, etc.). Despite these limitations, many groups continue to prioritize repatriation work, funding it through grassroots efforts. The Haida Repatriation Committees, for example, have long funded their repatriation efforts through community dinners and tourism events (Haida Repatriation Committee n.d.).[251]

Many participants involved in the Tłįchǫ, Gwich'in, and Walpole Island First Nation studies highlighted the economic challenges that can accompany repatriation. These include significant logistical costs and the burdens of securing funds to cover them. However, many also spoke about the potential long-term economic benefits that repatriation can bring.

Economic Costs

Finding and securing funds for repatriation work is without question the most prevalent issue for descendant communities seeking to repatriate their ancestors or cultural belongings. Importantly, Clint Jacobs, as the current Director of the Walpole Island Heritage Centre, talked about the specific costs associated with the reburial of ancestors and other repatriation work, but also emphasized that the in-kind contributions of institutions like the Heritage Centre were often not considered (January 10, 2020). Regarding the 2014 repatriation of ancestors, it was the Heritage Centre that dedicated both employees' time and funds to plan and host the reburial event. Then-Director Joyce Johnson coordinated with community members to build the burial boxes or cater food for the feast. The University of Windsor fielded some costs, like transportation; however, the event itself was largely funded by the community.

In both the Tłįchǫ and Gwich'in projects, institutional partnerships played a major role in acquiring and offsetting the costs of repatriation. Both received funds from programs like the Museums Assistance Program,[252] which only heritage institutions can access. The Tłįchǫ worked in partnership with the PWNHC to return K'aàwidaà's lodge and make two replicas. Since these were collaborative efforts, with the lodge stewarded

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[251] Similar crowdfunding approaches have arisen to address other issues as well, such as recent ground-penetrating radar surveys of former Indian Residential School properties.

[252] This is a federal assistance program, administered by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

by the Museum, they fielded most of the costs associated with travel and shipping, and applied for external project funds to support the reproduction project. Tom Andrews also noted that costs associated with tangential projects, like the documentary films or travelling exhibitions that share and promote community initiatives like these also require additional funds, some quite significant (e.g., Tom Andrews would budget $3,000–5,000 per film minute to account for production costs [pers comm. 2021]). Similarly, the GSCI worked with both the PWNHC and the CMH to organize and fund the Gwich'in Clothing Project. GSCI employees, like Ingrid Kritsch, dedicated a significant amount of their time to organizing and overseeing the project, which took three years. She estimated that these costs, added to the funds required for materials and the seamstress' time, could easily have exceeded $500,000 (pers. comm. 2020).

These cases and others demonstrate that, without a dedicated and consistent source of funding, repatriation work that is meaningful and relevant to receiving descendant communities can be an enormous challenge. Work that already takes a significant amount of time to complete will likely take even more. For some communities, this can result in putting off the repatriation or finding alternative solutions, like developing shared stewardship agreements. Limited funds can also restrict what communities decide regarding research as part of the repatriation process. For instance, limited funds prevented further study of the ancestors at the University of Windsor before they were reburied.

Institutional partnerships can be one way to offset some of these costs. As discussed above, partners in both the Gwich'in and Tłįchǫ projects provided in-kind support—including employee time and curatorial fees. Without these partnerships, it is unlikely that the projects would have been what they became. That said, partnering with institutions can sometimes come with its own risks and can require descendant communities to make necessary concessions (e.g., waiting for funding cycles or signing stewardship agreements).

Potential Benefits

While the financial costs of repatriation are often high, participants from all three cases emphasized that they still felt it was necessary work. Repatriation returns important cultural materials and ancestors back to where they belong and fulfill cultural responsibilities and obligations to ancestors and future generations. Many of those I

spoke to felt that the costs associated were worth the result *and,* in some cases, could provide future revenue for their community through the development of a local museum or cultural centre.

While institutional partnerships help to promote and showcase their cultures (e.g., the PWNHC has organized major collaborative exhibits on both the Tłı̨chǫ and Gwich'in), many of the individuals that I spoke to were also interested in the development of a local museum or heritage centre, where they could host their own exhibits and tell their own stories. For example, Tłı̨chǫ Grand Chief George Mackenzie mentioned that while it was important that Tłı̨chǫ archives and materials have been kept safe in museums like the PWNHC, there was still a need for Tłı̨chǫ to have their own space. He talked about the importance of running their own museum and being able to showcase Tłı̨chǫ stories and history. Giselle Marion also emphasized that a Tłı̨chǫ museum or similar facility in Behchokǫ̀ would be a draw for tourists travelling along the Mackenzie highway.

Similar ideas were echoed by Walpole Island First Nation and Gwich'in participants. Clint Jacobs (WIFN) emphasized the need to build local capacity to ensure that returned belongings and other heritage were both properly cared for in a museum conservation sense, and in a culturally appropriate way (January 10, 2020). Similarly, Alestine Andre (Gwich'in) felt that a Gwich'in cultural learning centre or facility could be a centralized location where Gwich'in culture could be seen and felt, through things like locally developed exhibits and regular cultural programming (September 12, 2019). While local exhibits and workshops already exist in individual communities, a centre would provide a centralized location and connect them to the growing tourism economy in the region. This was a theme emphasized in each case study: caring for returned materials at home was thought of, in part, as an opportunity to capitalize on local heritage economies, and to do so on their own terms.

Effects on Health and Well-being

An important and underlying facet of many participants' reflections was repatriation's connection(s) to health and well-being in descendant communities. I discuss them here rather than in the individual case study chapters because these connections tended to underlie and, in some ways, connect the socio-culture, political, and economic aspects and effects of repatriation. My understanding of health and well-being here (following Atalay 2019; Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020) encompasses a

holistic understanding of health, where an individual's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health are intertwined, and individual health is understood to relate to that of the community, environment, and other-than-human beings.

In recent years, those doing the work of repatriation and other community-based heritage reconnection projects have regularly described it as restorative, therapeutic, and/or healing work, affecting both individuals involved and the wider community.[253] Viewing repatriation as a healing process was similarly articulated in the three cases examined in this study. In each case, participants connected the work they were involved in with broader goals of better health and well-being in their community.

For the Tłı̨chǫ, it was what happened after the repatriation of K'aàwidaà's lodge that was most significant for this. The lodge reproduction project, like the birchbark canoe project and others before it, took place on the land. It brought youth and Elders together to teach and learn about Tłı̨chǫ culture and traditional ways of life. Reflecting on the importance of on-the-land cultural programming, Tony Rabesca said

> *In order to succeed, like graduating grade 12 for example: you go to school, you graduate, and you got your diploma. Yay–you're happy. But if you go out on the land and you don't know how to cut caribou. You watch, you watch, you watch, and finally, you pick up the knife and you have [an] Elder watching you. [When] you start cutting it and the Elder says you did a good job, it just feels like you're holding that diploma up [to] say "I graduated!" That's the feeling that you want to succeed in life and the passage that you've been wanting to be accepted. There's a passage that young people are searching for. It can be on the land. It can be through spiritual; it can be through traditional drumming activities; it can be anything. But some of them are lost because of, you know, social issues, problems. And trying to find their own passage but then they need guidance now, they need support, they need help. That's what I give them, that's what I help to develop and support the next generation to be strong.* [Tony Rabesca, July 4, 2019]

For John B. Zoe, projects like these that get people back to the land allow them to come back to themselves. He noted that on-the-land programs like the annual Trails of Our Ancestors journey allows Tłı̨chǫ people to

> *You know, get back into yourself. That's a reconciliation towards yourself. And it's a recognition of yourself. And it's bringing back your sense of identity, your language, your culture and way of life. And that's the seed*

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[253] See Atalay 2019; Bruchac 2010; Collison and Krmpotich 2020; Colwell 2019; Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020; Peers 2013; Schaepe et al. 2017; Simkin 2020; The Western Apache NAGPRA Working Group 2020

that we revive. It's a gift. So, we need to cultivate it, we need to—not re-learn it, we already know the knowledge—but knowing that it is going to go down with all the older people, we need to get it back going. And do it the proper way, the traditional way.

… Bringing in those canoers with their renewed energy. You know, when they come ashore? They'll start shaking hands with everybody that's there for the annual gathering, spreading the strength that they have gathered from the land, to carry them through the tough decisions that they have to make. [John B. Zoe, June 27, 2019]

This connection to the land is immensely important to the Tłı̨chǫ. At the PWNHC in 2018, Tłı̨chǫ Elders told stories of living in structures like the repatriated caribou skin lodge. Many reflected on the immense changes that had happened, like the decline in caribou herds. Their losses were so deeply felt that one Elder began to pray to the spirit of K'aàwiidaà to bring back the caribou and through them, traditional Tłı̨chǫ lifeways. Zoe emphasized that knowledge and stories that are brought out through events like these are now being mobilized to improve Tłı̨chǫ health and well-being.

…right now, we're kind of concentrating on using all that information for promoting health. Using traditional methods to improve health outcomes… We want to use the stories to revive. You know, to get people back paddling, go back to the old camps, go to the lake. Things that your Elders knew that provided a way of repatriation. Those Elders have gone, but they set a precedent for us. So, we need to follow the trails and learn as much as we can so that we can launch our own project. But it would be more towards improving the health outcomes using our traditional methods. [John B. Zoe, June 27, 2019]

For the Gwich'in, the Clothing Project demonstrated the emotional dimensions and impacts of repatriation work. Each of the women who worked on it conveyed both their sadness over the historical loss of traditional practices like quillworking, a*nd* their joy over being able to learn about them through the project. Engaging with and making traditional clothing and then later seeing their efforts modelled with pride at the fashion show gave many of the seamstresses an immense feeling of pride and accomplishment, and reinforced Gwich'in relationships to the land and the caribou (Kritsch and Wright-Fraser 2002:206).

From her experience with this and other reproduction projects, Karen Wright-Fraser also sees a direct connection between reclamation work like this and peoples' well-being. She reflected that

> *In the communities, sometimes the politicians or some [other]
> organizations, they leave arts or traditional things at the bottom of the
> priority list. Where I think a lot of arts is at the heart of the well-being of
> the community. And if people learn different skills, their well-being will be
> enhanced and community gets a little better, a little more well. Things like
> addictions might fall off the radar a little bit if people are feeling good
> about themselves. And I know arts and traditional skills will help that.*
> [Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019]

Karen's insight on the importance of arts and culture work in communities aligns well with a statement made by former Gwich'in Chief Peter Ross when the Tsiigehtchic outfit exhibit was installed in the community in 2005, who saw this reconnection with the past as a strong foundation for healthy Gwich'in communities in the future:

> …The significance of this garment extends far beyond the work as a
> piece of art and culture. It speaks to the wisdom, pride, ingenuity and skill
> of our forefathers and mothers. Despite the fact that life was much harder
> in the early days of our people, our culture and wisdom of the land and
> the animals that live within it made our people strong and proud. This
> pride is evident in this outfit and poses an example of what being a
> Gwich'in was and still is today.
>
> The same traits that protected, fed and clothed our ancient peoples still
> lead and guide us today. Our ability to recognize and remember our past
> will lead our children into a secure and strong tomorrow… (cited in
> Thompson and Kritsch 2005:56).

Alestine Andre, who helped to coordinate the Clothing Project, also spoke of the "good feelings" that it inspired. For her, the act of creating something so intricate and beautiful, and knowing that they were following in the footsteps of their ancestors was incredibly important. In her opinion, the return of ancestral knowledge and skills was something that empowered the women involved in the project. It was something that inspired a "coming back to ourselves" (Alestine Andre, September 12, 2019). Other seamstresses echoed this, with Mary Clark saying that working on the project brought her a sense of belonging, and that "something inside you comes alive" (August 28, 2019).

For Walpole Island First Nation, the return of ancestors to Bkejwanong has contributed to the restoration of a spiritual and cultural balance that was disrupted with their removal. Walpole Island First Nation Elder C. Eric Isaac Sr. noted that when ancestral spirits are disrupted, they may retaliate by causing mischief or other issues for the living (C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac, January 13, 2020). He emphasized that

repatriation and reburial enable knowledge holders and spiritual leaders to conduct the necessary ceremonies and "put things right" again. [254] In this way, the ancestors' spirits are properly recognized as part of the Anishinaabe world. Such recognition can appease them and ensure that they do not cause any mischief for the living.

Similarly, other participants spoke of the broader implications of repatriation work for the Walpole Island First Nation community. Reflecting on the spiritual impact of removing ancestors, Clint Jacobs noted

> *[Removal] also disrupts the sacred responsibilities that we (as spirits) have to care for those ancestral spirits and in turn, of them helping and caring for us. That knowledge could be lost if not passed on. The passing on of that knowledge and of ceremonial rites is also affected if it is disrupted and not passed on and practiced with younger generations— thereby affecting them spiritually too. [Clint Jacobs pers comm. 2021]*

Similarly, Tanya Dodge sees her work rematriating corn seeds and teaching about traditional practices for planting, harvesting, and seed keeping as a way to address social issues in the community. For her, corn is a medicine and reconnecting with the traditional land-based practices that surround it can help to build people up.

> *One of the things that I learned about the corn is that it's a medicine. It's a medicine for your mind. It's a medicine for your mind and your well-being, your mental health. Within our community, we have all these social issues. We have addictions. We have trauma, childhood trauma. We have residential school. All these things that have impacted us greatly; we're forgetting our medicines. So that's one of the things that we see, is that bringing back this corn and this bowl of corn soup. Everything that we do is around food. It's a social thing. It's providing for our families. It's a commodity that we trade. It's sovereignty. Feeding ourselves and feeding our nation—that [is what] takes us away from handouts and having to depend on the government to feed our people.* [Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019]

Bryan Loucks adds to this, saying that repatriation is also the return of traditional rights and responsibilities. For him, it is an important part of the learning that is required in the time of the Seventh Fire—"picking up what was put down or lost"—before Anishinaabe can move on to the time of the Eighth Fire (pers comm 2021). It is about learning and unlearning in order to unburden one's spirit and move forward in a more balanced way.

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[254] In some cases where reburial may not be possible or it is delayed, ancestral remains have been housed and ceremonially acknowledged while still in institutions. Some institutions have built spaces specifically for this (e.g., Aranui and Mamaku 2021; Bell and Hill 2021).

For others, the sense of accomplishment felt in returning their ancestors has helped to reinforce that they are on the right path (Dean Jacobs pers comm 2021).

In each case, repatriation events were also an important space for connection and emotional processing. For the Tłı̨chǫ, both the reception event in 1998 and the temporary exhibit in 2018 brought community members into contact with K'aàwidaà's lodge. At each event, participants were able to learn about their history, hear Elders' stories about life on the land, and reflect on how this knowledge helps to connect them to community and culture. Similarly, the fashion show held to commemorate the successful conclusion of the Gwich'in Clothing Project was a deeply emotional event. Seeing young Gwich'in men proudly modelling their traditional clothing brought many attendees to tears. Karen Wright-Fraser reflected

> *One-by-one they came out and people are just clapping [emphatic]. And you know, they walked out, and their heads [were] high. You know what I mean? And today, a lot of the young men... a lot of times the young men [feel] left out. And sometimes they need something to help them to feel like they matter, and I felt like...[emotional] that was one of them.* [Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019]

The Walpole Island First Nation reburial event in 2014 was also deeply impactful for many people in attendance. The physical work of carrying the funerary boxes to the grave site emphasized both the humanity of the individuals being reinterred and the gravity of their excavation and removal. Members from the community and the universities were equally affected, with many visibly emotional throughout the day.

Each of these case studies demonstrate that repatriation can be an important space to work through individual grief and other complex emotions, such as anger, hope, and happiness. They show that doing the work of repatriation can begin to return balance to spiritual disruptions. Large-scale events, like a public reception or reburial ceremony, can be places where community members can collectively work through these as well. Then, in the short or long term, repatriation can also link to other reclamation work that connects people with their culture, language, and lands. This can elicit feelings of empowerment, resurgence, and healing. Because repatriation work is so all-encompassing (i.e., it involves physical, social, mental, emotional, and spiritual commitments and experiences), when it is meaningfully undertaken, it can contribute to improved health and well-being for those involved and, through them, the wider community.

The Importance of "Doing the Work"

Repatriation is an intensive undertaking for all involved, not only demanding time and resources, but requiring emotional investment and spiritual engagement as well. Each of the studies I conducted demonstrate that, for the receiving descendant community, repatriation is about more than return. The "doing" of this work is often as impactful as the return itself. Undertaking it can have many social, cultural, political, economic, spiritual, and personal effects. Individually and in combination, these are important elements to consider, especially when repatriation is described as healing or an example of restorative justice.

The repatriation experiences of the Tłı̨chǫ, Gwich'in, and Walpole Island First Nation demonstrate that repatriation can affect Indigenous descendant communities in a variety of ways. Reflecting on these findings within the context of recent discussions that connect repatriation with restorative justice, reconciliation, and healing, three important themes emerge for consideration: 1) the importance of the intangible in repatriation work; 2) the spaces that repatriation creates to process complex emotions; and 3) the interconnected nature of repatriation work.

The Importance of the Intangible

Repatriation is often thought of as a process with primarily tangible outcomes. For returning institutions, ancestral remains or cultural materials are physically leaving their collections. For receiving descendant communities, their ancestors and/or belongings are physically returning to their people and territory. This in and of itself is enormously important and powerful, especially for receiving communities.

The three repatriations examined here clearly show this. For both the Tłı̨chǫ study and the return of ancestors to Walpole Island First Nation, repatriation involved the physical return of *something* to each community. K'aàwidaà's lodge travelled from the University of Iowa to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre; it is physically available to Tłı̨chǫ if they choose to visit it. Its return was celebrated by Tłı̨chǫ communities, both when it was first returned and at later events. At the 2018 event, nearly 20 years after K'aàwidaà's lodge was first returned, community members were still eager to see and interact with it. Because the lodge has a physical presence, it has

become a touchstone through which people can connect with their culture, land, and ancestors.

The return of ancestral remains to Bkejwanong was also a public event. Community members were involved in the planning and invited to attend the reburial. They carried the ancestors to their final resting place. Similarly, the rematriated corn seeds were received in ceremony. Their return has led to annual community events and workshops around planting and harvest seasons. Both events emphasized the physical return of these ancestors to Walpole Island First Nation.

Even when heritage is not physically repatriated, there are typically some tangible elements produced and/or returned. For example, the intention of the Gwich'in Clothing Project was decidedly *not* to physically return the traditional outfit from the Canadian Museum of History.[255] However, the project itself produced several tangible outcomes which helped to "return" the knowledge and skills necessary to make such outfits. These included reference manuals given to the core group of seamstresses, to which many of the women continue to refer. Such ephemeral but tangible elements are common in other examples of return involving intangible heritage (e.g., oral histories and songs returned via digital or tape recordings, or archival records [see examples in Fforde et al. 2020; Gunderson et al. 2019]).

Importantly, while these tangible aspects are clearly important, what the three cases also demonstrate is that repatriation, in all its forms, is also valued by descendant communities for its *intangible* benefits and outcomes: the relationships, the reconnections, the cultural knowledge regained, the spiritual balance, and the solidarity and pride in culture and community. For instance, the Gwich'in Clothing Project facilitated the development of relationships with ancestors, among the seamstresses, between Gwich'in communities, and across heritage organizations like the GSCI, the CMH, the PWNHC, the Smithsonian, and the National Museums of Scotland.[256] Similarly, the return of ancestral human remains to Walpole Island First Nation both built on existing relationships with the University of Windsor and helped to develop new ones (e.g., my own relationship with the community). These continue to be important parts of individual and community lives, extending well beyond a project's conclusion.

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[255] Importantly, this outfit was legitimately bought by traders and then donated to the CMH.
[256] Team members also visited collections held at these institutions during the project (see Chapter 5).

Knowledge about the history of repatriated materials and belongings can be invaluable to descendants who want to know as much as they can about them.[257] Investigation into the caribou skin lodge history revealed records identifying its original owner, K'aàwiidaà—an important ancestor for the Tłı̨chǫ. Information like this can create important connections between community members and repatriated materials, and through them to culture. For example, Peter Huskey's connection with the lodge through his ancestor K'aàwiidaà has led to regular visits intended to help him connect with his family, culture, and ancestors. Likewise, the rematriation of seed-ancestors to Walpole Island First Nation brought with it a reconnection to traditional Anishinaabe horticultural practices. After learning about this history, a new generation of seed-keepers on Bkejwanong are now dedicated to continuing these practices and ensuring they are taught to future generations.

Such reconnections to culture and history, fostered through repatriation, can also contribute to the development of education-focused projects or events meant to share cultural knowledge with the wider community. For Walpole Island First Nation, the now-annual spirit feasts share important knowledge around traditional funerary practices with younger generations who may never have witnessed them. The corn-harvest workshops do the same for traditional horticulture. The Tłı̨chǫ lodge reproduction project provided an opportunity to document the knowledge of Elders who were born and raised on the land. Video footage captured both what they know and how they do it. Such information can be revisited again and again if necessary. And similarly, the Gwich'in Clothing Project's reference manuals, along with the community exhibits, publications, and project videos on the Department of Culture & Heritage's public YouTube channel, ensure that Gwich'in youth today and in the future can continue to learn about their history and culture.

In each of these cases, repatriation was also a balancing of the material with the spiritual, the tangible with the intangible. Material items or ancestral remains that were returned are also understood as reflections and touchstones for important intangible

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[257] Tom Andrews emphasized that this can also be an important aspect for cultural institutions. Bringing Indigenous descendants into museums and other heritage spaces can both develop community members' pride in their culture (that it was important enough to be saved in collections) and bring new knowledge about cultural belongings and other heritage to institutional records and perspectives. Andrews witnessed this firsthand working with Tłı̨chǫ and other Dene Elders on these and other projects (pers comm. 2021; see Andrews 2006; Inuvialuit Living History n.d.; Fienup-Riordan 1999, 2005)

254

elements, like familial connections, spiritual obligations, or cultural identity. Participants emphasized that the intangible features and related outcomes were just as important as the physical return of ancestors, belongings, and other heritage. Thus, while repatriation itself is often understood to be a very tangible process, it is the intangible elements and legacies that contribute to the restoration and resurgence of Indigenous cultures on their own terms.

The Emotional Space of Repatriation

Examination of these case studies also supports the idea that repatriation can be an important space for healing. Indigenous scholars have argued that, through the restoration of connection to and responsibility for ancestors or belongings, repatriation can help to alleviate cultural trauma and its effects by bringing some closure to particularly traumatic events (Atalay 2019; Thornton 2002, 2020). Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh (2020:752) describe the work as "a time of mixed emotions," where feelings of shock and sadness over collecting are felt alongside descendants' happiness about the return. Based on my discussions with repatriation practitioners in each community, repatriation work and events can be a healing space for communities and individuals to work through complex emotions around their cultural trauma.

As discussed above, repatriation often goes hand in hand with complex emotions. It necessarily involves learning and confronting past injustices that are related to a community's ancestors (i.e., removal, dispossession, theft, and/or colonial violence). These encounters are then often accompanied by strong feelings of anger and grief over the loss of the repatriated materials themselves, and associated losses (e.g., territory, autonomy, context, knowledge, people, identity). When Karen Wright-Fraser, a Gwich'in seamstress, first encountered her people's traditional clothing in a scholarly volume on Dene Clothing (i.e., Thompson 1994), she felt a rush of feelings:

> I couldn't believe it and I thought to myself, "Oh my God. This is from my people." And I just started to cry, [because] I felt so good. I felt really happy to see such a beautiful outfit and that, way back when, our people probably had a strong culture. Like a strong tradition, which I didn't really see too much... And then, at the same time, I got angry. So, there was all these different emotions. And then, I almost had to grieve because I never did see it and it was something almost lost. [Karen Wright-Fraser, June 23, 2019]

Similarly, Tanya Dodge (WIFN) described the continued curation of seeds at the University of Michigan with great emotion, remarking how visits from community members seemed to stimulate them:

> *The way that they [Anishinaabe relatives from Michigan visiting the University's Museum] look at those seeds, it was that they were being held against their will. They said that they could feel the energy when they went to go visit the seeds...*
>
> *They started visiting the seeds and being able to go into the vault. And they started to go there and sing for them and do ceremony. [very emotional] And they said that one of the things that happened while they were there singing to the seeds, and doing ceremony for them, they started moving around. They were moving around, and they said that they were almost-at one point, some of them even were jumping out of the boxes and they said that some of them, they just wanted to go home with them.* [Tanya Dodge, October 24, 2019]

These and other reflections demonstrated that part of repatriation for community practitioners can involve working through very intense feelings of grief and anger around the legacies of colonial collecting and the accompanying feelings of loss. Processing these emotions is part of what makes repatriation such deeply sensitive and potentially exhausting work. It becomes a space that allows for individual and collective grief to emerge.

Importantly, what the case studies also show is that interacting with repatriated materials can remind community members of the resilience and skills their ancestors had. Many individuals involved in the work to repatriate and reproduce the Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge were very proud of the skills of their ancestors; the intricate stitching would have made K'aàwidaà's lodge an important belonging to help his family survive on the land.[258] Both Tanya Dodge and Montana Riley (WIFN) spoke with pride about their ancestors' skill in horticulture (October 24, 2019; November 1, 2019). Likewise, 16 years after the Gwich'in Clothing Project was completed (at time of writing), Agnes Mitchell still felt in awe of her ancestors' abilities. Thinking about the CMH outfit and drawing parallels to her own experiences with sewing, she said

> *Oh my God. I mean, the stitching was* **so** *fine. And just perfect for such a long time ago. And I kept thinking, "Oh my goodness, I wonder if she worked with this in the summertime or if it was [winter]? If they worked at*

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[258] The quality of the stitching was also something that many people commented on when interacting with the lodge at the PWNHC's event in 2018.

that time, with any outfit, how did they sew when it was wintertime?! And what kind of needles [did] they use? I know they used sinew, eh? But you know, to see all that and all the quillwork that was done on that outfit was **so even**… *And I'm thinking, all this while I'm looking at it because thinking of, you know, how I work, I just need the best light. Even in the wintertime, I need a good light so I can see. But these people had nothing like that. So, did they have candles? How were they able to make it so even? And the stitching was* **so fine**…

It was amazing to see that, just to look at that.
[Agnes Mitchell, July 27, 2019, emphasis original]

Reconnections like these often highlight ancestors' skills and resilience. For many participants learning more about how their ancestors survived and thrived in the past evoked feelings of respect and cultural pride. This is an important outcome of repatriation work.

The case studies also demonstrate that repatriation projects can offer opportunities to bring together Elders, youth, and others to facilitate intergenerational knowledge sharing. This is very clearly evident in the Tłı̨chǫ and Gwich'in examples. In both, the reproduction projects deliberately involved younger people to connect them with Elders, on the land, in workshops, and in museum spaces. For WIFN, the development of corn harvesting workshops and the annual spirit feasts—events that developed from and around repatriation—continue to bring the community together to learn and do the work of their ancestors. In each case, repatriation work has contributed more broadly to work that is meant to build a better future for the community. In this way, it can contribute to feelings of hope.

As a space to process complex emotions, repatriation offers community members the chance to process feelings of grief and anger about the past, revisit the resilience of their ancestors, and work towards a more hopeful future where traditional knowledge continues to be shared across generations. In these ways, repatriation can be a powerful way for communities to process the legacies of cultural trauma. When repatriation is meaningfully undertaken, it can thus be an important mechanism that works toward healing and reconciliation.

The Interconnected Work of Repatriation

The involvement of so many different groups in repatriation work (e.g., cultural centres, political representatives, Elders, and knowledge holders) means that these projects often intersect with other ongoing community projects. The work involved in repatriating Indigenous ancestors, cultural belongings, and other heritage links the social with the political; it connects health and well-being with culture and language reclamation work. Repatriation intersects these different areas of community lives and thus, can act as a conduit between them. Figure 7.1 shows these facets. The work is further connected through a community's spiritual frameworks and connections to the land. In this way, repatriation work can bring very diverse areas of community life together.
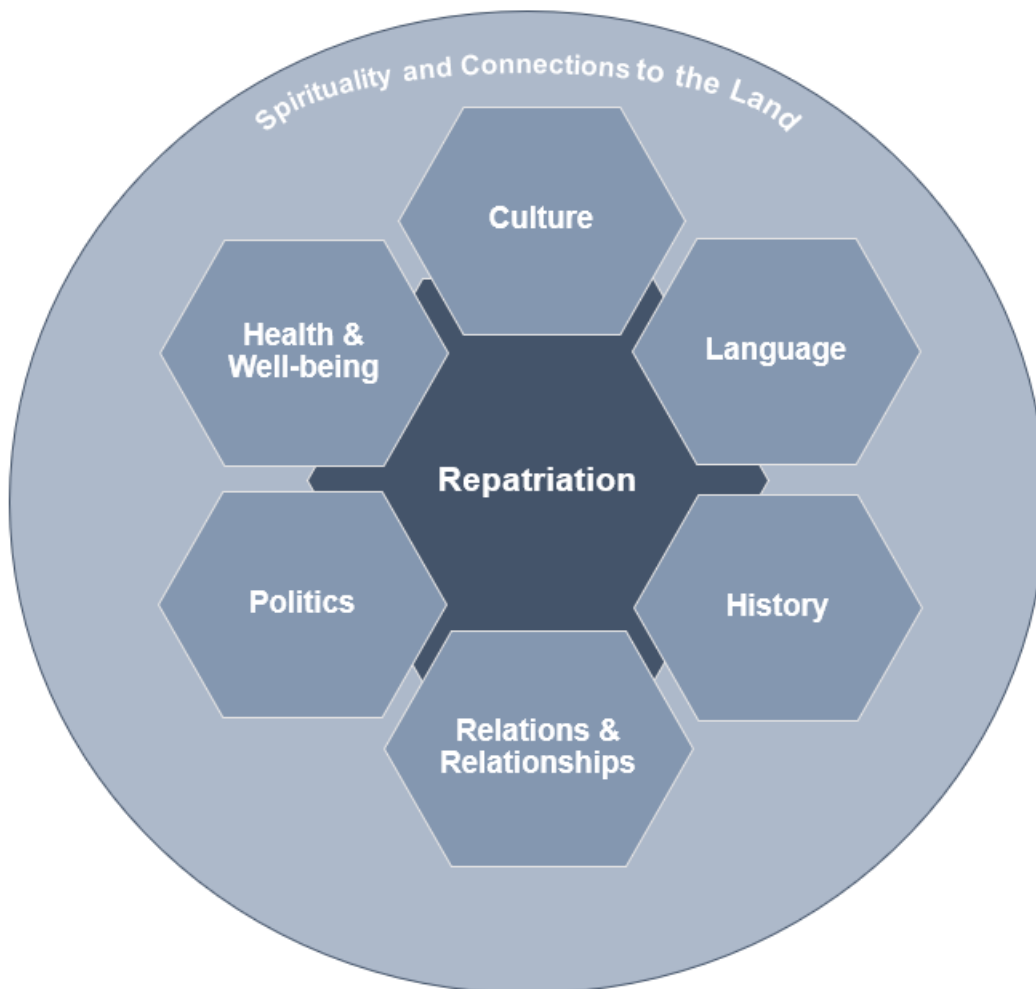
Figure 7.1. The interconnected aspects of repatriation work.

258

These connections became immediately evident when I began learning more about the repatriation projects through interviews with cultural workers in each community. In interviews, participants emphasized the ways that their connection(s) to repatriation either grew from earlier projects aimed at cultural protection and revitalization, or led to new ones. Figures 7.2a, b, and c, are case study maps which depict my understanding of the ways each repatriation connects with other work in the community. In each, the repatriation event is identified as a hexagon, while circles represent significant political events. Rectangle shapes indicate other related cultural initiatives and work. The connections identified in these maps reinforce that repatriation is relational practice that both influences and is influenced by institutions, individuals, and other projects.

A. Tłı̨chǫ Case Study

Tłı̨chǫ Heritage Resource Inventories

Trails of Our Ancestors (1995 - Present)

Gamètì Ko Tłı̨chǫ Ideas of Home) Project (2003–2006)

Scottish Museum Project (2006)

Tłı̨chǫ Kiel'a (Birchbark Canoe) Project (1996)

Educational Videos

Community Lodge

Traveling "Object Ambassador"

Dene Mapping Project

Tłı̨chǫ Ewo Kohnimbha (Caribou Skin Lodge) Repatriation (1997)

Lodge Reproduction Project (1999 - 2000)

Tłı̨chǫ Assembly Unveiling (2000)

Dene-Métis Treaty Negotiations

Tłı̨chǫ Treaty Negotiations

PWNHC Lodge

PWNHC Educational Event (2018)

Figure 7.2a, b, and c. Three case study maps demonstrating the ways that repatriation work connects to other ongoing cultural reclamation work in each community.

In each, the repatriation event is identified as a hexagon, while circles represent significant political events. These maps can be read through time from left (earliest) to right (most recent).

260

B. Gwich'in Case Study
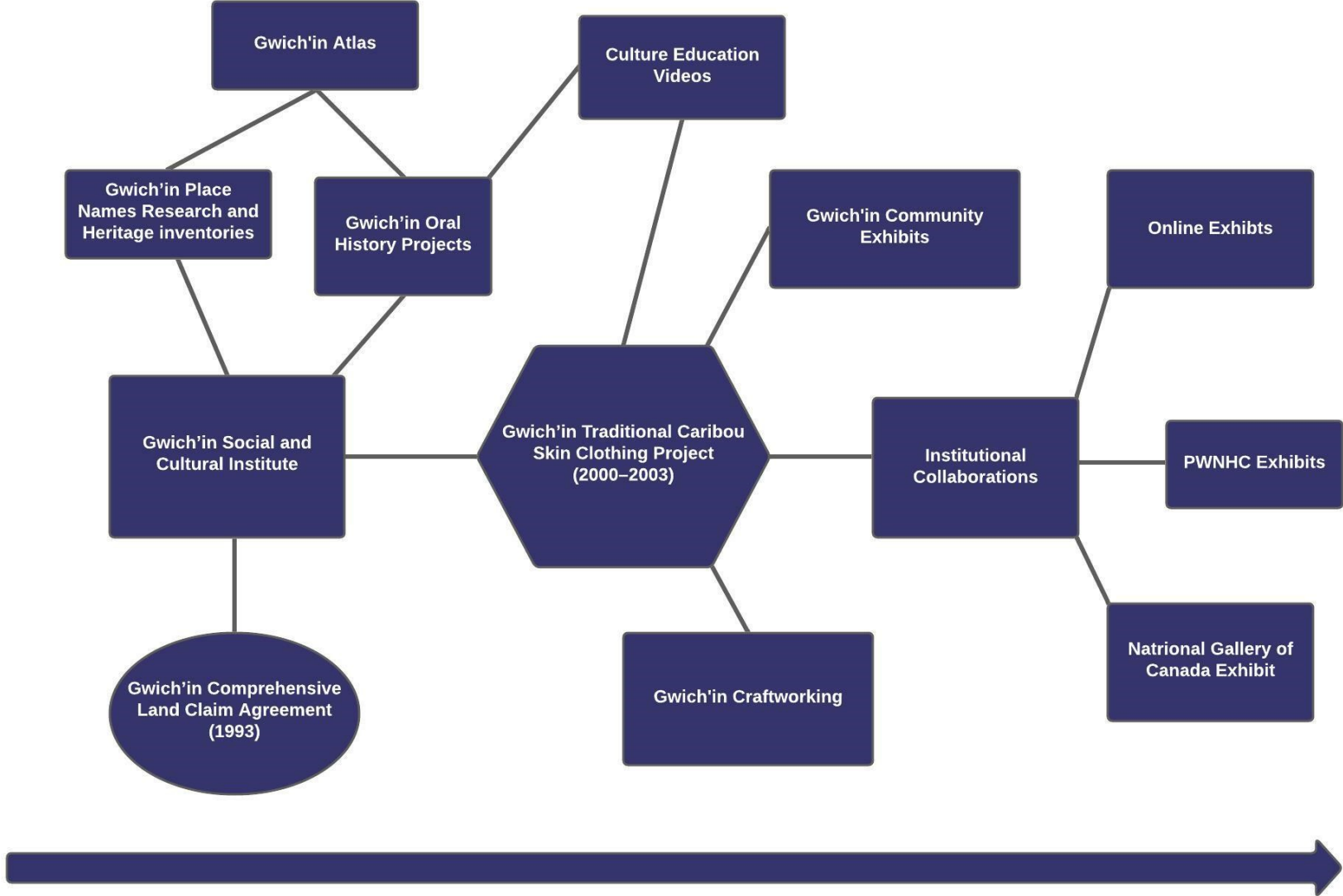
C. Walpole Island First Nation Case Study
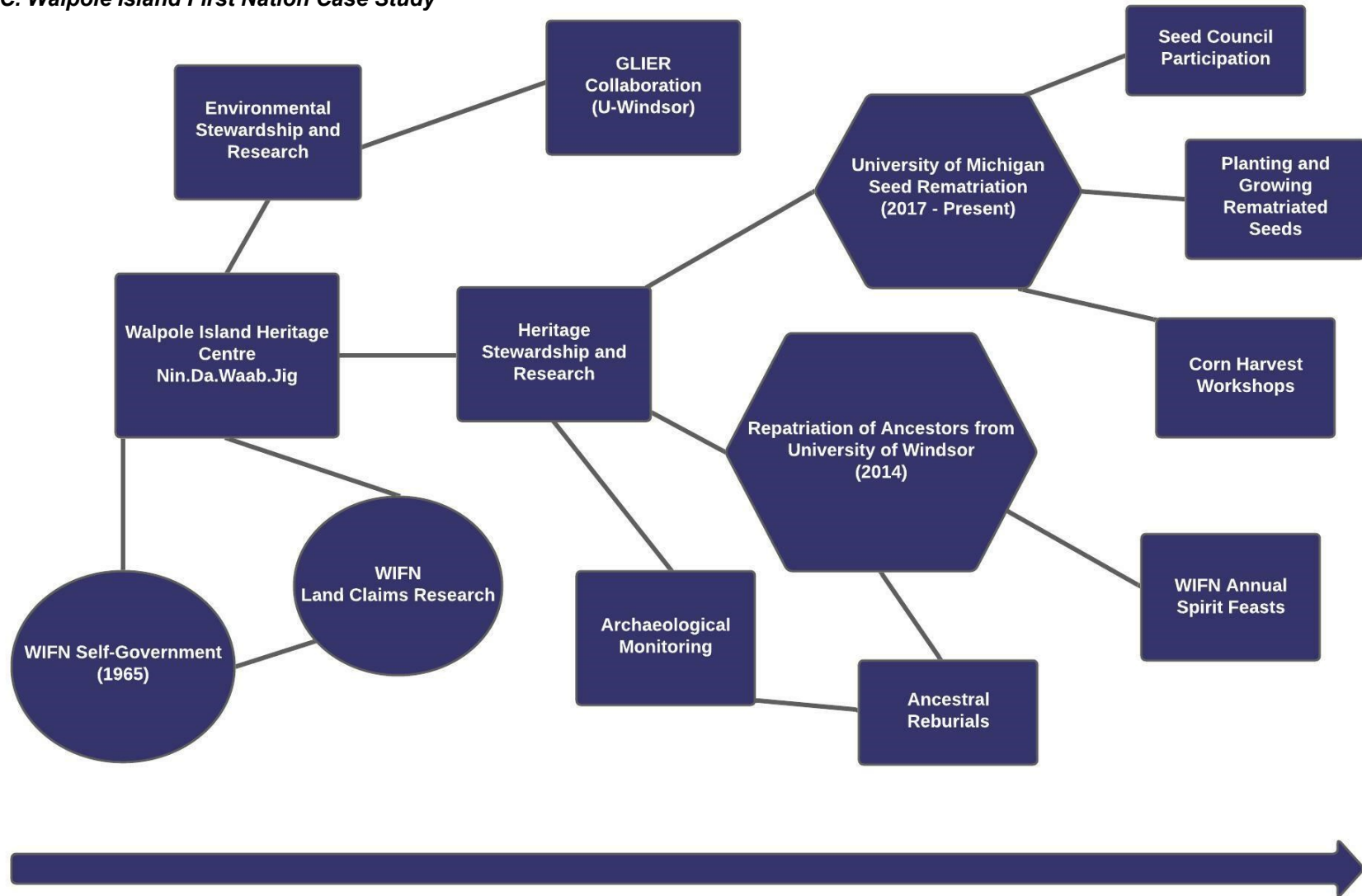
Conversations about the repatriation of the Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge were *always* linked to earlier work undertaken by the Tłįchǫ in collaboration with the PWNHC to produce a traditional-style birchbark canoe (which in turn grew out of previous work to document Tłįchǫ land-use and place names) as well as everything that followed. While writing up this earlier canoe project, Tom Andrews and John B. Zoe reached out to June Helm. It was this initial conversation (which may not have occurred otherwise) that spurred discussions on the return of the lodge. This line of connection also carried on after the lodge was returned: through related cultural and education projects, celebration events, and community hopes for the future (Figure 7.1a). For example, the later Scottish Museum Project (Andrews 2006; Daitch and Andrews 2007) can be connected to the lodge reproduction project, which stemmed directly from the repatriation of K'aàwidaà's lodge.

Similarly, the Gwich'in Clothing Project developed within a web of cultural work that was being undertaken by the GSCI and rooted in the repatriation clause of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement. One can trace the Clothing Project's roots in the mandate and activities of the GSCI: documenting and sharing Gwich'in oral histories, restoring Gwich'in place names, and protecting Gwich'in cultural and environmental resources, including other-than-human relatives like the caribou (Figure 7.1b). The Clothing Project intersects with each of these. Furthermore, the skills and techniques that were (re)learned through the Gwich'in Clothing Project continue to be shared and built upon in other craft-making projects and workshops that are held in Gwich'in communities or shared via media coverage. The project outfits have also been displayed locally and in major exhibitions (e.g., the Yellowknife outfit was featured at the National Gallery of Canada in 2017 as part of their "Canada 150" installation). The GSCI's experiences in developing and implementing the Clothing Project are also invaluable. The capacity-building that is an inherent part of large projects like this can often be overlooked but is an essential connection from repatriation work like the Clothing Project to other later initiatives.

For WIFN, the return of ancestors is only one part of the work that the Heritage Centre does. Negotiating the return of ancestral remains or reinterring them when found through archaeological investigations are essential to restore spiritual balance and ensure a good life (*Mino-Bimaadiziwin*) for the community. For WIFN, repatriation work connects most clearly with spiritual and cultural projects, like the annual ancestors' feast

or the rematriation of corn seed-ancestors from the University of Michigan. However, much of this work also intersects projects that are not necessarily related to ancestral remains or cultural heritage, such as research into the histories of treaty making in southwestern Ontario or evaluating the impacts of industry on local environments (Figure 7.1c).

It is important to note that these connections are not dispassionate links between projects; rather, they are the individuals invested in doing this work. For the Tłı̨chǫ, cultural knowledge holder John B. Zoe and former PWNHC archaeologist Tom Andrews were the connectors between many of the projects discussed in Chapter 4. However, other connections are also made through George Mackenzie, Rosa Mantla, and Giselle Marion. Similarly, Ingrid Kritsch, Alestine Andre, and later, Sharon Snowshoe[259] each represent critical links between the Clothing Project and other GSCI projects. For WIFN, Dean Jacobs, David W. White, C. Eric Isaac Sr., and Tanya Dodge have connected work involving ancestral remains with treaty research, archaeological monitoring, and the return of seed-ancestors.

This demonstrates that the "right people" can significantly influence the level of impact that repatriation has for a community. A point that both Tom Andrews and Ingrid Kritsch made while reflecting on their respective work with the Tłı̨chǫ and Gwich'in, and Dean Jacobs acknowledged when thinking back on his career with the Walpole Island Heritage Centre. The people who take on this work can determine if certain projects grow into others, whether and how much funding is acquired, how much this work is promoted both within and outside communities, and what institutional relationships can be made and sustained. Since repatriation work is often undertaken with limited resources, these connections can potentially make or break a project.

There is no doubt that repatriation is a key part of cultural reclamation work in Indigenous communities. The links and interconnections identified here, alongside the diverse effects of repatriation as explored in each case study chapter demonstrate that repatriation work is situated within a network of efforts aimed at reclaiming, protecting, and (where appropriate) sharing local culture. One could also argue that all such projects are in some way connected to those preceding and following them, regardless of

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[259] While Sharon joined the GSCI as Executive Director in 2005, after the Clothing Project was completed, she was involved in the exhibit at the PWNHC (2007–2008) and has coordinated the movement of the community exhibits when necessary.

whether repatriation is undertaken or not. However, what these case studies demonstrate is that, while institutional accounts of repatriation often construct it as an intensive but singular project, for descendant communities this work can and does connect with other work. It is also important to note that, given repatriation's political facets, these are not necessarily restricted to cultural initiatives. In these ways, repatriation can have far-reaching and sometimes unexpected impacts. This has important implications both for our understandings of the work of repatriation itself and what happens next.

Chapter Reflections and Summary

The repatriation experiences of the Tłı̨chǫ, Gwich'in, and Walpole Island First Nation reflect the diversity of effects that repatriation and the work it involves can have on receiving descendant communities. Study participants described a variety of experiences and outcomes during interviews, demonstrating that repatriation is a highly impactful activity for Indigenous descendant communities, one with clear effects across socio-cultural, political, economic, spiritual, and other spheres. From these community perspectives, repatriation becomes more than a process of returning ancestors, cultural belongings, and other heritage. Instead, it is deeply embedded in other community-based work to honour, revitalize, and protect local culture, knowledge, language, and heritage.

Repatriation events bring people together to process both the removal and return of repatriated materials. Many participants also reported that repatriation brings with it feelings of connection, satisfaction, and hope for the future. This work is unique in its ability to link collective grief over histories of loss and trauma, together with resilience and pride in the face of settler violence (in the past and present), and joy, excitement, and hope for the future (when ancestors and belongings are returned). "Doing the work" of repatriation connects individuals and projects within and across communities, bringing social, political, cultural, spiritual, and economic dimensions of reclamation work together. It requires practitioners from communities and institutions to face difficult histories, learn the truth of the past, reconsider why and how we do things in the present, and come together to find a way forward. In these ways, repatriation can and does function as a form of restorative justice.

Chapter 8.

Conclusion: Repatriation, What Next?

My goal in undertaking this research has been to explore the different ways that repatriation processes and outcomes affect receiving communities. My own experiences with the 2014 Bkejwanong repatriation reinforced the notion that it is demanding, time-consuming, and extremely important work. It took ten years to return the ancestors from the University of Windsor, on top of the nearly 30 years they had already spent waiting. I saw firsthand the raw emotion that was stirred by conversations about ancestors and belongings. While I was not a decision-maker in that process, I still felt the heavy responsibility of "making things right." I also saw firsthand the ways that existing frameworks can, at best, prolong an already complicated process, and, at worst, perpetuate colonial relationships and inequities. Participating in the return and reburial of those ancestors, and my conversations with Walpole Island First Nation community members like Dean Jacobs and David W. White, led me to question whether this was the end of the story. Was the reburial where the work of the repatriation ended? Did that mean that the University had fulfilled its obligations? If not, what happened next?

Repatriation is not a one-dimensional, request-return process. It is complicated, multi-layered, and multi-faceted work that involves many different stakeholders, both in and outside of the receiving communities. My dissertation research has been guided by two overarching questions: 1) what happens after a repatriation is "completed"?; and 2) what role(s) does repatriation play within ongoing reconciliation work? Both questions are grounded in recent discussions around repatriation as a form of restorative justice and healing for Indigenous and other minority and marginalized peoples (Atalay 2019; Bruchac 2010, 2021; Colwell 2017, 2019; Fforde et al. 2020). In this final chapter, I briefly revisit each case study to summarize key findings and situate them within the continuing discourse around repatriation as a healing practice.

More than a Return

To address my central research questions, I established four objectives for this study: 1) to understand how the meanings and processes of repatriation change in

different contexts and for different communities; 2) to identify and understand the social, cultural, political, and economic effects of repatriation; 3) to assess any similarities and differences among partner communities' experiences; and 4) to note any community-identified factors that led to satisfactory outcomes. I proceeded to address these via an extensive review of the literature on repatriation (Chapter 2), and close examination of three case studies: the return of a Tłįchǫ caribou skin lodge, the collaborative reproduction of a traditional Gwich'in caribou skin outfit, and the return of ancestors to Bkejwanong (Chapters 4, 5, and 6, respectively). For each, I reviewed published materials, archival records, and media coverage related to the repatriation, and interviewed individual community members who had been directly involved or interested in these projects.

Each case offered an opportunity to explore the different ways that repatriation and the work involved can affect receiving communities. For the Tłįchǫ, the return of K'aàwidaà's caribou skin lodge provided opportunities for storytelling and on-the-land education. The reproduction project, in collaboration with the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC), ensured that the Elders' knowledge of how to make and live in traditional lodges was documented to share with future generations. The original lodge continues to be a tangible connection to Tłįchǫ history and K'aàwiidaà specifically. In this case, repatriation was a significant opportunity to celebrate and connect with Tłįchǫ culture, and it became a vehicle for cultural education.

The Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project set out to make five replicas of an outfit that was traded during the nineteenth century. While the original outfit was not physically returned to the Gwich'in, the project reconnected Gwich'in seamstresses with the traditional methods and materials needed to make such clothing, both through community engagement and oral history work, and institutional research. The project connected the women with their ancestors and contributed to an increase of pride in culture and community. Here, repatriation of the intangible skills and knowledge needed to make these outfits contributed to active socio-economic work and has provided direct connections between seamstresses and their ancestors.

Finally, the return of ancestors to Bkejwanong in 2014 provided a significant opportunity for community members to witness and participate in traditional funerary rites—a practice continued in the now-annual spirit feasts. Similarly, the rematriation of corn seeds has reconnected many community members with responsibilities to other-

than-human ancestors and relatives. Advocating for ancestors, both human and other-than, is an important spiritual and cultural responsibility for Anishinaabeg, and it is part of a long history of Walpole Island First Nation stewardship. Repatriation, in this case, has been understood as a responsibility to WIFN relations, and an opportunity for reconnection and reclamation.

These cases (and many others worldwide) demonstrate that, for descendant communities, repatriation is far more than a process of request-and-return. The return of ancestors and objects of cultural patrimony can reconnect community members with their ancestors and culture. The work is deeply connected to other cultural, spiritual, and political efforts in communities, building relationships between individuals and with institutions. Returning ancestors and heritage items to descendants also inherently recognizes their rights and responsibilities associated with such materials and, in some cases, the land on which they were found. In this way, repatriation can also have important political dimensions.

The case studies also emphasize the ways that repatriation work relates to broader cultural education initiatives in Indigenous communities. Each involved work that brought Elders, youth, other community members, and outsiders together on the land to teach and learn traditional practices. Such projects can be enhanced and supported by institutional partnerships, as was the case for both the Gwich'in and Tłįchǫ work. Such partnerships can provide communities with access to academic expertise (where appropriate) and different sources of funding. Repatriation is expensive and thus challenging to fund for communities with other pressing needs. In each case, future economic benefits through reproduction projects or institutional collaborations were discussed as ways to offset the costs. Additionally, the opportunity to eventually showcase their own culture on their own terms in a local or community-based museum or heritage centre was viewed as a potential benefit.

Finally, an important theme reflected in each study was that repatriation processes or "doing the work" can have important implications for community health and spiritual well-being. As a space to work through complicated emotions, both individually and collectively, repatriation projects can be an important starting place for healing from cultural trauma. This, in conjunction with other relationship-building, cultural reconnection, and educational aspects of repatriation work make it a powerful force for resurgence and reconciliation.

Repatriation, Restorative Justice, and Healing

As reviewed in Chapter 2, the histories, debates, processes, and aims of repatriation movements have mostly dominated academic discourse. In the 1980s and 1990s, attention often focused on Indigenous rights to repatriation, based on religious, human, and/or collective rights (Colwell 2019:92; see Echo-Hawk 1986; McKeown 2012; Winski 1992; Vizenor 1986; Zimmerman 1986, 1998). Discussions subsequently expanded to consider the ways that repatriation mandates like the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in the United States, were impacting research and institutional practice (Bruning 2005; Kakaliouras 2008; Killion 2008; Rose et al. 1996). Many case studies of repatriation have since included detailed discussions on the processes followed, intended for others to reflect on and learn from (e.g., Aranui 2018; Fründt 2016; Peers 2017; Pfeiffer and Lesage 2014). Extensive provenance research by Indigenous descendant communities and repatriation practitioners has also traced the movements of collected ancestors and cultural materials in the past (Aranui 2020b; Fforde, Aranui et al. 2020; Kritsch and Kreps 1997; Turnbull 2017). While these themes remain important, the focus has begun to explore repatriation's role(s) in relation to healing, reconciliation, and decolonizing work.

Archaeology and anthropology have contentious histories, often having been closely tied to colonial expansion, the assertion of settler dominance in the "New World," and the dispossession of Indigenous homelands. Cherokee scholar Russell Thornton has noted that cultural trauma stems from events that leave deep and lasting impacts on the collective consciousness of a group (Thornton 2002:21; 2019:785–786, drawing on Alexander et al. 2004; see Turnbull 2017, 2020). He sees the collection of Indigenous ancestral remains and cultural belongings, and their inevitable alienation from descendants as such an event, among others (e.g., dispossession and loss of territory, assaults on traditional systems, spiritual conversion).[260] Repatriation of these materials then, can bring closure and healing to descendant groups. The Western Apache NAGPRA Working Group, for instance, has described repatriation as an important and necessary part of their work to restore *Gozhóó*, or "the happiness and fulfilment that is derived from harmony and balance between oneself, one's community, and the natural

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[260] McAnany and Parks (2012:80) have called this "heritage distancing," or "the alienation of contemporary inhabitants of a landscape from the tangible remains or intangible practices of the past."

world" (2020:773). Anishinaabe scholar and archaeologist Sonya Atalay (2019) explores a similar connection between Anishinaabe repatriation efforts and *Mino-Bimaadiziwin*, or "the way of a good life" (see also Gross 2014; Rheault 1999). My findings intersect with and build on these broader conversations. Each case study examined here demonstrates that repatriation can have far-reaching impacts on descendant communities, across a variety of spheres.

While exploring the connections between archaeology, justice, and reconciliation, Chip Colwell has noted that "before communities and individuals can resolve conflict, they must first confront what has come to pass" (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2007:25). He identifies repatriation as a form of "restorative justice" [261] in the relationship between Indigenous peoples and settler/colonial societies. He draws a comparison between the aims and expectations of the United States' repatriation law (NAGPRA) and the mandates of national truth and reconciliation commissions in countries like South Africa, Canada, and Australia (2007, 2019:93). These have typically sought to gather testimony on widescale historical injustices, acknowledge their impacts on present peoples, and then cooperatively develop a path forward. Similarly, repatriation work first requires that information on the collection/curation of ancestral remains or cultural materials be compiled and shared with requesting communities; the two groups then work together to chart a plan for the repatriation.[262] Repatriation can be a means of restoring descendant communities' rights to repatriated materials and a new beginning for broken relationships. In this way, it can act as a platform for restorative justice to occur.

Abenaki scholar Margaret Bruchac continues this discussion, emphasizing that restorative methodologies (i.e., extensive research into the history and origins of collections in holding institutions *and* source communities) are an essential part of meaningful repatriation processes. Bruchac argues that undertaking this work is a key part of the responsibilities that collecting/holding institutions have to honestly attempt to fix what was broken by their actions in the past (2010:150, 2021). A restorative approach, for Bruchac, is a process of untangling the social, political, and

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[261] As discussed in Chapter 1, Colwell draws on the definition of restorative justice as outlined by Desmond Tutu, the Chair of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996–2003). Tutu defined restorative justice as one that was deeply concerned with the "healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator" (1999:54, cited in Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2007:26).

[262] This process is similar across both legislated (i.e., NAGPRA) and negotiated frameworks, like those governing Canadian institutional approaches to repatriation.

epistemological histories of ancestors and belongings in institutional collections. In her *On the Wampum Trail* project (2017, 2018), Bruchac works to trace the stories of wampum belts, through their collection and repossession. She writes that this work has demonstrated that restorative processes as part of repatriation work can "enable sleeping objects to speak once again with the communities that originated them" (2018:101). Her work demonstrates that by identifying, where possible, the objects' source community(ies), how they got to the holding institution, and the people they interacted with along the way, repatriation work can rearticulate ancestors and important cultural belongings with their histories and descendants. This is the "restorative" part of repatriation as restorative justice.

A similar approach was taken in all three cases examined as part of my study. In each, there was a deliberate effort by institutional practitioners in collaboration and consultation with community partners to learn more about the "how and why" things were collected. This historical information provided added depth to each project for those involved. For Walpole Island First Nation, the irreconcilable truth of the ancestors' presence at the University of Windsor directly contradicted official accounts of the excavation (see Chapter 6, "Excavations at the Rickley Site"). In this case, revisiting the site report, student accounts, and other available archival information related to the excavation provided added context and identified uncomfortable histories—something that is necessary to move forward in a better way. Identifying K'aàwiidaà as the original owner of the repatriated caribou skin lodge through historical and archival research provided Tłįchǫ with a very tangible connection to an important political figure in their history. The purchase of the lodge and its preservation at the University of Iowa meant that it is available today for Tłįchǫ to engage with and learn from. For seamstresses involved in the Gwich'in Clothing Project, the legal purchase of the original outfit was evidence of their ancestors' skills. That their ancestors' efforts were in demand by traders of the time became a source of pride, a recognition that what their ancestors created was *art* (Lillian Wright, July 24, 2019). In these ways, taking a restorative approach and thoroughly researching collections as part of repatriation practice can deepen understandings of the past for all parties involved in repatriation work.

Indigenous scholars and repatriation practitioners have also argued that it is the "doing" of repatriation work that make it a healing practice for those involved (see Atalay 2019; Colwell 2019; Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020; Peers 2013). As discussed

271

above, repatriation often requires deep emotional and spiritual engagement alongside the physical and social participation of those involved. In the Gwich'in Clothing Project, it was during the workshops where participants came together to learn and make the outfits that relationships and social bonds were formed. The return of K'aàwidaà's lodge brought Tłı̨chǫ from across their territory together to celebrate. The lodge itself became a focal point as a representation of Tłı̨chǫ history, culture, and pride. For Walpole Island First Nation, the physical and emotional labour involved in reburying the ancestors (or in the planting of corn seed-ancestors) embodies spiritual and cultural responsibilities for Anishinaabeg. Atalay (2019:80–82) has argued that it is the significance of these embodied practices that make repatriation so important for healing work in communities. In the case studies examined here, it was the connection between this embodied work *and* the more intangible elements of repatriation—the cultural practices, social relationships, and/or complex emotions—that made the repatriations so impactful.

Atalay has also argued that stories about repatriation work—both telling them and listening to them—can be healing for those involved (2019:83–85). These can create space for processing emotions or sharing what participants' have learned. They can also be a form of bearing witness to both the injustices of the past (i.e., collecting) and the resilience of relatives in the present (see also Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020:750–751). All three studies emphasize the power of stories as part of repatriation. It is through them that cultural knowledge has been shared across generations.

Importantly, much of the literature around repatriation's connection to healing and reconciliation has focused on the return of ancestral remains and/or sacred materials. This is likely because descendant groups have often concentrated their efforts on returning ancestors before anything else (e.g., Haida repatriation efforts [Bell and Hill 2021; Collison and Krmpotich 2020; Krmpotich 2014]). However, my research has demonstrated that the return of what would have been "everyday" belongings, like the Tłı̨chǫ caribou skin lodge, can have an equally important impact. Similarly, reconnecting with traditional skills, like quillwork or horticultural practices, has had lasting impacts for those involved in the Gwich'in Clothing Project and the Bkejwanong seed rematriation efforts, respectively. Extending the definition of repatriation to incorporate more projects like these can enhance our understandings of its broader impacts on descendant communities.

The nature of repatriation work means that it is long-term and expensive. The politics of formal requesting procedures often necessitates the involvement of a variety of groups within requesting communities, and leads to complex negotiations with returning institutions. In Canada, limited funds require communities and institutions to get creative to find ways to finance the work—including developing institutional partnerships. Repatriation is a complicated undertaking that can have far-reaching effects for descendant communities. Additionally, its interconnections with other community work, emphasis on the intangible, and emotional dimensions together make repatriation a powerful mechanism for social healing. These considerations warrant important reflection, especially within ongoing reconciliation efforts in Canada.

Repatriation and Reconciliation in Canada

Reconciliation has become a thorny subject in Canada. It has generally referred to efforts aimed at repairing the relationship between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous people here. This goal has been the foundation for reconciliation movements in other countries as well (e.g., Australia [Reconciliation Australia n.d.] and South Africa [Tutu 1999]). Repatriation and related community-based heritage research have been connected to these efforts (Colwell 2007, 2019; Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh 2020; Schaepe et al. 2017). In Canada, reconciliation has most often been closely associated with the federal government's responsibilities and actions (or lack thereof) in relation to Indigenous peoples, especially regarding the Indian Residential School system (Sterritt 2020; TRC 2015). However, it also extends to the everyday activities of the general population.

The public discourse on reconciliation in Canada began in 1996 with the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). The RCAP report recommended "a renewed relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada be established on the basis of justice and fairness" (RCAP 1996:Vol. 5, app. A, p. 1). The federal government's response included a Statement of Reconciliation, which emphasized "learning from the past" to restructure the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.[263] However, many have noted that the RCAP

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[263] It also included a formal acknowledgement of the Government's role in the "historic injustices experienced by Aboriginal people" (Government of Canada 1997:5).

report and its recommendations were largely ignored by successive governments (Castellano 2002; TRC 2015b:113).

In 2005, the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement established funds for commission aimed at gathering testimony on residential school experiences and continuing discussions around reconciliation in Canada. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released its final multi-volume report and Calls to Action in 2015 (see TRC 2015a, c). In these, the TRC provided a clear definition of "reconciliation," noting that it is "about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country" (TRC 2015b:113). The commissioners emphasized that for such a relationship to succeed, "there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour" (TRC 2015b:113).

Canada's Reconciliation efforts have been both criticized and politicized in recent years.[264] The TRC's Calls to Action were intended to guide the process, providing a starting point or roadmap (2015c). Since their release, federal and provincial governments and others have taken some important steps forward (e.g., educational reforms and the very recent National Day for Truth and Reconciliation [September 30]), and non-profit organizations like *Reconciliation Canada*[265] continue to push for greater public dialogue on these issues. The TRC has now transitioned into the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), which stewards IRS survivors' stories and works with educators, governments, and the public to support the ongoing work of reconciliation in Canada.[266] However, critics have also pointed out that many of the more substantial calls have yet to be addressed (McIvor 2020; Morden 2014). These include (but are not limited to) the continued over-representation of Indigenous children in both child welfare and the justice system; health care discrimination; problems with on-reserve infrastructure (i.e., clean water); and the continued encroachment of Indigenous territories for resource extraction.[267] Because of this, serious concerns about the

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[264] See, for example, a recent article by Conrad Black in the National Post that claims the TRCs findings (and other claims about Indigenous experiences before and at contact) to be categorically inaccurate https://nationalpost.com/opinion/conrad-black-7 (It is unclear where Black got his information but it was clearly not from reputable or recent archaeological studies).

[265] See https://reconciliationcanada.ca/.

[266] See https://nctr.ca/about/.

[267] In 2021, after several Indigenous communities led investigations into unmarked burials at former Indian Residential School sites, the Government of Canada announced $320 million in funding to support the work—a significant increase over the original $27 million initially pledged

metaphoric use of "Reconciliation" to describe fairly superficial actions continue to be raised (Nicholas 2017a:207).[268]

Repatriation work is undertaken within this broader discourse around "Reconciliation" in Canada and elsewhere. But in mainstream discussions here, repatriation of heritage is not often centered in this movement.[269] The public narrative tends to focus on the truth of, and the need for reparations around, the residential school system, survivors' experiences, and the systems legacies. The TRC's Calls to Action do not mention "repatriation" specifically, instead calling on the government to work with the Canadian Museums Association to reevaluate existing museum policy and bring it into alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (TRC 2015c: Call 67). The more detailed final report, however, does reference the specific UNDRIP Articles 11 and 12, which recognize Indigenous rights to repatriation of ancestral remains, belongings, and other cultural heritage (2015b:247–248; UNDRIP 2007[270]).

My research findings demonstrate that repatriation can and should be recognized as a powerful mechanism for reconciliation and Reconciliation in Canada.[271] It can directly contribute to the actions necessary for reconciliation identified by the TRC: awareness, acknowledgement, atonement, and action (2015a:113). I see four main features of repatriation that give some insight into its potential for this work: 1) it requires truth-telling; 2) it can support reclamation work; 3) it can build connection and relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples; and 4) it acknowledges and respects Indigenous rights and title.

(Government of Canada 2021). However, the costs of such work are estimated to be much higher (White 2021).

[268] See similar critique on the use of decolonization by Tuck and Yang (2012).

[269] There are instances where repatriation has been centred in reconciliation discussions. For example, when Simon Fraser University's Aboriginal Reconciliation Council (SFU ARC) was undertaking consultations regarding reconciliation work on their campuses, George Nicholas (professor, Archaeology) emphasized the fact that adequate support for repatriation work on the campus was essential. The SFU ARC's final report, *Walk this Path with Us*, identifies repatriation as a key area in need of support going forward (Call to Action 24 [Simon Fraser University 2017:49]).

[270] See the recent report on repatriation by the United Nations' Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP 2020).

[271] Here, I make a distinction between "Reconciliation in Canada" which tends to be linked to the federal government's responsibilities to Indigenous peoples, and "reconciliation," which I see as a more boots-on-the-ground approach to establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationship between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians.

- *Repatriation requires truth-telling*. The intellectual work of repatriation often requires research into the origins and histories of institutional collections. Such research can uncover information around the past that may contradict existing assumptions or narratives. For example, research into the history of Walpole Island First Nation ancestors at the University of Windsor revealed that the official narrative (i.e., that all ancestral remains were documented, but not removed [Kroon 1975]) was false. Similar investigations of the history of K'aàwidaà's lodge and the original Gwich'in outfit at the Canadian Museum of History showed that both were legitimately purchased by visitors to Tłı̨chǫ and Gwich'in territories, respectively. Repatriation can help tell these stories, acknowledge the truth of what happened in the past, and then move the conversation forward.

- *Repatriation can support reclamation of identity, culture, and community.* When meaningfully and intentionally undertaken, repatriation can support reclamation work in descendant communities. The Gwich'in Clothing Project sought to reclaim and reconnect with the knowledge and skills required to make traditional caribou skin clothing. The project brought Gwich'in seamstresses and community members into contact with traditional clothing, many for the first time. Many people reported strong feelings of pride in their culture and ancestors. This reconnection had a powerful impact on both individual and collective identity. These impacts were evident in both the Tłı̨chǫ and Walpole Island First Nation studies as well. In each, repatriation and the work it is connected to, contributed to the reconnection and reclamation of culture, and through that, a strengthening of the Nation as a whole.

- *Repatriation can build connection and relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.* Repatriation inherently requires the participation of both the requesting Indigenous community and the holding institution (which are often represented by non-Indigenous individuals). The work of repatriation brings the two parties into interaction and requires them to work together to ensure a successful outcome. When parties seek to meaningfully work together, a shared understanding can develop, and relationships can deepen and expand. The relationship between the Tłı̨chǫ and the PWNHC demonstrates this well. The repatriation of K'aàwidaà's lodge and its stewardship at the museum created a new dimension to an existing relationship. The subsequent partnership to reproduce two replicas extended it further. The public events around these projects invited both Tłı̨chǫ and other groups to interact and connect. Similar connections are evident around the Gwich'in Clothing Project and the return of ancestors to Bkejwanong. Repatriation can be a first step in bridging the divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. It can start conversations that extend far beyond the return itself.

- Finally, *Repatriation acknowledges and respects Indigenous rights and title.* One of the most important (and thus, controversial) parts of repatriation is that it inherently recognizes Indigenous descendants as the rightful stewards of

repatriated materials and by extension, their rights to territory. It also requires
holding institutions and the individuals operating them to critically rethink and
reexamine their own histories and purpose. These processes often elicit questions
of who should steward such materials and how. Notions of ownership and control
are constantly interrogated within these discussions.

Each of these aspects of repatriation and repatriation work play an important part
in the journey towards reconciliation in Canada and elsewhere. True reconciliation work
requires a fundamental change in how things are done and moving beyond simply
redressing past misdeeds (Nicholas 2017a:207). When it is meaningfully and
intentionally undertaken, repatriation can be a restorative and just process. It can
contribute to both truth and reconciliation, and it offers one of the most tangible
examples of reconciliation in action. Repatriation starts something; it requires action. But
to do so—and to do it effectively—repatriation needs sufficient recognition and support
from settler governments.

Implications for Future Policy

In Chapter 2, I briefly described the contemporary framework for repatriation in
Canada. While it is mandated and regulated by national policy or federal legislation
elsewhere (e.g., the Australian Government Policy on Indigenous Repatriation [2016],
the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act [1990] in the United States),
in Canada, there is no encompassing federal heritage legislation.[272] Here, repatriation is
undertaken on a case-by-case basis, typically negotiated between holding institutions
and descendant communities, outside of federal or provincial legislation.[273] Most often,
repatriation requests are received by heritage-oriented institutions that hold Indigenous
collections, including museums and universities. Many of these institutions have
developed internal policies that provide structure and guidance for repatriation, typically

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[272] Federal legislation to protect archaeological heritage was proposed in 1990. It was rejected for
several reasons, chief among which was Indigenous communities' objections to implications of
Crown ownership of archaeological resources (Bell 2009:36). Catherine Bell (2009: 55–63) and
others (e.g., Koehler 2008; Tuensmeyer 2014) have also cautioned that top-down legislation
may bring with it the same confusion and issues as were common in the early days of NAGPRA
in the United States, resulting in issues surrounding liability, power, process, and application.
[273] An exception is Alberta's First Nations Sacred and Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Act,
though this only applies to two provincial museums and can only be activated by those Nations
that have negotiated the necessary regulations (see Chapter 2). Repatriation can also be
stipulated as part of Modern Treaty or Land Claim Final Agreements (e.g., the Nisga'a Final
Agreement or several comprehensive land claims in the NWT).

outlining a case-specific, negotiated process that responds to requests made by federally recognized Indigenous groups.

Until recently, the federal government has not seriously considered any repatriation-specific regulations.[274] However, in 2018, the *Indigenous Human Remains and Cultural Property Repatriation Act* (Bill C-391) was introduced. Bill C-391 sought to develop a comprehensive national strategy for the repatriation of Indigenous ancestral remains and cultural property (House of Commons 2018). Unfortunately, it did not receive royal assent in Parliament before the election was called in 2019. At the time of writing in 2021, it has not been reintroduced. Thus, the future of federal repatriation policy/legislation remains unclear.

The patchwork approach to repatriation in Canada has resulted in a flexible framework that is grounded in the moral and ethical obligations of institutions to engage meaningfully with their publics. The emphasis placed on collaboration in the Task Force Report and the limited resources available for repatriation work has meant that holding institutions and descendant communities often work closely to resolve repatriation claims. This has allowed for the development of several long-term research initiatives between institutions and Indigenous descendant communities (e.g., Kayasochi Kikawenow in Manitoba [Brownlee and Syms 1999]; Kwä̱ḏāy Dan Ts'ínchi in British Columbia and the Yukon [Hebda et al 2017]; and Moatfield Ossuary in Ontario [Williamson and Pfeiffer 2003]).[275]

While some have claimed that this approach can be more cooperative than others (i.e., top-down repatriation as mandated by NAGPRA [see Buikstra 2006:408–409, Watkins 2003]), it is not without its challenges. Repatriation in Canada has been criticized by heritage practitioners and Indigenous peoples alike (Penney 1992:11; Devine 2010; Doxtator 1996:63–64; Herle 1994:41; Tuensmeyer 2014:204). Here, it is constrained by limited funding and resources. There is little support from the federal government, and only a few provinces and territories have addressed these issues directly (i.e., Alberta, British Columbia, and both the Yukon and NWT, via comprehensive

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[274] Federal legislation like the NAGPRA in the United States was considered by the Task Force on Museums and First Peoples, but they ultimately decided against pursuing it.

[275] In 2021, I co-edited a scholarly volume that brought together several collaborative initiatives around the care and study of Indigenous ancestral remains and the impacts of repatriation movements on research practices (Meloche et al. 2021a). In it, we highlighted examples from Canadian contexts.

land claims). Much of the work involved in repatriation is undertaken outside of the public eye; with media coverage (if any) saved for the successful handover ceremony.[276] Timelines are lengthy and fraught with challenges (e.g., little or no available documentation). The responsive nature of institutional repatriation policies also places much of the work on descendant communities.[277] Often, only federally recognized groups can submit a request for information on collections and/or repatriation of specific materials. They must also demonstrate cultural affiliation to *prove* their claim is a valid one. However, it is ultimately the holding institution that retains decision-making authority. This continues a longstanding power imbalance between Indigenous peoples and museums, and repatriation outcomes can thus be subject to change if negotiations break down or an internal shift occurs (Doxtator 1996:63–64). Additionally, the need for an appropriate facility to receive repatriated materials may limit or require descendant communities to negotiate stewardship agreements (e.g., in the NWT, the PWNHC is the only facility with the necessary staff and facilities to properly conserve delicate belongings like the Tłı̨chǫ lodge or the Gwich'in outfits). If repatriation is to truly contribute to the goals of reconciliation, then practice in Canada must change.

My three case studies, and others (e.g., Fforde, Keeler, and Turnbull 2020), indicate that repatriation impacts descendant communities. The core issue is whether the impacts are beneficial or harmful. Repatriation can be an incredibly powerful tool for social healing or for perpetuating trauma. Taking a restorative, proactive approach to repatriation recognizes its potential as a mechanism of restorative justice within ongoing reconciliation efforts. Effecting such a shift will not be easy, however. Repatriation remains a largely bureaucratic process, limited by institutional structures and politics (Peers 2017; Robbins and Kuwanwisiwma 2017).[278] It also continues to face resistance from institutions over settler-colonial conceptions of ownership and stewardship. For example, many heritage institutions continue to assume that Western-colonial standards of care and documentation are the most effective, whereas descendant perspectives are devalued or ignored. A proactive and restorative approach to repatriation will require a

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[276] This may change, given the positive impacts from the public response to the recent work around the search for unmarked graves on former Residential School properties.

[277] Most current approaches to repatriation follow this framework: Indigenous communities must either investigate on their own or submit a request for information on collections; then, if appropriate, they must submit a request for repatriation or claim under relevant legislative requirements, demonstrating the legitimacy of their connection to the requested materials.

[278] But see examples in Meloche et al. 2021a for novel approaches to repatriation in heritage institutions.

large-scale change in institutional understandings of repatriation, and, most likely, the involvement and support of the federal government. Based on my research, I suggest that the first steps toward a more meaningful approach to repatriation require (1) adequate financial support for both descendant communities and holding institutions; and (2) a proactive approach to repatriation. By taking these steps, the government would acknowledge the importance of this work.

Dedicated Funds for Repatriation Work

Limited funding and resources are one of, if not the biggest challenges for repatriation and other cultural reclamation or revitalization work today. Currently, there are no repatriation-specific federal programs to support communities undertaking this work. Institutions must often divert funds from annual budgets to fund internal projects. Given that these are often already limited, institutional repatriation work (i.e., collections-based research, rehousing, etc.) tends to only be undertaken when a request is received—which has ultimately led to the responsive approach that defines Canadian repatriation today.

Many Indigenous communities have funded their own repatriation projects. The Haida Repatriation Committee provide an important example of this. They have largely funded their decades-long repatriation program through community-based events, like dinners and dances (see Krmpotich 2014). Their success has influenced the development of similar models in other communities, as recently outlined in the *Indigenous Repatriation Handbook* (Collison et al. 2019). Others have funded repatriation efforts through internal operating budgets or as part of work mandated by Final Agreements.

While federal funding is limited, in British Columbia the provincial government has provided funds to support this work at the Royal BC Museum (CBC News 2016) and has developed a repatriation grants program for Indigenous communities. These grants range from $15,000–35,000 and are administered by the British Columbia Museums Association. In 2020, 25 grants were awarded, totaling $454,000 and supporting repatriation activities in nearly 50 Indigenous communities in British Columbia (BCMA 2021). These funds support repatriation-related research and project activities like transportation or acquiring materials for burial containers (BCMA n.d.). However, the relatively small size of the individual grants fails to reflect the actual costs associated

with longer-term repatriation projects, which may need supplementation by other programs or institutional support. Additionally, this program is subject to the provincial government's budget and priorities. If these shift, it could be dissolved or reduced.

To do meaningful repatriation work, adequate support is needed for both descendant communities and holding institutions. Each party has responsibilities that can go far beyond a single project or return event. Descendant communities continue to bear a large portion of repatriation work, researching collections, contacting institutions, and proving their affiliation. Financial support for community-based repatriation projects would both aid cultural reclamation work and potentially, bring economic benefits. Holding institutions must also do due diligence in researching collections' histories and contents, collecting available information on requested materials, and navigating a complex legal landscape for return. This all requires support. Adequate funds can help to facilitate access to collections, enable potential collaborative projects, and ensure that repatriation timelines do not extend into eternity. Establishing a dedicated federal repatriation grants program would recognize the importance of this and take meaningful action towards Canada's Reconciliation goals.

Proactive Repatriation

While the responsive approach to repatriation that is common in Canada has provided the flexibility necessary to address claims from diverse Indigenous groups, it is limited by the burdens placed on those requesting return. A proactive approach shifts at least some of this work back to the holding institution by requiring them to research collections and contact communities that may have an interest in them. Museum or university employees undertake thorough research into collections, their origins, and histories (i.e., what is there; who collected it, where, from whom, and how; and why it was accessioned into the current institution). Such information on collections' provenance can provide insight into traditional owners and descendants. The institution can then proactively contact appropriate stakeholders regarding materials of potential interest to discuss all available options.

Figures 8.2 and 8.3 compare a responsive approach to repatriation with a proactive one by identifying the typical steps involved in each. A responsive approach typically begins with a request for information by a descendant community (Figure 8.2; see Young 2010, 2016). This will prompt institutional research into the collection(s) in

question. The institution will typically review available archival information associated with the collection's history (i.e., accession information). There is also an initial review of the cultural affiliation claim at this stage. The institution's response to the informational request may be followed by community consultation to discuss next steps (i.e., continued stewardship, repatriation, or potentially even research). If repatriation is desired, a second request is submitted by the descendant community and then reviewed by the holding institution.[279] If the request is denied, the requested materials will remain in the care of the holding institution. If it is approved, the institution will typically notify any other communities that have overlapping interests. Most institutional policies require the resolution of overlapping or conflicting claims before repatriation can proceed. If there are no overlapping claims, the requested materials are returned.

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[279] In larger institutions (e.g., the Royal Ontario Museum), the review of these claims is usually done by the Board of Governors or Trustees. These bodies are the legal representative bodies in most museum governance models.
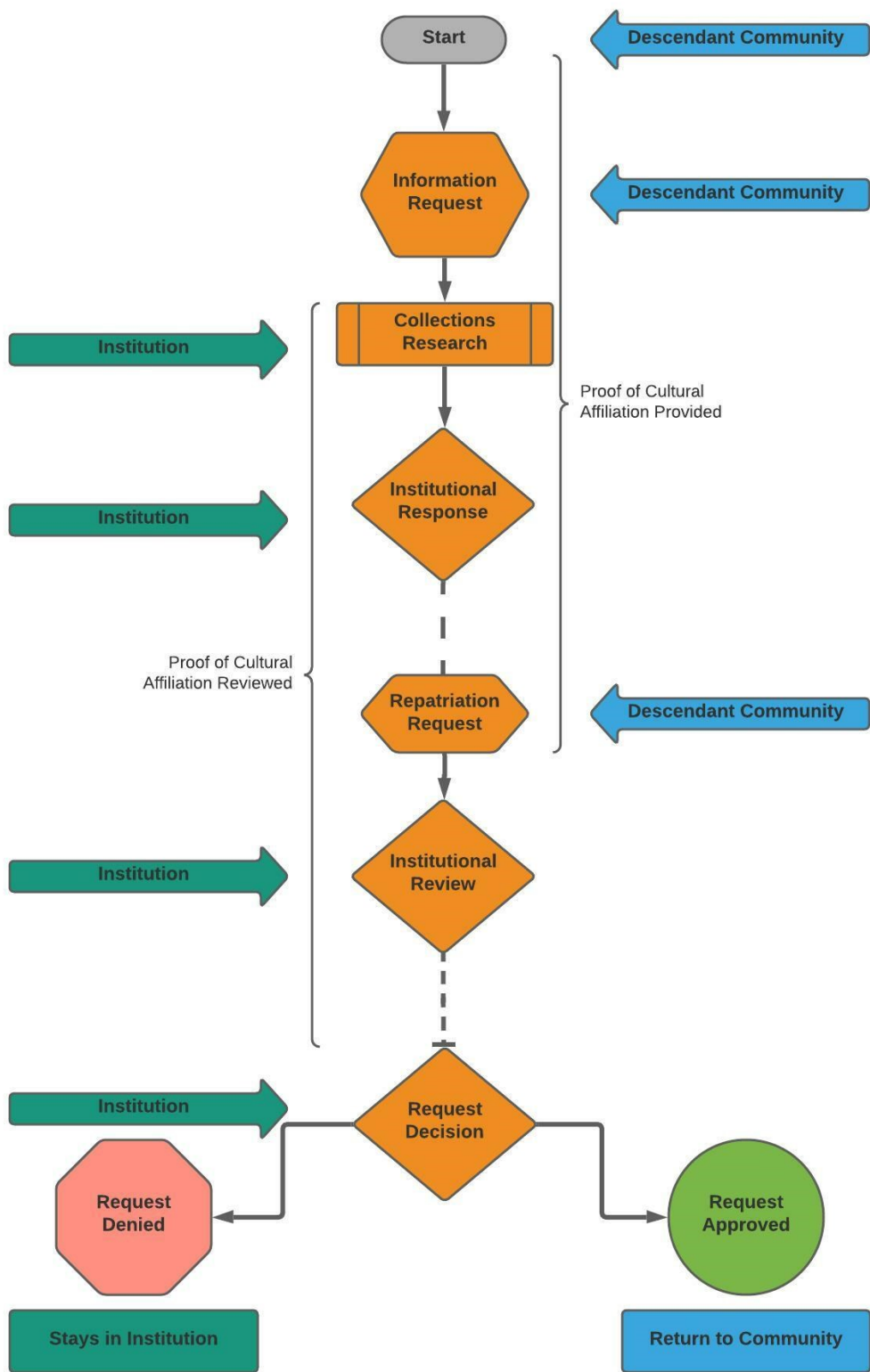
Figure 8.1. A responsive approach to repatriation.
These processes typically start with a request for information on collection(s) at the top. The actors and their respective actions are identified by arrows on either side of the process.

A proactive approach to repatriation follows a similar set of steps; however, as demonstrated in Figure 8.3, it places more of the initial burden of research and consultation on the holding institution (see Jones 2020; Rowley and Hausler 2008). In this model, the institution proactively undertakes research into the origins and history of its collections. This research may identify the appropriate descendant community or communities that should be consulted on the use and/or disposition of materials in the collection. Since this is proactively done, the holding institution can then consult with a descendant community on available options (e.g., stewardship, research, or repatriation). Transfer of title and/or stewardship agreements can ensure descendants' rights are recognized until materials are returned. If repatriation is desired, the process can potentially be expedited given earlier research determining cultural affiliation.
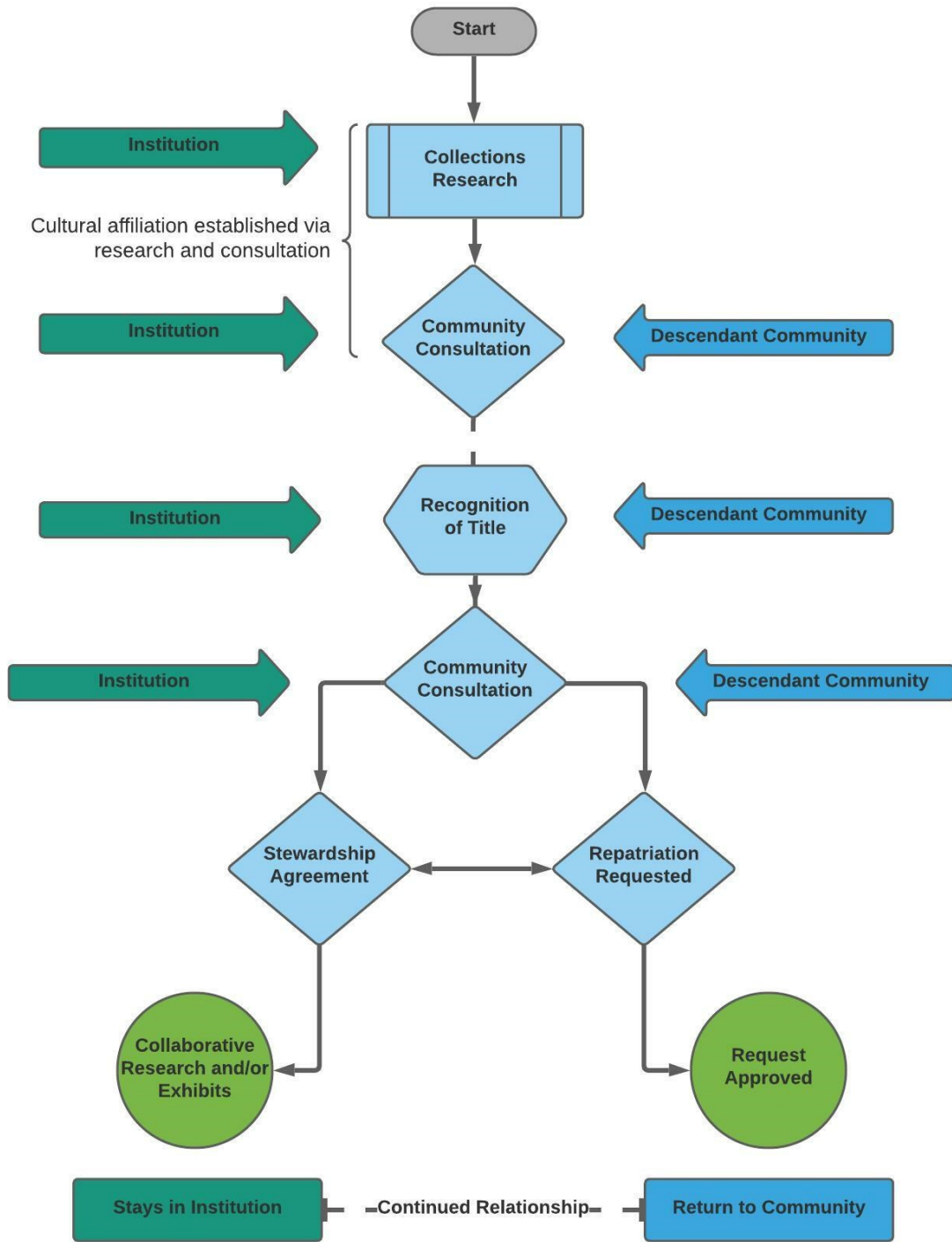
Figure 8.2. A proactive approach to repatriation.
This approach would begin with institutional research on collections to determine appropriate consulting community (top). The actors and their respective actions are identified by arrows on either side of the process.

There is a significant difference in the work required of the descendant community between the two approaches. A responsive approach (Figure 8.2) frontloads the claimant's responsibilities, requiring them to request both information on collections and, if desired, their return. It also requires them to provide proof of cultural affiliation with claimed materials. Institutional responsibilities typically begin with the initial informational request, then include the review and determination of the repatriation request. In contrast, the proactive approach (Figure 8.3) places the burdens of research and proof of affiliation on the holding institution. In this approach, the descendant community and institution work in tandem and on equal footing.

Given the decidedly different priorities for collections and the resources required to proactively return them, most institutions have avoided taking this approach. They either respond to individual requests or have been legally mandated to inventory their collections for repatriation purposes (e.g., NAGPRA in the United States). Thus, proactive approaches, when they are taken, are often case-specific. For example, the Journey Home Project resulted from consultations between the University of British Columbia's Laboratory of Archaeology (UBC LOA) and representatives of the Stó:lō Nation on the status of several ancestors the LOA was caring for (Rowley and Hausler 2008; Schaepe et al. 2015; Schaepe and Rowley 2021). The LOA proactively reached out to the Stó:lō Nation to determine the best path forward. Community members then decided to undertake anthropological study of these ancestors to better determine how and where to return them for reburial. Similarly, a shift in institutional culture around repatriation at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science resulted in an unorthodox approach to address both Indigenous ancestors *and* non-Indigenous human remains that were not subject to NAGPRA's repatriation requirements (Colwell and Nash 2021). In this case, the staff proactively sought the input of diverse communities to inform their decision-making surrounding the non-Indigenous remains (2021:88–89).[280] Both initiatives demonstrate the effort necessary to proactive repatriation, while emphasizing its value. They also show that such an approach can also bring diverse outcomes—not necessarily limited to repatriation.

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[280] This included representatives from anthropological and archaeological research communities, a local tribal representative (Cherokee), religious practitioners (a priest, rabbi, and imam), non-religious individuals (an agnostic and an atheist), museum staff, a lawyer, and a professor of religious studies. Colwell and Nash affectionately refer to this consultation as a "Bad Bar Joke Conference" (2021:88).

Building connections via proactive consultation and community engagement can start important conversations and add to what is known about materials in collections. When combined with restorative methodologies (Bruchac 2010; 2021), a proactive approach to repatriation is a meaningful and potentially mutually beneficial step towards the goals of reconciliation. A main reason for resistance to repatriation has been the claim of little or no documentation relating to collections. One way to address this is to conduct thorough and extensive provenance research to determine, if possible, who collected it, where, how, and why. This is something that repatriation practitioners in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australia have been undertaking for many years to ensure that ancestors are returned with as much accuracy as possible (e.g., Aranui 2020a; Fforde, Aranui et al. 2020).

Margaret Bruchac also advocates for provenance researchers go further when tracing the history of collections; to visit relevant archives outside of the holding institution and search for the collector's correspondence or journals; to consult with tribal knowledge holders and value the knowledge they share just as much as that found in archival records; and through this, restore knowledge around the collections themselves and their histories both in and outside of source communities. She argues that this information can help to restore understandings of Indigenous pasts that were ruptured by colonialism and collecting practices (2021). Similarly, Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh argue that thorough provenance research can contribute to truth-telling and bearing witness—an essential part of reconciliation and healing processes (2020:750–751). Research into these histories of collecting that integrates archival records with oral testimony and community memories can expand institutional and community knowledge, or it can complicate it.

Implementing a proactive approach to repatriation, one grounded in restorative practices, requires a significant shift in institutional mindsets around collections, ownership, stewardship, and, ultimately, reconciliation. An important point to make here—one well demonstrated by the three case studies examined in this study—is that repatriation does not always mean "return." Much of its power actually lies in "reconnection." In some cases, Indigenous groups will not be ready for the immediate return of their ancestors or belongings, meaning co-stewardship agreements may be established. In others, descendants may be more interested in collaborating on better representation or interpretation of collections, or may even seek to undertake studies of

ancestors or belongings before they are returned, requiring collaborative research agreements or a memorandum of understanding. Travelling or temporary exhibitions and other collaborative projects are also possible. All are potential options that can be explored, but what counts is first recognizing the continued connections between descendant communities and their ancestors or belongings in heritage institutions. The key is building relationships and working together towards a just outcome. In this way, taking a proactive and restorative approach to repatriation can work towards these and other reconciliation goals.

Rethinking Repatriation

The narrative of *loss* has undermined repatriation since the idea was first discussed in scholarly and museum circles. Institutional gatekeepers worried that implementing repatriation policies or legislation would empty museums and university collections. Returning ancestral remains continues to be seen by many as a "loss" to science and to our understanding of humanity's biological history (Aranui 2020a; Chatters 2017; Jenkins 2011, 2016b; Kakaliouras 2014; Weiss 2008; Weiss and Springer 2020).[281] Reburial has often been ominously described as the end of physical/biological anthropology. Similarly, discussions on the restitution of cultural belongings continue to raise concerns about "emptying museums" (Jenkins 2016a; Waltman 2020).[282]

Decades later, these fears have proven false or are at least exaggerated,[283] but the narrative remains. Such arguments prioritize western science and styles of learning above all else. They are steeped in ideas that see museums as bastions of knowledge and learning, while ignoring their well-documented history as monuments to colonial and imperial power. Thus, what these arguments really point to are institutional fears around the loss of control, of status, and of power, that comes with repatriation.

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[281] But see Aranui 2020a and Lippert 2008a, b for Indigenous perspectives on these arguments.

[282] See the British Museum Trustees' statement on the debate over the Parthenon Marbles https://www.britishmuseum.org/about-us/british-museum-story/contested-objects-collection/parthenon-sculptures/parthenon

[283] For example, ancestral remains that have been reburied are no longer accessible, but many have been studied prior (and see Nienabar et al. 2008 for an alternative). Unfettered access to Indigenous ancestral remains is also restricted, requiring consultation and consent prior to any research (much to the chagrin of some [see Weisse and Springer 2020]).

Repatriation movements, couched as they are within broader Indigenous rights activism, helped bring these biases into sharp focus. While repatriation continues to face resistance (e.g., Weiss and Springer 2020),[284] the recognition of Indigenous rights and sovereignty through repatriation has had a rippling and largely positive effect, transforming the way we do a lot of things in anthropology and archaeology (e.g., Kakaliouras 2017). Rather than a loss, repatriation can and should be viewed as an opportunity for all of us to revisit and address the past and critically reflect on the foundations of our disciplines—the good and the bad—to do better today.

Many practitioners and researchers have taken up this call, and a diversity of collaborative and community-based projects have developed (e.g., Atalay 2012; Meloche et al. 2021a, b; Swidler et al. 1997). Importantly, these have integrated Western scientific methods alongside Indigenous traditional knowledge, methods, and interests. For example, there are many examples of Indigenous groups working in collaboration and cooperation with western-trained scientists and institutions to undertake research before ancestors are reburied. There are also programs that seek to train Indigenous peoples to conduct such research on their own terms (e.g., the Summer internship for INdigenous peoples in Genomics [SING] [285]).[286]

In addition to the Journey Home Project mentioned above, collaborative initiatives have investigated the life histories of ancestors such as Kwäḍāy Dan Ts'ínchi ("Long Ago Person Found" [Hebda et al. 2017]) and Kayasochi Kikawenow (Brownlee and Syms 1993). As discussed in Chapter 6, Walpole Island First Nation has worked collaboratively with universities to learn more about their ancestors (D. Jacobs et al. 2021). Other projects at the Manitoba Museum, the Canadian Museum of History, and elsewhere (e.g., the shíshálh Archaeological Research Project[287]) have co-developed research programs with Indigenous partners. Projects like these demonstrate that, while repatriation has definitively changed biological anthropology, it has not ended it.[288]

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[284] Mainly from those unwilling to reflect on the realities of the past and its implications for the present.

[285] The SING consortium is an NIH-funded program for Indigenous community members to learn innovative concepts and methods at the cross section of indigeneity and genomics. See more here https://www.singconsortium.org

[286] Interestingly, projects like these appear to be more common in Canada.

[287] See https://shishalharchaeology.wordpress.com/

[288] See also https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/repatriation-effects/

While Indigenous ancestors have been the primary focus of many discussions on repatriation, descendant communities also seek the return of other relatives and belongings that have been collected and curated in museums and other institutions. Similar transformations can be seen in projects involving the return of secret/sacred objects, "everyday" cultural belongings, and other heritage materials. In addition to the Tłı̨chǫ and Gwich'in case studies examined here (Chapters 4 and 5), collaborative projects that connect descendants with museum objects can deepen both institutional and community knowledge. The rematriation of seed-ancestors to Anishinaabe and other Indigenous groups has brought with it a revitalization of traditional horticulture and related ceremonial practices. Similarly, Margaret Bruchac's (2018) restorative approach to the repatriation of wampum belts has shed new light on their historical purpose and meaning, and recharacterized what we know about Indigenous-settler relations in the early days of colonization.

Projects that bring Indigenous peoples and perspectives into museum spaces, repatriating archival and ethnographic knowledge at the same time, can be powerful for both the descendant community re-encountering such cultural information, and the museum or institution who is gaining new, culturally relevant information on things they have stewarded, sometimes for many years. Tuscarora scholar Richard W. Hill Sr. and Daniel Coleman (2019) offer a framework for such partnerships, based on the spirit of the Two Row Wampum or the Covenant Chain of Friendship. They argue that such an approach can facilitate a respectful approach to cross-cultural and cross-epistemological research (2019:340). Hill and Coleman identify five principles that are essential for such an approach: 1) research relationships are dialogical; 2) they are established in ceremony that is informed by a consciousness of place; 3) partners are necessarily equal even if they are distinct or different; 4) they make space for diverse experiences and perspectives; and 5) these relationships recognize that knowledge is to be *shared* not owned (2019:345–354). Partnerships built on principles like these (or other local frameworks) create what Cree scholar Willie Ermine (2007) has termed an "ethical space," where respectful and productive dialogue from differing perspectives can occur.

My point here is that in the 30 years since repatriation was officially addressed by most settler countries (i.e., NAGPRA in the United States [1991]; the Task Force Report in Canada [1992]; the first domestic [1985] and overseas [1990] repatriations to Australian Aboriginal groups; and Te Papa's repatriation program [2003] in New

Zealand[289]), repatriation work has not been only a loss. Instead, it has been an opportunity: to revisit/reveal the truth about the past; to explore, learn, and add more knowledge to the proverbial pile. It offers the chance for settler-colonial institutions and researchers to atone for the sins of their disciplinary (and familial) ancestors.[290] And, as demonstrated by the three very different examples examined in this dissertation, repatriation is an opportunity to build new relationships based on honesty, humility, respect, and understanding. Rethinking the way that we talk about and understand repatriation is an important step going forward.

Future Directions for Research

Repatriation movements brought significant and necessary changes to the ways that heritage practices. Relevant policy and institutional structures will need to grow and adapt with practice in order to contribute to reconciliation goals. My work is well situated in the growing body of literature that is beginning to consider the complex impacts of this process. Here, I propose three important areas that require further study.

First, there is a need for continued exploration of the idea that repatriation is a healing practice for Indigenous communities. In this study, I have identified three important dimensions: 1) repatriation's emphasis on the intangible; 2) the space it provides for practitioners to process complex emotions; and 3) its interconnections. Fforde, Knapman, and Walsh (2020) have also explored the concept of dignity in relation to repatriation of ancestors, while Atalay (2019) has discussed the importance of embodied practice and repatriation stories. These themes each demonstrate the multifaceted nature of repatriation work. They emphasize the myriad ways that it can intersect with and influence the collective health and well-being of descendant communities. Thus, they warrant further nuanced exploration to better understand the potential implications that repatriation can have for improved community outcomes.

Second, there is a need for critical examination (and maybe a reconsideration) of "repatriation" as the most appropriate term to describe this important work. Early in this project, I presented on my research and ideas to the WIFN community. In inviting people

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[289] These dates mark important policy-related landmarks for repatriation movements. However, it is important to note that Indigenous repatriation-activism predate them, sometimes by many decades (see Chapter 2).

[290] Thanks to John Welch for this sentiment.

to attend the public presentation, I made posters with the title of my project (see Figure 3.1) to invite people to come listen to me speak about "repatriation" and why it was important. At the first two events, there were fewer than ten people in attendance. I was confused; I knew the return of ancestors was an important issue for the community and there was always a lot of interest in talking about it. It wasn't until I met with a local sewing group that I realized "repatriation" is not the word that people used to describe this process locally. "Return" was more recognizable. This led me to reconsider when and how I use "repatriation" when referring to the return of ancestors, belongings, and other heritage items. Similarly, Tanya Dodge and others (i.e., Young et al. 2018) have argued that "rematriation" might be more appropriate when returning ancestors to the earth (October 24, 2019). There may also be more appropriate terms in local languages to describe this work. Thinking about the language we use is important. We must ensure that these conversations are accessible and appropriate, not just within academic circles but in affected communities.

Finally, both research areas require more in-depth, community-based, and long-term study of repatriation experiences. There is also a need for more Indigenous theorization on this subject, especially from within those communities undertaking repatriation projects. My work has demonstrated the diverse intersections and effects that repatriation can have across socio-cultural, political, economic, spiritual, and emotional spheres. It contributes to ongoing discussions around repatriation as a tool for restorative justice and healing. However, I am and always will be a white, settler academic. I understand and interpret what I see via my particular standpoint. Tracing the effects of repatriation through an Indigenous lens or worldview may yield entirely different and equally important results.

Other Considerations

Improving repatriation policies and structures will require the implementation of dedicated funding programs and a shift towards a more proactive, restorative approach. Thus far, such policies have primarily focused on the return of ancestral remains, sacred materials, cultural objects, and other cultural patrimony. However, intersecting issues that need further reflection include concerns about data sovereignty, intellectual property, and access to digital collections (e.g., Gray 2019); the disposition of ephemeral materials like accession records and files (e.g., Thorpe et al. 2020); and the importance

of intangible heritage like songs, stories, dances, and other knowledge often documented by ethnographers and anthropologists (see Gunderson et al. 2019; Nicholas 2017b).

In addition to these gaps, repatriation concerns are not only limited to Indigenous descendant communities. Nations like Egypt and Peru have been successful in returning cultural materials that were looted or questionably exported (Alderman 2010; Boger 2010). Greece continues to advocate for the return of the Parthenon Marbles from the British Museum (Fouseki 2014). Furthermore, other marginalized groups have raised concerns about the use and curation of human remains. Calls for the development of an African American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in the United States emphasize that the work of repatriation is not done.[291] These issues will also need to be addressed in future iterations of repatriation policy.

Concluding Thoughts

A conversation with Bryan Loucks (a WIFN spiritual practitioner and knowledge holder) reminded me of the important work that we all must do in difficult times. He said that experiences of trauma and pain develop in layers. These layers crack when we acknowledge and face the truth. As Bryan reminded me (via a well-known Leonard Cohen lyric[292]), these cracks, however painful they may be, are how the light gets in and then, shines out again. The cracks allow the heart to reconnect with the mind, body, and spirit, and that is where the real work of healing begins.

Repatriation events and the work needed to achieve them can be the catalyst for these cracks, setting healing in motion. My research, and that of so many others, has shown that this work can be a powerful undertaking for Indigenous descendant communities, holding institutions, and the individual settler-colonial people who are involved in the transfers. For descendants, it can be a reclamation of culture and identity, a reconnection to community and history, and a space to process cultural traumas. For holding institutions, repatriation is an opportunity to revisit institutional identity, to critically reflect on past practices and their impact in the present, and to build more

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[291] Advocates for this new Act seek protections like those in NAGPRA for African American ancestral remains in institutional collections (see Dunnavant et al. 2021).

[292] The lyrics are from the song "Anthem" by Leonard Cohen (https://qz.com/835076/leonard-cohens-anthem-the-story-of-the-line-there-is-a-crack-in-everything-thats-how-the-light-gets-in/).

equitable relationships for the future. For participants or observers from settler-colonial backgrounds, repatriation can be an important reminder that our shiny, white histories often have very dark shadows; that it is a privilege to handle and care for other people's heritage; and that coming together from a place of humility can create unexpected and absolutely necessary connections.

Repatriation ultimately brings two parties (i.e., descendants and the collectors/holders) together to acknowledge the truth of the past, make amends, and then, build something new. Frameworks like Hill and Coleman's (2019) Two-Row Wampum-Covenant Chain agreement, or Bruchac's restorative repatriation, offer important examples for the way forward. This work requires a great deal of uncovering, learning, and unlearning. But through it, we can get closer to the truth of the past and confront the ways it continues to affect us in the present. This is essential, not only for reconciliation but also to build a better, more equitable future.

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Appendix A.

Institutional Repatriation Policies

Table A includes several examples of institutional policies on repatriation. Where available, hyperlinks are provided.

Table A.1. Institutional repatriation policies in Canada.

Institutional Repatriation Policies in Canada			
Date	*Institution*	*Policy*	*Public?*
2000	Parks Canada	Management Directive 2.3.:Human Remains, Cemeteries, and Burial Grounds	No
2000	Parks Canada	Management Directive 2.3.:Repatriation of Moveable Cultural Resources of Aboriginal Affiliation	No
2011 (2001)	Canadian Museum of History	Repatriation Policy	Yes[1]
2000 (1995)	Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia	Guidelines for Repatriation	Yes[2]
2003	Royal BC Museum	Aboriginal Material Operating Policy	Yes[3]
2017	Royal BC Museum	Indigenous Collections and Repatriation Policy	Yes[4]
2019	Royal BC Museum and the Haida Gwaii Museum	Indigenous Repatriation Handbook	Yes[5]
2014	Laboratory of Archaeology, University of British Columbia	Policies and Procedures, and Repatriation Guidelines for Indigenous Peoples	Yes[6]
2017 (2008)	University of Alberta Museums	Museums and Collections Policy	Yes[7]
2010	Royal Saskatchewan Museum	Policy for the Management and Repatriation of Sacred and Culturally Sensitive Objects of Aboriginal Origin in the Ethnology Reserve Collection	Yes[8]
2007	University of Winnipeg Anthropology Museum	Policies and Procedures	?
2009	Manitoba Museum	Repatriation Policy	?

1999	Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto	Repatriation Policy	Yes[9]
2018 (2001)	Royal Ontario Museum	Board Policy: Repatriation of Canadian Indigenous Objects	Yes[10]
2018 (2002)	Royal Ontario Museum	Board Policy: Repatriation of Human Remains of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada	Yes[11]
2018	Yukon Territorial Government	Searching for Our Heritage Database	Yes[12]

[1] https://www.historymuseum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/REPATRIATION-POLICY.pdf

[2] https://moa.ubc.ca/culturally-sensitive-materials/

[3] https://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/documents/105663/aboriginal-material-operating-policy

[4] https://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/documents/105663/Indigenous-Collections-and-Repatriation-Policy

[5] https://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/sites/default/files/indigenous_repatriation_handbook_v01_screen_jw_20190327.pdf

[6] https://anth.ubc.ca/research/laboratory-of-archaeology/policies-and-procedures/

[7] https://www.ualberta.ca/museums/about/museum-policy

[8] https://royalsaskmuseum.ca/rsm/research/aboriginal-studies/repatriation-and-shared-stewardship

[9] https://anthropology.utoronto.ca/resources/repatriation-policy/

[10] https://www.rom.on.ca/sites/default/files/imce/policies2018/repatriation-indigenous-objects-2018.pdf

[11] https://www.rom.on.ca/sites/default/files/imce/policies2018/repatriation-human-remains-indigenous-peoples-2018.pdf

[12] http://www.tc.gov.yk.ca/museum_resources.html

Appendix B.

Research Approvals

Included here are the following research approvals

- Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics Approval
- Tłįcho Government Letter of Support
- Gwich'in Tribal Council Department of Culture & Heritage
- Walpole Island First Nation Letter of Support
- Aurora Research Institute NWT Research Permit

SFU

Minimal Risk Approval – Delegated

Study Number: 2018s0633
Study Title: Exploring Repatriation and its Effects

Approval Date: 2018 December 20   **Expiry Date:** 2019 December 20
Principal Investigator: Meloche, Chelsea H.   **Supervisor:** Nicholas, George
SFU Position: Graduate Student   **Faculty/Department:** Archaeology

SFU Collaborator: Welch, John
External Collaborator: n/a
Research Personnel: n/a
Project Leader: n/a

Funding Source: SSHRC Doctoral Award
Funding Title: Evaluating Indigenous Experiences with Repatriation in Canada

Document(s) Approved in this Letter:
- Study Details, version 2, dated 2018 December
- SSHRC Proposal, uploaded 2018 December 20
- PI Response, received 2018 December 20
- Consent Form, dated 2018 December
- Interview Script, dated 2018 November
- Interview Recruitment Script (Tlicho), dated 2018 December
- Interview Recruitment Script (Gwichin), dated 2018 December
- Interview Recruitment Script (WIFN), dated 2018 December
- Interview Recruitment Script, dated 2018 December
- Recruitment Script, dated 2018 December
- Oral Consent Process, 2018 November

The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human participants.

The approval for this Study expires on the **Expiry Date. An annual renewal form must be completed every year prior to the Expiry Date. Failure to submit an annual renewal form will lead to your study being suspended and potentially terminated.** The Board reviews and may amend decisions or subsequent amendments made independently by the authorized delegated reviewer at its regular monthly meeting.

This letter is your official ethics approval documentation for this project. Please keep this document for reference purposes.

<u>**This study has been approved by an authorized delegated reviewer.**</u>

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY   ENGAGING THE WORLD   Page 1 of 1

Amendment Approval - Delegated

Study Number: 2018s0633
Study Title: Exploring Repatriation and its Effects

Amendment Approval Date: May 22, 2019
Principal Investigator: Meloche, Chelsea H.
SFU Position: Graduate Student

Expiry Date: December 20, 2019
Supervisor: Nicholas, George
Faculty/Department: Archaeology

SFU Collaborator: Welch, John
External Collaborator: N/A
Research Personnel: N/A
Project Leader: N/A

Funding Source 1: SSHRC Doctoral Award
Funding Title 1: Evaluating Indigenous Experiences with Repatriation in Canada

Funding Source 2: Northern Scientific Training Program
Funding Source 2: What Happens Next?: Exploring the Effects of Repatriation on First Nations Communities in Canada

Document(s) Approved in this Amendment:
- NSTP Application 2019-2020 uploaded on May 13, 2019
- Amendment Form uploaded on May 13, 2019
- WIFN Letter of Support uploaded on May 22, 2019
- Department of Culture and Lands Protection Letter of Support uploaded on May 22, 2019
- ORE Acknowledgement Form uploaded on May 22, 2019
- Research Agreement with the GTC Department of Cultural Heritage uploaded on May 22, 2019
- NWPT Permit Approval uploaded on May 22, 2019
- Interview Consent Form uploaded on May 22, 2019
- Project Introduction – Newsletter uploaded on May 22, 2019
- Project Introduction – Radio Script uploaded on May 22, 2019
- Project Introduction - Social Media Post uploaded on May 22, 2019
- Study Details uploaded on May 22, 2019

The amendment(s) for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human participants.

Please note that approval of the amendment(s) does not change the expiry date on the current SFU REB approval of this study. The approval for this study expires on the **Expiry Date. An annual renewal form must be completed every year prior to the Expiry Date. Failure to submit an annual renewal form will lead to your study being suspended and potentially terminated.**

This letter is your official Amendment Approval documentation for this project. Please keep this document for reference purposes.

<u>The amendment to this study has been approved by an authorized delegated reviewer.</u>

Department of Culture and Lands Protection

Tłı̨chǫ Ndek'àowo

Tłı̨chǫ Government

Box 412
Behchoko, NT
X0E-0Y0

Ms. Meloche
Ph.D. Student
Simon Fraser University

December 6, 2018

Dear Ms. Meloche:

Please accept this letter in support of your research project titled: Exploring Repatriation and its Effects.

It was wonderful to have recently met you Chelsea. In reviewing your project and later discussing it with you in person, I was thrilled that you reached out to us, the Tłı̨chǫ, to be a part of this wonderful work! Your research Exploring Repatriation and its Effects being a comparative case study focusing on the experiences of three First Nations communities with repatriation and repatriation processes will shine light on repatriation and ideally guide other Indigenous communities through their own repatriation process(es).

The Department of Culture and Lands Protection is a large department within the Tłı̨chǫ Government. Our main mandate of the department is to ensure that our Tłı̨chǫ language, culture and way of life are alive and well. Part of this mandate includes knowing our history and repatriation plays a huge part in this.

The Tłı̨chǫ Government supports you in this work and invites you to work collaboratively with the Dedats'eetsaa: Tłı̨chǫ Research and Training Institute as well as other community members who have been involved in our own repatriation work. Collecting your data through semi-structured interviews, talking circles and informal discussions is a natural way to gather information from the participants. Your openness to include participants in continued consultations will ensure the community guides this process.

After data collection and analysis from the three communities is completed, the Tłı̨chǫ region welcomes a report not only on our contributions to this research but also on the commonalties from the three Indigenous groups that are part of this research.

Although our region has undergone some repatriation work in the past, there is still so much to do. The Tłı̨chǫ have belongings all over the world that need to come home. I agree that this process can be very healing but it can also be painful. I see your research in helping to guide us in our next phase of repatriation work.

Masi again for reaching out to the Tłı̨chǫ to assist with your research. We are excited to be included. This important work will greatly benefit not only our Tłı̨chǫ region, but other Indigenous communities as well.

Sincerely,

Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault
Director, Department of Culture and Lands Protection
Tłı̨chǫ Government

RESEARCH AGREEMENT WITH THE
GTC Department of Cultural Heritage

Date of Agreement: May 2019

Principal Investigator:
Name: Chelsea H. Meloche Address: Telephone: Email:
Associated Institution:
Name: Simon Fraser University (SFU) Address: 8888 University Dr.. Burnaby. BC. V5A 1S6 Telephone: Email:
Gwich'in Organization:
Name: Gwich'in Tribal Council. Department of Cultural Heritage Address: Telephone: Email:
Project Title:
Exploring Repatriation and its Effects: The Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project
Permit Types and Numbers:
NWT Scientific Research License # 4404 (Aurora Research Institute)
Ethical Review Conducted: Yes _X_ No __ If yes. provide written proof from University Committee. SSHRC, NSERC etc. If no. detail steps that will be taken to obtain Ethical Review: *See conditional ethics approval attached.*
Copy of Informed Consent Statement using Schedule "B" as a template is attached: Yes _X_ No __
List purpose, goals and objectives of this Research Project:
I am proposing to work with the Gwich'in as part of my dissertation research that aims to better understand how Indigenous communities may be affected by repatriation processes and outcomes, and. more generally. to consider the role of repatriation for reconciliation. As part of this work. I will consider how the Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project has affected their communities. *Research Questions:* What happens after a repatriation is "completed"? How are receiving communities affected by repatriation processes and outcomes? How do repatriation processes and meanings change? *Research Objectives:* 1. To understand how the meaning and processes of *repatriation* change across different jurisdictions. 2. To understand the social. cultural. economic. and political effects that repatriation may have on recipient Indigenous communities 3. To assess how and why identified effects may be similar or different among and within partner communities. 4. To note any community-identified factors that contributed to satisfying repatriation processes and results. To accomplish this. I am undertaking a comparative case study to work with four partner communities. Pending final agreements. research will be conducted on the traditional territories of Walpole Island First Nation (ON). Gwich'in (NT). and Tłįchǫ (NT) nations.

1 of 4

List sources of funding obtained:
- the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
- the Northern Scientific Training Program
- Simon Fraser University

Duration of Research (number of field seasons/dates in Region):
1 field season (Summer 2019)

Identify Community Advisory Body (Department of Cultural Heritage/ Elders Council / Gwich'in Land and Resource Advisory Committee / Renewable Resource Council /other):
Department of Cultural Heritage, Gwich'in Tribal Council

Detail benefits to community (education, training, employment, capacity building):
To ensure that my research is reciprocal, I will work to engage meaningfully with the Gwich'in and other partner communities. This may include organizing talking circles on repatriation and other critical heritage issues as desired by the community. During all phases of research in Gwich'in traditional territory, preference in employment and/or training opportunities will also be given to qualified Gwich'in community members.
After I will distribute copies of my dissertation, any subsequent publications, and an executive summary of my research, written in plain language so that it can be adapted for local publications. I plan to publish the results in both academic journals and more publicly accessible forums, co-authoring with community members. Any publications will follow the rules established in the Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge Policy.
In addition to documenting internal knowledge and experiences with repatriation work, this project will also compile a resource kit on repatriation for each partner community including: relevant policies, guidelines, case studies, and examples of scholarly research on repatriation from around the world. These kits could also be the basis for the development of an accessible, web-based resource on repatriation practice and policy in Canada.

Detail research methodology to be used:
I am working to be as collaborative as possible for this project and I will work closely with the Gwich'in and other partner communities to ensure the continued relevance and sensitivity of my work.
I will use semi-structured interviews and informal discussions to gather personal and professional experiences with The Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project. I hope to complete a minimum of 5–10 interviews. I am particularly interested in working with the individuals who organized or participated in the Clothing Project. I want to learn of their experiences with the project itself, whether any subsequent repatriation-revitalization work has been sought since, and whether the workshops fostered the continued use of traditional sewing skills and patterns in contemporary works. I am also interested in speaking with other Gwich'in representatives directly involved in repatriation work (e.g., heritage advisors, elected and traditional leaders, community elders).
Interviews will seek information on experiences with the repatriation process and any community-identified effects (both positive and negative). Questions will seek community members' input on the development or revitalization of cultural practices, the generation of material culture, the presence of the returned in the community, the development or demise of research relationships, economic benefits or burdens, cross-community relationships, policy development, socio-political capacity, and socio-economic infrastructure.
Interviews will be audio-recorded when participants are willing, and notes taken if not. Participants will have the option to review their transcripts for accuracy and to ensure that any sensitive information is removed.
I will organize the information collected during interviews to identify common themes within individual case studies and then compare them across the dataset. Results will be reviewed by partner communities. Upon completion, I will report individual results to each partner community.

Detail any Ownership Agreements for Data Collected:
Digital copies of audio recordings and transcripts, final report, and associated research material will be provided to the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Department of Cultural Heritage with the understanding that these may be used by GTC DCH and other researchers in the future, with the source properly credited. This is indicated in the interview consent procedure (see attached).

Detail how data will be accessed in future and any storage agreements:

All digital data, including audio recordings and photos, will be kept in an encrypted folder both on my own computer and in a backup drive. Signed consent forms will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home office, or in a secure folder while travelling. No data will be stored or sent outside of Canada.

The principle investigator, Chelsea Meloche, will have access to the raw data. George Nicholas (PhD Supervisor) will also have access in the capacity for review only. This is indicated on the Consent Form (see attached).

As detailed on the consent form, any information or quotations used from the interviews will be properly accredited.

All interview transcripts, recordings, digital photographs with photo logs, and original copies of the completed reports will be submitted to the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Department of Cultural Heritage or other designated Traditional Knowledge repository in digital format at the end of the study to be added to the Gwich'in Archives as per the *Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge Policy* and the *Guide for Researchers*.

Detail methods of consulting with and communicating results to community members during and after the project:

To me, meaningful consultation is developing and maintaining a relationship between myself and the community with whom I wish to work. In this sense, consultation with the Gwich'in will involve regular conversations (by phone and email) about project progress and updates with my community contacts and other appropriate representatives. Community representatives will include members of the Department of Cultural Heritage (Gwich'in Tribal Council), whom represent the interests of the wider community in heritage and other matters.

I will visit the community, participate in community events where appropriate (and invited), and keep in touch with participants by phone and email when I am not able to be physically present. After I complete my dissertation, I will provide digital and hardcopies to the community. I will also seek funding to return to give a public presentation on my research results.

Detail how you propose to incorporate Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge into the research:

The Gwich'in Traditional Caribou Skin Clothing Project (2000–2003) re-connected Gwich'in seamstresses with traditional caribou hide clothing that had been long-removed from their communities. This collaborative project repatriated traditional skills and knowledge that were no longer practiced by Gwich'in communities and fostered connections between community members across a range of ages and experiences. For the proposed project, it offers an opportunity to explore repatriation from a local community angle: one where access to cultural materials was important because it fostered the return of the sewing skills and methods, traditional knowledge, stories, and teachings needed to recreate them.

This reconnection to Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge will thus form the foundation of my exploration of the effects of repatriation on the Gwich'in. I am seeking to consider community-identified effects and experiences with repatriation processes and outcomes.

Detail how confidentiality will be maintained during and after this project if requested:

Given the subject matter of this project, it is anticipated that participants will likely desire their names to be recorded alongside the knowledge that they choose to share with me. This work will be part of efforts to document Gwich'in traditional knowledge, teachings, and values around repatriation and its importance for the wider community. As noted in the *Gwich'in Guide for Researchers*, including the names of participants in this study will add credibility to the TK provided and properly accredit the contributions of Gwich'in participants in this project. I will record the names of Gwich'in interviewees so that future generations can access, identify, and learn from them. This is reflected on the updated Consent Form (see attached).

Detail any Media Relations Agreement:

No such agreement exists.

Termination:

September 15, 2019 (per ARI permit)

Statements:

The Principle Investigator agrees that any copies of future publications, reports or products of the research will be forwarded to the GTC Department of Cultural Heritage.

The Principle Investigator acknowledges receipt of a copy of the document entitled "Working with Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge in the Gwich'in Settlement Region" and agrees to abide by all guidelines contained therein.

The Principle Investigator indemnifies and saves harmless any of the Gwich'in organizations from any liability and hereby waives any legal claim against it for any event that might occur during the course of the project.

Copies of this form must be submitted to th

GTC Department of Cultural Heritage
Director

The Council of Three Fires

★◆★◆★◆★◆★◆★◆★◆★◆★◆★◆★

February 26, 2019

Attn: Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to express our interest and willingness to conduct a community-based research project with Chelsea Meloche, supporting her ethics application (***Exploring Repatriation and its Effects, 2018s0633***) at Simon Fraser University.

We have identified that our work shares some common priorities, and Chelsea's research has the potential to generate concrete benefits to our First Nation community. Thus, I would like to express our interest and willingness to collaborate with Chelsea to develop a more formal research relationship. Our Heritage Centre Advisory Committee and Walpole Island First Nation community will support her research, providing input and feedback to her work.

Sincerely

Interim Supervisor,
Nin.Da.Waab.Jig/Walpole Island Heritage Centre

2019
Northwest Territories Scientific Research Licence

Issued by:	**Aurora Research Institute – Aurora College** Inuvik, Northwest Territories
Issued to:	Ms. Chelsea H Meloche Simon Fraser University
	Phone: Email:
Affiliation:	Simon Fraser University
Funding:	SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship Northern Scientific Training Program Simon Fraser University Travel and Minor Research Award
Team Members:	Dr. John R. Welch
Title:	**Exploring Repatriation and its Effects**
Objectives:	To explore the effects of repatriation from the perspective of receiving communities and, more generally, consider the roles of repatriation for reconciliation efforts in Canada.
Dates of data collection:	May 15, 2019 to July 12, 2019
Location:	Yellowknife, Behchokò, Inuvik, Fort McPherson, and Tsiigehtchic

Licence No.16543 expires on December 31, 2019
Issued in the Town of Inuvik on May 09, 2019

* original signed *
_____
Pippa Seccombe-Hett
Vice President, Research
Aurora Research Institute

Appendix C.

Consent Forms

Included are

- Interview Consent Form
    - Used for Tłįchǫ case study interviews, Walpole Island First Nation case study interviews, and other interviews
- Gwich'in Interview Consent Form
    - Used for Gwich'in case study interviews

Interview Consent Form:
Exploring Repatriation and its Effects

Study Team

Principal Investigator:
Chelsea Meloche
Department of Archaeology, SFU

Senior Supervisor:
Dr. George Nicholas
Department of Archaeology, SFU

This study is being undertaken as part of a doctoral degree in Archaeology at Simon Fraser University (SFU). This research is part of a thesis project, portions of which are intended for eventual publication. This study is funded, in part, by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. *If your band has a specific research protocol, this permission has been acquired.*

SFU and Chelsea Meloche, the principle researcher, subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants. Should you wish to have any questions or concerns, please contact the Director of the Office of Research Ethics, _____, by phone _____ or email at ____.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have received this document, reviewed all three pages, considered the possible risks or benefits of this research study, received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Why are we doing this study?

For my doctoral research, I am interested in learning more about First Nations communities' experiences with repatriation. By asking "what happens *next*?" I hope to learn more about how your community has been affected by this process and, more generally, how repatriation fits into reconciliation efforts today.

What will your participation in this study be like?

Our interview will take approximately 1 hour. Ideally it will be in person or by telephone. We will talk about your experiences with, and opinions on repatriation. With your permission, I will audio-record our conversation in addition to taking notes.

☐ *Please check this box if you consent to having this conversation audio-recorded.*

If you would like to review the interview transcript, I will provide you with a copy and you will have up to two weeks to review it. *If you choose this option*, I will contact you by phone or email after a two-week period to discuss your review of the transcript. If you notice anything that you do not want included in my research, I will redact it from the transcript.

☐ *Please check this box if you would like to review the interview transcript.*

Page 1 of 3

What are the possible risks?

I do not believe there is any aspect of this study that poses a risk to participants. However, our conversation may address sensitive and potentially distressing issues. You have the right to decline to answer any question and if, at any time during the interview or after, you feel discomfort about what we have talked about, the interview will be paused and rescheduled, or you can decide to withdraw your participation.

All participants must be 19 years of age or older.

What are the possible benefits?

My hope is that this study will contribute to a better understanding of repatriation, and how it affects receiving communities. I believe that in the future this work will have the potential to inform culturally sensitive heritage policy and repatriation guidelines.

This project will also compile community knowledge on repatriation and related activities, documenting internal knowledge for use by future generations.

How will your identity be protected?

Two levels of confidentiality are offered for this study. Please indicate your preference below:

☐ *Full Confidentiality*: If you decide that you would like to remain anonymous in your participation, I will not use any identifying information in referring to your responses in the final document.

☐ *No Confidentiality*: By agreeing to this option, you consent to allow me to identify you by your full name and any demographic information.

Please note, if we are talking on the phone or by Skype, there is no guarantee that our conversation will be completely confidential, as these are inherently unsecured connections.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may still choose to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from this study, I will immediately destroy all data collected from or about you. Deciding not to participate will not have any adverse effect or consequence.

What will happen to the results of this study?

The audio files of the interviews will be transcribed. Recordings will be stored securely on my encrypted computer. Only the study team for this project (identified above) will have access to any interview files for the duration of the project.

Upon completion of this project, the interview audio file and transcript will be transferred to your community. If you have selected full confidentiality, your audio file will be deleted and a coded transcript with all identifying information removed will be issued to your community. Otherwise, your community will archive these materials for their benefit and records.

These interviews may be used in my dissertation as paraphrased or direct quotes, or as a consolidated measurement with other responses (e.g., "60% of participants said…").

Once my dissertation is approved, it will be stored in SFU's online research repository. Copies will be provided to each partner community in this study for their records. Portions of my thesis may also be published in academic journals or on public forums (e.g., newsletter or blog post).

Page 2 of 3

☐ *Please check here if you wish to be notified of any publications related to this research and wish to receive a copy.*

Who can you contact if you have any questions about this study?

If you have any further questions about this study, please contact me by phone or by email.

Who can you contact if you have concerns about this study?

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact the Director of the Office of Research Ethics.

Consent to Participate

Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, you may choose to withdraw at any time.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records and that you consent to participate in this study.

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date (YYYY/MM/DD)

_____   _____
Printed name of Participant signing above   Participant contact information (*Optional*)

Interview Consent Form (read aloud to each interviewee):
Exploring Repatriation and its Effects, Gwich'in communities

Study Team

Principal Investigator:
Chelsea Meloche
Department of Archaeology, SFU

Senior Supervisor:
Dr. George Nicholas
Department of Archaeology, SFU

This study is being undertaken as part of a doctoral degree in Archaeology at Simon Fraser University (SFU). This research is part of a thesis project, portions of which are intended for eventual publication. This study is funded, in part, by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. *If your community has a specific research protocol, this permission has been acquired.*

SFU and Chelsea Meloche, the principle researcher, subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants. Should you wish to have any questions or concerns, please contact the Director of the Office of Research Ethics.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received this document, reviewed all three pages of this document, considered the possible risks or benefits of this research study, received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Why are we doing this study?

For my doctoral research, I am interested in learning more about First Nations communities' experiences with repatriation in Canada. By asking "what happens *next*?" I hope to learn more about how your community has been affected by this process and, more generally, how repatriation fits into reconciliation efforts today.

What will your participation in this study be like?

Our interview will take approximately 1 hour. Ideally it will be in person or by telephone. We will talk about your experiences with, and opinions on repatriation. With your permission, I will audio-record our conversation in addition to taking notes.

☐ *Please check this box if you consent to having this conversation audio-recorded.*

If you would like to review the interview transcript, I will provide you with a copy and you will have up to two weeks to review it. *If you choose this option*, I will contact you by phone or email after a two-week period to discuss your review of the transcript. If you notice anything that you do not want included in my research, I will redact it from the transcript.

☐ *Please check this box if you would like to review the interview transcript.*

Page 1 of 3

What are the possible risks?

I do not believe there is any aspect of this study that poses a risk to participants. However, our conversation may address sensitive and potentially distressing issues (i.e. bring back memories of being taught traditional knowledge, skills, or teachings by a dear grandmother, mother, auntie, or father who are no longer alive). You have the right to decline to answer any question and if, at any time during the interview or after, you feel discomfort about what we have talked about, the interview will be paused and rescheduled, or you can decide to withdraw your participation.

All participants must be 19 years of age or older.

What are the possible benefits?

My hope is that this study will contribute to a better understanding of repatriation, and how it affects receiving communities. I believe that in the future this work will have the potential to inform and help develop culturally sensitive heritage policy and repatriation guidelines in Canada.

This project will also compile community knowledge on repatriation and related activities, documenting internal knowledge for use by future generations.

How will your identity be protected?

This project seeks, in part, to document Gwich'in traditional knowledge surrounding repatriation. Therefore, I will identify all participants by their name. This will acknowledge your contribution to this project for future generations (i.e. future Gwich'in grandchildren).

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may still choose to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from this study, I will immediately destroy all data collected from or about you. Deciding not to participate will not have any adverse effect or consequence.

What will happen to the results of this study?

The audio files of the interviews will be transcribed. Recordings will be stored securely on my encrypted computer. Only the study team (identified above) will have access to any interview files for the duration of the project.

Upon completion of this project, the interview audio file, transcript and any associated research material will be deposited with the GTC Department of Cultural Heritage in digital format to transfer to the Gwich'in Archives. The GTC Department of Cultural Heritage will archive these materials for future records.

Data collected from these interviews may be used in my dissertation as paraphrased or direct quotes, or as a consolidated measurement with other responses (e.g., "60% of participants said…").

Once my dissertation is approved, it will be stored in SFU's online research repository. Copies will be provided to each partner community in this study for their records or archives. Portions of my thesis may also be published in academic journals or on public forums (e.g., newsletter or blog post).

☐ *Please check here if you wish to be notified of any publications related to this research and wish to receive a copy.*

Who can you contact if you have any questions about this study?

If you have any further questions about this study, please contact me by phone or by email.

Who can you contact if you have concerns about this study?

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact the Director of the Office of Research Ethics.

Consent to Participate

Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, you may choose to withdraw at any time.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records and that you consent to participate in this study.

_____ _____
Participant Signature   Date (YYYY/MM/DD)

_____ _____
Printed name of Participant signing above   Participant contact information (*Optional*)

Appendix D.

Interview Guide

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Interview Guide
Exploring Repatriation and its Effects

Study Team

Principal Investigator:
Chelsea Meloche
Department of Archaeology, SFU

Senior Supervisor:
Dr. George Nicholas
Department of Archaeology, SFU

Tentative Interview Questions
*While this guide includes a list of questions, it will not act as a script but rather a general outline for interviews; wording, follow-up questions and prompts may emerge during the interview. Questions asked (or not) may vary based on community, repatriation examples, and participant's experience/role in repatriation matters.

Preliminary questions are oriented by potential effects as identified in the literature. Interviews will seek information on experiences with the repatriation process and community-identified social, cultural, political, and economic effects. Due to the inductive nature of qualitative research and the emergent design approach of this project, some of these elements may evolve as the project progresses.

Experience with Repatriation
- Can you tell me about your experience(s) with repatriation?
  - Have these experiences changed over time?
  - What differences in process have you noticed (if multiple)?
- Why was repatriation something that was important to you? Why did you take on this role?
  - Did the repatriation have an impact on you? Can you tell me more about that?
  - Can you tell me more about the meaning/significance the return of these [*ancestors/belongings*] has had for you?
  - How do you feel they are understood in/by your community?
- What are your feelings towards museums and other institutions with heritage and research collections (e.g., universities)?
- What are your feelings towards institutions holding [*ancestors/belongings*]?

Repatriation Processes/Procedures and Outcomes
- Do you remember any of the discussions about [*repatriation*]?
  - What was the tone of these discussions?
  - Do you think repatriation was understood to be a positive thing for the institutional representatives?
  - What about your community? Were there any who did not want these ancestors/belongings returned?

Page 1 of 3

372

- Can you tell me more about the institutional processes that were followed?
    - Did the institution have a repatriation policy in place already?
    - What was consultation like?
    - Did you feel like it was a complicated process?
    - Were there any problems faced during the repatriation process?
    - How long did it take to return your [*ancestors/belongings*]?
        - Do you think this was reasonable? Why or why not?
- How was your community involved in the repatriation?
    - Did the repatriation bring the community together? Divide it?
    - What do you think was the most challenging part?
    - Do you think your community benefitted in any way? If so, how?
- How do decisions get made within your community regarding repatriation?
    - Does your community have a heritage policy?
    - Does it include information about repatriation?
- Who funded [*repatriation*]?
    - Was there any issue funding [*repatriation*]?
- Were there other communities involved in the repatriation process?
    - If so, was there co-operation? Dissent?
    - Have these relationships persisted since the repatriation was completed?
- Was the [*Provincial/Territorial Government*] involved in the repatriation at all? If so, how? If not, why not?
    - Do you think the [*Provincial/Territorial Government*] is doing everything it can in terms of dealing with returning [*ancestors/belongings*] (in terms of guidance, funding, interest)?
    - Could they do more? What would that look like?
- Can you describe the handover ceremony?
    - How did you react to the ceremony?
    - Were you involved directly? How did being involved make you feel?
- What cultural traditions and values inform the return of [*ancestors/belongings*]?
- How did you welcome the [*ancestors/belongings*] home?
    - Was this a new or adapted process?
- If it is appropriate, can you tell me about what happened once the [*ancestors/belongings*] were returned?
- Have the repatriation(s) been documented in any way?
    - Do you think there is a benefit to documenting the process/event? Why or why not?
- What did you like about the repatriation process?
    - Was there anything you did not like about the process?
- What could be done to make repatriation easier for First Nations communities?
- Has the [*returning institution*] kept in touch? If so, how?
    - Do you think there would be any advantage in staying in contact with them? Why or why not?

Page 2 of 3

- Were the [*ancestors/belongings*] studied prior to their return? If so, how?
  - Are there things that we can learn from [*ancestors/belongings*] before they are returned?
  - Do you think it is important to study [*ancestors/belongings*]? Why or why not?
  - If [*ancestors/belongings*] were studied, how were these relationships initiated? Have there been any conflicts? If so, how have they been resolved?
- Are the [*ancestors/belongings*] still present in the community? How?
  - Have the reburial/storage locations become sites of significance?
  - How is this recognized?
- Has your community returned other [*ancestors/belongings*] since?
- Does the community have a dedicated space to house the [*ancestors/belongings*]?
  - Is it publicly accessible?
  - Does it provide any economic benefit to the community?
- Does your community have any plans to house returned [*ancestors/belongings*]?
- Many communities feel that repatriation has helped young people connect with traditional culture and values, do you think this is true in your community?

Appendix E.

Interview Participants

Tables E.1, E.2, E.3, and E.4 list formal interviews and several informal conversations. Note, those dates with an asterisk (*) indicate a formal interview that I followed up on at least once. These follow-up conversations are referenced as "personal communications" in the dissertation.

Table E.1. Tłı̨chǫ Case Study Interviews.

Interview Date	Name	Interview Location	Role(s)
Several informal conversations (*)	Tammy Steinwand	Yellowknife, NWT	*Project:* N/A *At time of interview:* Director of Culture and Lands (Tłı̨chǫ Government)
June 20, 2019	Peter Huskey	Yellowknife, NWT	*Project:* Descendant of K'aàwiidaà (original lodge owner) *At time of interview:* Consultant, language translation and culture (Tłı̨chǫ Government)
June 21, 2019	Don Gardner	Yellowknife, NWT	*Project:* Canoe building expert consultant *At time of interview:* Canoe building expert consultant
June 24, 2019	Giselle Marion	Behchokǫ̀, NWT/Tłı̨chǫ Territory	*Project:* N/A *At time of interview:* Director of Client Services (Tłı̨chǫ Government)

Interview Date	Name	Interview Location	Role(s)
June 27, 2019 (*)	John B. Zoe	Yellowknife, NWT	*Project:* Project coordinator/liaison *At time of interview:* Consultant, culture, research, and politics (Tłįchǫ Government)
July 4, 2019	George Mackenzie	Behchokǫ̀, NWT/Tłįchǫ Territory	*Project:* Project Manager/Dept Education/Principal at CJBHS *At time of interview:* Tłįchǫ Grand Chief (Tłįchǫ Government)
July 4, 2019	Jim Martin	Behchokǫ̀, NWT/Tłįchǫ Territory	*Project:* N/A *At time of interview:* Cultural Practices (Tłįchǫ Government)
July 4, 2019	Tony Rabesca	Behchokǫ̀, NWT/Tłįchǫ Territory	*Project:* N/A *At time of interview:* Cultural Services (Tłįchǫ Government)
October 17, 2019	Rosa Mantla	Phone	*Project:* Project Liaison with Tłįchǫ Education Department/Elders; Principle at EMES *At time of interview:* Retired Tłįchǫ Community Services Agency (Tłįchǫ Government)
June 25, 2019	Mike Mitchell	Yellowknife, NWT	*Project:* Organized 2018 Lodge event at PWNHC *At time of interview:* Curator of Heritage Education and Public Programs (PWNHC)
August 1, 2019 (*)	Tom Andrews (with Ingrid Kritsch)	Edmonton, AB	*Project:* Project Coordinator/Manager *At time of interview:* Retired NWT Territorial Archaeologist (GNWT/PWNHC)

Table E.2. Gwich'in Case Study Interviews.

Interview Date	Name	Interview Location	Role(s)
Several informal conversations (*)	Sharon Snowshoe	Fort McPherson, NWT/ Gwich'in Settlement Area	*Project:* N/A *At time of interview:* Director, GTC Department of Culture & Heritage
June 23, 2019 (*)	Karen Wright-Fraser	Yellowknife, NWT	*Project:* Lead Seamstress/Coordinator *At time of interview:* Retired, GNWT Community Coordinator/Liaison (PWNHC)
June 27, 2019 (*)	Audrey Snowshoe	Phone	*Project:* Seamstress (Aklavik)
July 5, 2019	Shirley Stewart	Yellowknife, NWT	*Project:* Seamstress (Fort McPherson) *At time of interview:* Nurse
July 24, 2019	Lillian Wright	Inuvik, NWT/Gwich'in Settlement Area	*Project:* Seamstress (Inuvik) *At time of interview:* Retired
July 24, 2019	Ruth Wright	Inuvik, NWT/Gwich'in Settlement Area	*Project:* Seamstress (Inuvik)
July 27, 2019	Agnes Mitchell	Tsiigehtchic, NWT/Gwich'in Settlement Area	*Project:* Seamstress (Tsiigehtchic) *At time of interview:* Consultant, cultural traditions, sewing (GTC Dept of Culture & Heritage)
July 27, 2019	Maureen Cardinal-Clark	Tsiigehtchic, NWT/Gwich'in Settlement Area	*Project:* Seamstress (Tsiigehtchic)

Interview Date	Name	Interview Location	Role(s)
August 28, 2019 (*)	Mary Clark	Phone	*Project:* Seamstress (Fort McPherson)
August 1, 2019 (*)	Ingrid Kritsch (with Tom Andrews)	Edmonton, AB	*Project:* Project coordinator/Manager (GSCI) *At time of interview:* Retired, consultant (GTC Dept of Culture & Heritage)
September 12, 2019	Alestine Andre	Phone	*Project:* GSCI researcher *At time of interview:* Retired, consultant (GTC Dept of Culture & Heritage)

Table E.3. Walpole Island First Nation Case Study Interviews.

Interview Date	Name	Interview Location	Role(s)
November 1, 2019 January 10, 2020 Several informal conversations (*)	Clint Jacobs	Bkejwanong/ Walpole Island	*Project:* N/A *At time of interview:* Director, Walpole Island Heritage Centre (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig)
October 24, 2019 (*)	Tanya Dodge	Bkejwanong/ Walpole Island	*Project:* Seed project delegate at the University of Michigan; Lead on harvesting workshops; Learning to be a seedkeeper *At time of interview:* Ontario works
October 29, 2019	Russell Nahdee	Windsor, ON	*Project:* University liaison with WIFN for 2014 repatriation; organized transportation *At time of interview:* Aboriginal Education coordinator, University of Windsor
November 1, 2019 (*)	Dean Jacobs	Bkejwanong/ Walpole Island	*Project:* Lead negotiator for 2014 repatriation *At time of interview:* Retired, consultant for WIHC on external projects, heritage management, and treaty/rights & title work; former Director, Walpole Island Heritage Centre (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig)
November 1, 2019	Montana Riley	Bkejwanong/ Walpole Island	*Project:* Seed project delegate at the University of Michigan; harvesting workshops, local gardens *At time of interview:* Eco-education Coordinator, Walpole Island Heritage Centre (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig)

Interview Date	Name	Interview Location	Role(s)
January 13, 2020	C. Eric Isaac Sr. and Patti Isaac	Bkejwanong/ Walpole Island	*Project:* Eric was part of WIFN delegation for 2014 repatriation negotiations; ceremonially greeted ancestors at UWindsor Both were reburial organizers and participants *At time of interview:* WIFN Elders; Eric is a cultural advisor for the Walpole Island Heritage Centre (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig)
March 13, 2020 (*)	Bryan Loucks	Phone	*Project:* Contributed to community work for 2014 reburial ceremony; reburial participant
January 28, 2021 (*)	David W. White	Phone/Zoom	*Project:* WIFN negotiator for 2014 repatriation; reburial participant *At time of interview:* WIFN archaeological monitor; former Director of the Walpole Island Heritage Centre (Nin.Da.Waab.Jig)

Table E.4. Additional Interviews.

Interview Date	Name	Interview Location	Role(s)
June 21, 2019	Joanne Bird	Phone	*Project:* Curator (PWNHC), advised and helped coordinate Tłı̨chǫ caribou skin lodge projects (i.e., exhibits, reproduction) and Gwich'in Clothing Project. *At time of interview:* Retired, PWNHC curator
July 3, 2019	Anonymous		
July 5, 2019	Rosalie Scott	PWNHC	*Project:* Conservator, assessed incoming accessions (Tłı̨chǫ lodge and reproduction lodge; Gwich'in Yellowknife outfit) *At time of interview:* Senior conservator
Several informal conversations (*)	Susan Irving	PWNHC	*Project:* N/A *At time of interview:* Interim curator (2019), PWNHC

Appendix F.

Codebook

Tables F.1, F.2, and F.3 outline the terms I used to code effects across case study interviews and other data. Table F.4 includes definitions for the major categories that I used to organize my discussions. My coding process at both stages was largely inductive, working from my observations and knowledge of the literature.

Note that totals listed under "Files" and "References" include those codes applied to transcripts analyzed in Nvivo software. There were several interviews and informal/follow-up conversations that, for various reasons, were not transcribed and analyzed in this manner.

Table F.1. Codebook for Tłı̨chǫ Case Study.

Name	Description
Social Connections	Mention of social/kin relationships or partnerships; also, institutional interactions.
Reconnection-Revitalization	Mention of reconnecting with/to Tłı̨chǫ culture/land/language.
New Material Culture	Mention of new material culture generated in connection with repatriation.
Education- Youth/Elders	Mention on connection of repatriation/return/reproduction to cultural education/reclamation.
Pride in Culture/Tłı̨chǫ Community	Mention of pride in Tłı̨chǫ culture/ community; can be political or internal.
Nation-building	Mention of connection to past or ongoing political presence/ actions.
Logistical Challenges/ Observations	Mention of logistical features/issues/challenges associated with return and/or reproduction project.
Costs/Funding	Mention of project(s) costs.
Economic Benefits	Mention of economic benefit for Tłı̨chǫ.

Name	Description
Personal Health	Mention of implication or connection with personal health (physical, mental, spiritual, etc.)
Environmental Implications/ Climate Change	Mention of climate change implications on cultural work.
Reconciliation	Mention of repatriation's connection to reconciliation/ healing.

Table F.2. Codebook for Gwich'in Case Study.

Name	Description
Ancestral Relationships	Mention of connection with ancestors.
Friendships/ Camaraderie	Mention of relationship/connection with other project participants.
Material-Tangible Outcomes	Mention of material outcomes from the Clothing Project.
Education-Teaching Others	Mention of teaching and learning about traditional methods/materials relevant to the Clothing Project.
Reconnection to Traditional Practices	Mention of connection to traditional methods/materials; reasons why participants got involved.
Personal Pride	Mention of pride in self/abilities.
Pride in Community	Mention of pride in Gwich'in culture/ community; pride as a Gwich'in person.
Political Support	Mention of support from Gwich'in political bodies.
Logistical Challenges	Mention of logistical features/issues/challenges associated with the Clothing Project.
Costs/Funding	Mention of project(s) costs.
Economic Benefits	Mention of economic benefit for Gwich'in.
Personal Feelings/ Mental Health	Mention of personal feelings/emotion during/after project.
Important for Future/ Reconciliation	Mention of Project's importance for Gwich'in futures and/or reconciliation.

Table F.3. Codebook for Walpole Island First Nation Case Study.

Name	Description
Ancestor-Descendant Relationships	Mention of connection between living and dead, or ancestor and descendant.
Community Relationships	Mention of social/kin relationship as relevant to repatriation.
Obligations- Responsibilities	Mention of repatriation/cultural work as an obligation or responsibility.
Reconnecting to Traditional Practices	Mention of reconnecting with cultural practices through repatriation work/event.
Cultural Education- Teachings	Mention of repatriation's connection to cultural education initiatives in the community.
Inter-Community Connections	Mention of institutional or community-level relationships.
Personal Pride	Mention of pride in self/abilities.
Formalizing Repatriation Approaches	Mention of developing formal repatriation procedures.
Repatriation- Sovereignty	Mention of WIFN sovereignty in relation to repatriation/ reclamation work.
Self-sufficiency	Mention of impetus to work towards WIFN economic self-sufficiency or caring for their own.
Project Funding	Mention of the economic costs of repatriation and other work.
Reconciliation- Healing	Mention of repatriation's connections to "healing," personally or community wide.
Personal and Community Health	Mention of connection between "doing the work" and personal health/well-being.

Table F.4. Codebook for Effects Categories.

Name	Description
Socio-cultural Effects	Mentions relevant to the community's social organization, beliefs system, cultural traditions, or material productions.
Political Effects	Mentions relevant to the involvement of political bodies or individuals, politically motivated actions, nation-building, and identity.
Economic Effects	Mentions relevant to any financial and logistical challenges, capacity-building, and any potential economic benefits.
Personal Effects	Mentions relevant to participants' personal feelings and emotions.
Spiritual Effects	Mentions of ancestral spirits and other relations; spiritual worldviews/cosmology.
Health/Well-being Effects	Mentions relevant to mental and physical health, and community well-being.

Appendix G.

WIFN Draft Repatriation Protocol

Beginning the Work[1]

1. Initial communication regarding ancestors or belongings
    - May be from institution to Walpole Island First Nation (WIFN) or from WIFN to institution
2. Request/Receive inventory from institution
3. Notify and consult with WIFN
    - Notify Chief and Council
    - Consult with community Elders
4. Establish community caucus for discussions on repatriation terms/expectations
    - Nin.Da.Waab.Jig
    - Community Elders
    - Neighbouring First Nations

Working with Holding Institutions

5. Visit with ancestors or belongings
6. Meet with representatives of holding institution to discuss terms and expectations of repatriation proceedings
    - Representatives from institution and WIFN
    - Terms and expectations may vary depending on individual case circumstances and institutional policy or protocol (where it exists)

Consulting Other Communities

7. Notify and consult with other communities
    - Caldwell First Nation; Moravian of the Thames; Chippewas of the Thames; Oneida Nation of the Thames; Aamjiwnaang; Chippewas of Kettle and Stoney Point; Munsee Delaware Nation; Others?

Re-internment Protocols[2]

8. Bundle ancestors' remains (by individuals as much as possible) in fleece blankets. Place in wood (cedar?) boxes for reburial
9. Ceremonial protocols and blessing of ancestors' remains.
10. Walk/drive ancestors' remains to gravesite. Place boxes in grave.
11. Graveside ceremony and prayers. Re-internment.
12. Community feast at WIFN Heritage Centre.

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[1] Protocol shared with permission from Walpole Island First Nation Heritage Centre. Information in this protocol was drawn from my experiences working with WIFN on the 2014 repatriation of ancestors from the University of Windsor, including my memories, notes, and knowledge of other protocols/policies.

[2] See also description of Saginaw-Chippewa ceremony for unknown ancestors attached.