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Patrolling North of 60: Military Infrastructure in Canada's Arctic Communities

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Patrolling North of 60:

Military Infrastructure in Canada's Arctic Communities

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

by

Bianca Romagnoli

2023

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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by

Bianca Romagnoli

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2023

Professor Salih Can Aciksoz, Co-Chair

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With their signature red sweaters and bright red .308 bolt action rifles, Canadian Rangers have become an established military presence in some of Canada's most remote regions. Originally established as a symbolic representation of Canada's sovereignty on the Northwest coast at the start of the Cold War in 1947, their presence in the Arctic was designed to protect Canada from any potential Northern invasion. Today, Rangers act as scouts and guides in the arctic meant to alarm the military of any suspicious activity, without actively engaging in combat. Rangers are expected to join the organization equipped with their own gear and already trained in surviving and navigating on the land. Located in almost 70 communities across the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, the Yukon, and Atlin, BC, Canadian Rangers in the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (1 CRPG) are viewed as a critical part of the arctic defense strategy. Since

the Organization's inception in 1947, the employment of local and Indigenous personnel has been advertised as a cost-effective way to bring money, skills, and employment to the north while simultaneously securing Canadian sovereignty in the region Due to their geographical location and the unique living conditions, most Canadian Ranger patrols are comprised of Indigenous personnel who use skills accrued over generations of living on the land to do their work. Because Rangers are expected to come to the organization fully trained, with extensive knowledge of "living on the land," their traditional knowledge is re-branded as the foundation of arctic military training.

Simultaneously examining the experiences of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous personnel, my research examines how Indigeneity becomes a key factor in the Canadian state's strategy to consolidate national sovereignty in the arctic. Focusing on 1 CRPG, my research aims to expand an understanding of the Canadian arctic military landscape. Examining military infrastructure through the everyday, lived experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous personnel within communities and at the headquarters, this research is informed by settler studies and critical Indigenous studies approach to studying how ideas of race, whiteness, and indigeneity are constructed from a colonial, military perspective. As Ranger identity is constructed from the fabric of colonial ideology, the project explores how Indigeneity is reformulated under a bureaucratic, military gaze.

In the twenty-first century, the Canadian Rangers have emerged from the shadows to become a visible example of diversity and inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces. Challenging this, this dissertation argues how the progressive representation of the organization hides its truly settler colonial identity. Using ethnographic research to examine how Rangers are recruited, administered, and paid, this project shows how settler colonialism relies on Indigenous

people to establish Canadian state sovereignty in the Arctic, doing so under the guise of a humanitarian ethic that scripts Indigenous people as needing assistance into modern life. Recognized as a people with a relevant culture and the necessary skills to manage the Arctic region, but paradoxically imagined as in need of state assistance, Indigenous people find themselves caught between their own economic needs and the ambitions of the settler state. This dissertation examines how settler soldiers participate in the colonial management of the Arctic through the Rangers. It focuses on how settler soldiers construct themselves in a white settler imaginary as a people who brings civilization to the Arctic.

The dissertation of Bianca Romagnoli is approved

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2023

To my dad,
I wrote down all the stories I wish I could have told you

&

To my mom,
For everything

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Acronyms and Translation

Acronyms

1 CRPG: 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group

1 Div: 1st Division

A COY: A Company

AOR: Area of Responsibility

ARCG: Arctic Response Company Group

CAF: Canadian Armed Forces

CO: Commanding Officer

CPIC: Canadian Police Information Center

CRBMI: Canadian Ranger Basic Military Indoctrination

JTFN: Joint Task Force North

N-Series: Nanook/Nunakput Series

RI: Ranger Instructor

Translation

Qamutiik: a sled designed to travel on snow and ice, built using traditional Inuit design techniques. Adapted to the arctic sea ice environment.

Qallunaat: Inuit word for white people often used to describe Instructors or visitors to communities.

Kamik: Traditional Inuit fur boots typically used in the arctic

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PREFACE

As I pulled into the parking lot, it was still pitch black outside and I knew it would remain dark for most of the icy, cold, subarctic February day. Sitting in the driver's seat of my car, I crush the Mac Donald's breakfast bag and hand it silently to my friend sitting in the passenger seat who would be responsible for driving my car back into town from the airport and driving it while I'm gone for two weeks so the battery won't die in the almost daily negative 50 degree temperatures that were projected while I was out of town.

I look at the dash and I see it's a few minutes before 6:00 AM and the temperature gauge on my dash reads negative 42…not accounting for the windchill. I close my eyes as I lean my head against the headrest and say: "It's gonna be fun." I hear my friend laugh and I look at her from the corner of my eye, exhale and open the driver seat door and I click the button to automatically open the trunk. I feel the sudden burst of icy air hit my body as I get out of my still-running Ford Escape. I can see two Ranger Instructors in their military uniforms already inside the front office of the private airport hangar where I was told to show up for our flight. I see no one else in the room and both men sit comfortably in chairs surrounded by their piles of duffle bags, black action packers, and non-descript backpacks. I double-check the time to make sure I'm not late but noticed that neither man has any weapons or resupply kits, so I knew their military supplies hadn't been dropped off yet, so I didn't need to rush.

Wearing just my puffy jacket, toque, sweat pants, and boots, I'm cold as I drag my five bags from the truck into the front door of the airport hangar where I use my hip to hold the door open and unceremoniously throw or kick my bags inside. Both Instructors get up and pick up my bags and toss them into a pile out of the way from the front door and I head back outside to grab my school backpack with my laptop and field notebook and say goodbye to my friend who was

already sitting in the front seat of my car after closing my trunk. She opens the window and smiles when she tells me to call her when I land and puts the car in reverse. I head back inside and say good morning to Michael and Frank who had taken their seats again. The lobby of the building is empty except for us, but I can hear commotion where I imagine the staff is preparing the plane that will take the three of us to Beaufort Delta for almost two weeks. I sit down across from Michael, with whom I would be traveling, and ask the other Instructor, Frank where his patrol was and he names another community in the region. Both men were French-Canadians who'd been in the unit for more than six years and while Michael was a jokester, Frank had a calming presence. Both men had extensive military careers and were confident Instructors. Having already gone on a few patrols, and having familiarity with the region, I knew that that plane would drop Michael and myself off first, then Frank.

As we're talking, we see headlights come through the window and see a two-ton truck pull into the spot my car had vacated. Two young corporals I recognize from the office wave as they head toward the truck and open the back. All three of us get up and head to the door to help unload the weapons and boxes that would travel with us to the communities farther north. Having done this many times before, we form a line so we can quickly get all the stuff inside the lobby. Standing between Michael and Frank, I help pass almost two dozen weapon cases and cardboard

Figure 1: Pile of resupply kit ready to be delivered to a patrol
Photo by researcher

boxes filled with new Ranger clothing, and miscellaneous supplies such as toilet paper, blue rope, tarps, and paper towels, among other things that would be handed out to Rangers once we head out on the land. Once all the stuff is inside, we begin to separate the boxes into two piles to ensure that once the gear is loaded onto the plane, the right pile would be unloaded in the correct community. I look at the label printed on the side of each box and carry or drag the box to the correct pile, while each of the Instructors goes through the weapon cases to ensure they have the right ones. Each weapon is inside a bright red hard plastic weapons case with the Canadian Ranger emblem in black in the center.

After we're finished, we sit back down and I look at my watch, tired and impatient when I realize it had been over an hour since I'd arrived. I put my feet up on the coffee table and lean back in the folding, old school, movie theater-style chair when I feel Michael, who was once again sitting directly across from me, use his foot to nudge mine as he asks, "You got good boots, eh?" I look at my flimsy black, leather boots obviously designed for style more than warmth, and roll my eyes, "no, I left them at home with my mantra [jacket]." Michael laughs but insists that I confirm I brought the right gear. I get back up and walk over to one of my green, military-issued duffle bags and unzip it a few inches. As I open the overstuffed bag, the recognizable fur hood of my dark green, military-issued mantra peeks out. I look over my shoulder and make eye contact with Michael who nods. Looking back at my bag, I stick my hand inside and rummage around until I feel the toe of one of my boots and pull on it until it is also peeking out of the opening of the bag and once again look back to see Michael nod. I return to my seat and stick my tongue out at Michael as both men laugh. "Hey, I got to make sure you don't die."

We sit for another hour before someone emerges from the back of the building and tells us they are ready to start loading the plane. We help the crew carry the bags, boxes and gun cases

to the plane's cargo doors, and after 30 minutes everything is loaded and we board the plane. At this point, I'd already been on more than a half dozen patrols, so I was no longer surprised by the weird sensation of being only a handful of people on a plane with a 100-person capacity and I pick a seat in the middle of the plane. While the flight was chartered by the military to fly the three of us to the Delta, everything about the flight was basically the same as a commercial flight. We sit and the two flight attendants perform the safety presentation, and we take off. I sleep for the two-hour flight and wake up as the plane starts descending into the Inuvik airport. Having been to the region before in the late summer, I was awestruck by the stark difference between the two seasons. What was once a beautiful technicolor of bedrock, trees, and what seemed like millions of bodies of water, was now just expansive whiteness that seemed to meld into the whiteness of the clouds as we made our final descent. As I look out of the window I begin to see the shape of the small 3,000-person community through the clouds and snow.

Just like every patrol I'd ever been on, we land and almost instantaneously, I see three pickup trucks drive across the tarmac before I'm even off the plane, and a dozen men and women in Ranger red jackets are pulling stuff off the plane and throwing it into the back of the trucks. I awkwardly stand next to Michael as he hugs and shakes hands with almost every member who he knows by name. I try to scan the trucks to make sure that all my bags had made it off the plane but the truck beds were already piled dangerously high and it was impossible to see my stuff. Once Michael confirms his gear is off the plane, we hop into the backseat of one of the trucks and we drive towards town.

Once we arrive at the hotel, the Rangers help us carry our stuff to our rooms and Michael tells me that he has some administrative work to do and I am left to my own devices until that evening when the patrol meeting would be held. I spend the time going through my gear and pull

out the stuff I would need for the night and I pack my backpack to make sure I have consent forms and pens for the fifteen to twenty members that were expected to show up for the meeting. Just like every time I go on patrol, I'm nervous as I wait for the designated time to meet the patrol and I practice the speech I give to explain who I am and what I do and ask permission to join the group.

It's time to meet the group and I head to the hotel lobby to find Michael already waiting by the door. We head outside and even though it was only 6:00 PM the sun had only come out for a few hours in the afternoon and it was already dark out. Michael leads me to an already running blue pickup that he'd rented from the patrol's second in command who was working out of town. Even though the truck had been running for hours, I was disappointed that the cab was still freezing cold and I could see my breath fog in front of my face. I imagine Michael anticipated my disappointment and explains that it's a diesel and therefore, he would have to keep it running 24/7 to ensure it wouldn't die in the frigid temperatures but it would probably never warm up unless we were driving it.

We drive only a couple hundred meters and pull into the parking lot of the local community center. There are almost a dozen trucks and jeeps still running parked outside and I can see people in their Ranger red jackets heading into the side door where a yellow, wet floor sign is propping the door open. I recognize a few of the Rangers from the airport and wave hello and I quickly make my way to the door. I follow Michael as we make our way up a set of stairs and enter what looks like a meeting room overlooking an ice rink. There were over a dozen people, all wearing their uniforms and chatting among themselves sitting at six, long folding tables that had been organized into a rectangle. As a town with only 3,000 people, it was no surprise that it seemed like everyone in the room knew each other. I pick a chair off to the side of

the head table where Michael is setting up and I wonder why I haven't been introduced to the patrol sergeant yet. Often, it is the responsibility of the patrol sergeant or the second in command (2IC) to liaise with the Instructor but up until this point, neither had shown up. As people continue to funnel into the room, Michael checks his watch and says, "Okay, time to start." The room quiets down and Michael tells the group that neither the sergeant nor the 2IC would be able to make it on patrol and, in fact, the sergeant would be stepping down and had called for an election. Michael goes on to explain that all the positions in the patrol would be re-elected on the last day of the patrol, not just the sergeant.

Almost instantly I feel the room tense and I look around wondering whether this announcement had come as a surprise to the group. Unlike traditional military units, Rangers are elected by their patrol into their positions. Every two years, all the positions are voted on and while in some patrols the leadership remains consistent, in others, there is a shuffle of positions every election. Back at the hotel later that evening, Michael tells me that this particular sergeant had been in and out of the position a few times over the course of several years and there was a lot of tension between the different groups in the patrol. Because this particular community is a hub, the make-up of the population is quite diverse. As I learned throughout the patrol, members of the patrol are long-time locals, transplants, Métis, Gwinch'in, Dené, Inuit, Inuvialuit, and non-Indigenous people making it one of the most diverse patrols in Canada.

Who was considered an insider or outsider to the community dictated whether they were viewed by other members as belonging to the patrol. This tension, I learned, became the backbone of the election process that took place for the course of the entire time the patrol was out "on the land".[1] While the sergeant, a local, Gwinch'in man, was praised for his on the land

[1] Going "on the land" was the term used by Rangers and Instructors to describe going out on patrol outside the community. This often referred to traveling by snowmobile or ATV and sleeping in tents.

abilities and leadership style, the second in command (2IC) position was held by a 'white guy,' Roy who was criticized by some members for being "too military."

A few days later while we were out on the land, I found myself sitting side by side with one of the Rangers, Gwen, on her cot while she stirred some soup in a pot on her wood stove only a few inches in front of us. Gwen's tent, which she was sharing with another Ranger, was a typical white, canvas MacPherson tent with a wood-burning stove that almost every Ranger has. Gwen, along with half the patrol, opted to place their tents right on the frozen river that ran across our makeshift camp location. After a long day practicing search and rescue procedures on a snowmobile, the warmth of the tent was a welcome change and the smell of food made me long for my own dinner waiting in my tent, but after days of hearing her make snide comments about the 2IC (who wasn't there), I wanted to know exactly what made him so terrible. What I came to learn was that his 'militariness' was code for him being an outsider. "He's not from here and doesn't know our ways," she explains matter of factly. "We got a way of doing things and he came here and is trying to make us like all down south." When I asked her to give me an example, she sat for a minute and said, "he's just obsessed with being on time, just like all those white military guys." I find myself unsure how to respond and simply say, "Yeah, I get that." She gives me a curt nod and we sit in silence as she stirs her dinner.

I hear Michael call my name and I (too hastily) jump out of my seat, eager to leave. I start trying to awkwardly climb over Gwen's lap without burning myself as I mumble something about having to leave and thanking her for her time, taking off at a jog across our makeshift camp towards Michael and I's tent situated at the top of a small embankment just off the frozen lake and in the tree line. As I move, I'm careful to watch my step, because even though it was not even 6:00 PM, it was already completely dark and I had to navigate by memory to avoid the

holes made into the ice that we used to get fresh water. I knew a wrong misstep would plunge my leg into the frozen water and I would probably never recover from the embarrassment.

I get to the tent, unzip the door and pop my head in, already talking, “Man, Gwen really don’t like the 2IC, eh.” Michael had turned on our overhead lantern and it swung back and forth from my disruption so I could barely make out Michael’s face. “She don’t like him cause he’s white,” he tells me again as he uses his spoon to point to the cast iron pan and sizzling bacon strips on the stovetop, “thinks only Indigenous people should be allowed.” I zip up the tent and take a seat on my cot only a few feet from the stove and find my half-clean plate and fork still sitting on top of my sleeping bag where I’d left it that morning. I wave the plate in the air and wipe my fork on the leg of my pants to clean it and grab two slices of bacon from the pan as Michael tosses me a half-frozen bun. With my mouth full of frozen bread and hot bacon, I chew as I contemplate what Michael had said. “Okay,” I finally begin, “if they hate him, why did they vote for him?” As we eat, Michael explains that while they technically voted for him, he, as the Instructor, strongly encouraged them to place him in the position. Unfazed by the questionable ethics, Michael goes on to explain that the patrol needed stronger leadership, and while the sergeant was great on the land and loved in the community, they needed someone who would elevate the patrol to a higher, more military-focused standard. “And anyway, he’s not even white. He’s M´tis. They just don’t care cause he’s from the south,” he adds.

And it was true, trying to find subtle ways to bring up Roy, it seemed like the group was split into two camps, one, that Roy, as an outsider, should not have power over the group, and two, that Roy was critical to making the patrol more legitimate in the eyes of the military. In both instances, Roy’s whiteness played a central role in whether he was characterized as good or bad. For the first group, his whiteness meant that he would never truly understand their way of life

and for the second group, his perceived whiteness was praised as giving the patrol more legitimacy in the eyes of the military because he could fit into southern ways of being.

In the end, I never met Roy and he was voted out of the position on the last day of the patrol and has since spent very little time with the group. In fact, the new Instructor who took over the patrol only a few months after this instance that occurred almost three ago has also never met Roy. Curious, I have repeatedly checked in on how the patrol was doing with the new Instructor and with members with whom I remain in contact. By all accounts, the patrol is deemed successful by the military's standard.

Back at the patrol meeting, Michael was insistent on going out on the land as soon as possible. Without a patrol sergeant present, Michael tells the group that they will be responsible for deciding where they want to go. His only requirement is that the group travels at least five to eight hours by sled and stays out for a minimum of four nights. After almost an hour of discussion, the group decides to head out to a common hunting location first thing in the morning. The location is right on the edge of the Arctic Ocean but still within the treeline so we can have wood to heat our tents. After the meeting ends, I head back to the hotel with Michael who tells me to be ready by 7:00 AM the next morning with all of my kit ready to go. I go back to my room and unpack my bags and begin separating out what I would wear, what I would bring, and what I would leave behind.

Even though I'd been on almost half a dozen patrols at this point, I was always nervous the night before heading out. Nervous that I would forget something, nervous about the cold, nervous about the exhaustion that I knew came with going on the land, and nervous that my land skills (or lack thereof) would jeopardize the group. After triple-checking everything, I head to bed knowing it would be my last good night's sleep for the next few nights.

The next morning I wake up before my alarm and I'm ready twenty minutes early. I look around my soon-to-be-empty $300/a-night room one last time and put my 80-liter blue bag on my back, my smaller 24-liter bag on my chest and pick up my cooler with both hands and I instantly regret wearing all my layers when I break out into a sweat under the eight-pound military issues mantra, three layers of thermals and fleece and a puffy jacket.

I awkwardly walk down the hotel stairs with my cooler bouncing off my knees and I see that Michael is already waiting for me even though I was still fifteen minutes early. As I hit the last step, he gets up, takes my cooler, and asks, "Ready?" I reluctantly say yes and we head out into the pitch-black, biting cold. The sled we'd rented from Roy is sitting in the parking lot, already running with a half-packed *qamutiik*[2] attached to the back. I help Michael drop my blue bag and cooler into the open spot and help him use blue rope to tie down our gear, MacPherson tent, stove, and miscellaneous equipment under a tarp. Once Michael is satisfied that everything is secured he tells me to hop onto the back of the snowmobile. As Michael gets on in front of me, I pull my fur hood over my hat and puffy jacket hood and use my goggles to secure everything onto my head. It's impossible to hear over the roaring engine so when I see Michael put up his thumb, I tap him twice on his right shoulder to tell him I'm ready.

Photo of researcher dressed for a winter patrol
Photo by researcher

[2] A sled designed to travel on snow and ice, built using traditional Inuit design techniques. Adapted to the arctic sea ice environment.

The meeting spot is at a central location right off the ice road entrance, and even though it's almost 10:00 AM, it's still completely dark and the only light we can see are the headlights approaching from different directions. From just the ten-minute ride from the hotel, I can already feel the cold bite through the layers I'm wearing. I wiggle my fingers and toes as best I can, hoping my body can adjust to the temperature quickly and hope I've dressed warm enough. Sitting on the back of Michael's sled, I hold on to the single handle as I use my core to hold my body upright as we bump and curve through the almost invisible route through the town's paths. In minutes, my goggles are fogged up and I'm completely blind and simply have to brace myself to anticipate any turn or bump we may hit.

When we arrive at the location, about half the patrol is already waiting with all the machines lined up in two rows. No one is recognizable under their goggles, face masks, and fur hats and with almost every machine still running you can barely hear anything except the roaming engines. I jump off the back of the sled knowing that staying still would only make me colder and I walk up the line of machines, waving at everyone I pass.

As members arrive, a natural circle forms in the center of the two lines of machines. We huddle close together to hear Michael and Dominic, who was chosen the night before to be the acting patrol sergeant. After thirty minutes, the whole group arrives and we prepare to leave. Dominic confirms that everyone is there and has all their gear, Michael confirms the order of march (the order in which the group will travel) and the two scouts confirm their GPS' and maps are ready with the chosen location. With a head nod from Michael, we all walk back to our snowmobiles and are ready to leave.

I'm once again on the back of Michael's sled and the ride is cold and the hum of the engine and swaying of the snowmobile almost lulls me to sleep. The group stops approximately

every hour or two and everyone gets off their machines and has a hot drink or something to eat. It's impossible to talk so I simply look at my surroundings for the duration of the ride and at each stop I usually join Michael as we make small talk with different members. At every stop, I'm repeatedly asked if I'm cold, and after a while I find myself getting frustrated by the question. With the wind chill, it was almost negative 50 degrees Celsius, I find it hard to believe that anyone wasn't cold after more than five hours of traveling through these conditions. However, each time I'm asked, I smile politely and inform the member that I'm doing okay and while they look skeptical, they accept my answer.

Patrol camp set up in the winter
Photo by researcher

In the end, it took our group almost eight hours to arrive at our chosen destination and as always, it was completely dark out. As I get off the back of Michael's snowmobile, I'm physically and mentally exhausted. My back aches and my legs shake as I stand looking at the spot where Michael and I will set up our MacPherson tent. The headlight of the machine and our headlamps are the only things providing any light and even though we've only been there for a few minutes, I can hear Michael already removing the tarp from the *qamutiik* to pull out the chainsaw so we can begin cutting down the trees we would need to build the frame of our tent. I look around and I see everyone else is already doing the same in their own two-person tent groups. Everyone works proficiently over the sound of engines and chainsaws and in less than an hour I see a half dozen white tents pop up in the treeline and on the ice of the frozen river. Within

minutes, smoke is billowing from the stove pipes into the sky, and even though it's still early in the evening, I can see flecks of green in the sky that are indicative that the northern lights will come out soon.

Our tent is up and our stove is quickly heating the tent and I am excited to finally take off some layers after Michael and I return to our tent. Dominic, as the acting sergeant of the patrol, tells the group that the rest of the evening is free to set up camp and rest. However, the next morning the group will once again rise early to head towards a local caribou grazing area to hunt. The group of a dozen men and women will be on the land for a total of five nights. Over the course of those days, I observe the group and work alongside them as they travel by sled, hunt, practice search and rescue procedures, argue, gossip and share communal meals. These interactions, and the hundreds of others I observe and partake in over the course of the next three years with the Canadian Rangers are the foundation of my research: understanding the military's role within small, isolated communities across what is known as the Canadian arctic.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

It's December 2020 and I'd just arrived at my fieldsite for the first time since having the approval to conduct research with the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (1 CRPG). Walking through the lines of the A Coy[3] Ranger company where Ranger Instructors work, I found a mass commotion as over a dozen military men ran around yelling at each other in French and English. I am directed to, and left, at the A COY lines by my point-of-contact at 1 CRPG who told me to settle in and meet "the guys." As I stand awkwardly in the way of the men as they move around me, I am aware that they look at my small, female, 5-foot-2 frame suspiciously. I was already told that the soldiers were "expecting me" but that they had no idea what exactly I would be doing. Looking around the room, all the men I saw were large, white men wearing standard Canadian military CATPAD uniforms. As they hustled around the room many of them donned their military parkas, along with massive fur hats and gloves to brave the extreme cold weather of -40 which had hit the northern capital of Yellowknife for almost a month. It's early January and many of the men are running out to complete their last-minute errands before going out on the first patrol of the new year. In a few days, almost all the men will travel on chartered flights to communities throughout the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut to mentor Rangers on their yearly patrol. Their job is to assess each patrol's ability to work autonomously in case they are called to support the Canadian Armed Forces. Over the course of my three years of continuous fieldwork with the members of 1 CRPG, I came to understand how complex and convoluted that support actually is. I started with this question: how do a group of white,

[3] 1 CRPG is separated between Alpha Company (A COY), Charlie Company (C COY) and the Orderly Room (OR). A COY is the Ranger Company where the Ranger Instructors (RI) work, C COY is the Junior Ranger Company where Junior Canadian Ranger Instructors (JCRI) work and the OR provides administrative support to the unit.

middle-class,[4] southern, combat soldiers work with local, northern, and Indigenous communities to support a militarized Canadian state-building, sovereignty-maintaining project in the arctic?

As I make my way down the hall, peeking my head into the 6x6 upholstered taupe-paneled cubicles, I see almost all the cubicles are decorated with pictures, maps, and knickknacks collected from occupants' travels across the north. Each member has a map dedicated to marking off each arctic and sub-arctic community they had visited. While, over the course of my fieldwork, each member tells me their own method of keeping track of 'their' communities, each map is impressively peppered with small flags reaching from the northwest coast of the Yukon to the most eastern edge of Baffin Island—only three hundred miles from Canada's arctic neighbour: Greenland. Alongside their maps, almost all the members have hung territorial flags and photos of themselves, donning the same military jackets with their fur hats and mitts standing next to dead narwhals, seals, and even polar bears surrounded by an expansive whiteness which tells me these photos were taken out on the land while on a Ranger Patrol. Many of these photos were juxtaposed with similar photographs which traded sleds for tanks; fur hats and gloves for tan camouflage body armour and bolt action hunting rifles swapped for assault rifles. As I quickly learned, the men who would become my chief interlocutors for the next three years accumulated dozens of combat tours across Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe.

Moving past the A COY lines, the entire office is decorated with a mixture of military memorabilia and arctic/Indigenous artifacts and photos. Many of the photos—some dated as far back as the 1950s – picture Inuit men and women, in a haphazard mixture of formal military

[4] I refer to Instructors as being middle-class, which goes against conventional ideas that members of the military, especially as non-commissioned members, are blue collar. However, working as an Instructor a sergeant makes a base pay of ~$80,000/year along with a northern living allowance and receives travel pay and per diem for each patrol. Many Instructors tell that they usually make more than $100,000 a year between all these incentives.

uniform, wearing standard military-issued pants and snow pants, "Ranger Red" sweaters, hats and parkas, and kamik. The Instructors themselves were often pictured wearing this mixed dress when the standard military gear was incompatible with the harsh arctic climate.

The 1 CRPG headquarters was an inconspicuous green building located in Yellowknife's downtown core. With no official military base, military offices in town were spread out through various federal government buildings. 1 CRPG was located on the bottom two floors of the building and security fobs are required to open all the doors. Inside the floor plan, designed as a figure-8, looked like a typical office with cubicles and the sound of printers, computer typing, and the purr of the air circulation system creating a steady hum. Each section of the figure 8 sectioned off the different divisions–Ranger Instructors, Junior Ranger Instructors, Operations, Training, Orderly Room with the commissionaires and the unit's leadership on the second floor and the unit's supplies housed in a different building.

While I spent the majority of my time with the Ranger Instructors, I often would visit the other sections to understand how people supporting, but not attending, patrols understood the role of the organization. From 2019, when I attended a patrol as part of my preliminary research until 2023, the unit changed commanding officers three times. While the unit houses approximately sixty-five full-time members at any given time, during my time there almost every single one of these positions changed personnel at least once. In fact, of the sixty-six members at the unit when I first arrived less than a dozen were still there three years later[5] and less than a handful remained in the same position. While there are only approximately a dozen Instructors in A Coy at any given time, over the course of my fieldwork more than thirty men held the position. In my first year at 1 CRPG of the thirteen men who made up A COY, all but one was regular

[5] All of these members were either reservists who couldn't get posted back down south or regular force who had opted to stop their career progression

force and they had thirty-three combat tours, and averaged almost twenty years of service each.[6] All the men were from the combat arms–infantry, armoured, artillery, or combat engineers.[7] Interestingly, regardless of the year, about half the Instructors were francophone even though only one-third of the CAF is francophone.

Over the course of three years, this office, the men[8] posted to the headquarters, and the dozens of Rangers I would go on patrol with became the central figures of my fieldwork and dissertation. Their daily interactions, politics, positionalities, and personalities will be the foundation of how I come to understand Canada's arctic sovereignty mission.

Theoretical Framework

With their signature red sweaters and bright red .308 bolt action rifles, Canadian Rangers have become an established military presence in some of Canada's most remote regions. Originally established as a symbolic representation of Canada's sovereignty on the Northwest coast at the start of the Cold War in 1947, their presence in the Arctic functioned to protect Canada from any potential Northern invasion. Today, Rangers act as scouts and guides in the arctic meant to alarm the military of any suspicious activity, without actively engaging in combat. Rangers are expected to join the organization equipped with their own gear and already trained in surviving and navigating on the land. Located in almost 70 communities across the

[6] Over the course of my fieldwork, the number of individuals with combat tours dropped and I attribute this change to the fact younger men were being posted to the unit and they'd joined towards the end of Canada's involvement in the war in Afghanistan and were less likely to have deployed or had deployed less often than their older counterparts.

[7] I was never able to find any official documentation that specified why Instructors had to be combat arms, however, the two most common reason I was given by members of the unit was either that only combat arms sergeants (or higher) had the proper qualifications needed to run a gun range (that was needed to qualify Rangers on weapons) or it was because it was only guaranteed that combat arms sergeants had the land skills necessary for the job. In fact, on multiple occasions, infantry sergeants told me that the requirements were too relaxed and in fact only regular force infantry sergeants should be considered for the job.

[8] Since 1947 there has only ever been one female Instructor

Northwest Territories, Nunavut, the Yukon, and Atlin, BC, Canadian Rangers in 1 CRPG are viewed as a critical part of the arctic defense strategy. Since the Organization's inception in 1947, employing local and Indigenous personnel has been advertised as a cost-effective way to bring money, skills, and employment to the north (Lackenbauer 2013). Due to their geographical location and the unique living conditions, most Canadian Ranger patrols are comprised of Indigenous personnel who use skills accrued from generations of living on the land to do their work. Because Rangers are expected to come to the organization fully trained, with extensive knowledge of "living on the land," their traditional knowledge is re-branded as the foundation of arctic military training (Lackenbauer 2015; 2013; 2006). Each patrol is administratively supported by a regular force, combat arms sergeant, called a Ranger Instructor (Instructor) posted to the north for a three-year term who acts as a liaison between the patrol and the larger military institution. While patrols control their own day-to-day function, Instructors are responsible for the administrative and financial operations (Lackenbauer 2013; 2006; 2012).

Focusing on 1 CRPG, my research aims to expand an understanding of the Canadian arctic military landscape. Simultaneously centering the experiences of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous personnel, my research examines how indigeneity is a key factor in the state's strategy to consolidate national sovereignty in the arctic. My project examines military infrastructure through the everyday, lived experiences (Geertz 1973) of personnel and is informed by settler studies and critical Indigenous studies (Coulthard 2014; Alfred 2009; Moreton-Robinson 2009; Nichols 2018; Byrd 2011; A. Simpson 2014; Kauanui 2008) approach to studying how ideas of race, whiteness and indigeneity are constructed from a colonial, military perspective.

Placing my research within the historical and current context of colonialism and imperialism, this project examines how the military positions itself as part of the state strategy to bring money and social development into the region. Challenging this, my research shows how Canadian Rangers become literal and symbolic vehicles through which settler colonialism, in the name of Canadian sovereignty, is enacted. I use the term ‘ settler colonialism’ (Wolfe 2006) to mean the ongoing erasure and destruction of Native people as a precondition for settler colonialism and the expropriation of land and resources. Through assimilation logic, Indigenous people employed as Rangers become state actors. As Ranger identity is constructed out of the fabric of colonial ideology, the project explores how Indigeneity is reformulated under a bureaucratic, military gaze that shifted from “visceral expressions of asserted European cultural and economic superiority […] to a more legalistic and bureaucratized form of domination (Irlbacher-Fox 2009: 60).

Building off of key Indigenous studies thinkers (Wolfe 2006; L. B. Simpson 2004; Coulthard 2014; Deloria 2004; A. Simpson 2014), my work demonstrates the continued processes of settler colonialism to establish a link between historical moments to the current context influencing social, political, economic and gendered understandings of indigeneity today. Using this work, my research examines how politics of recognition get rooted within colonial understandings of authenticity and indigeneity and the overt and covert ways colonial violence dictates social interactions between Indigenous people and the military.

This project examines how settler colonialism as an extractive process is part of the racial project of the accumulation of white property in the form of arctic land and resources. This understanding of settler colonialism is central to how my research positions the role of Canadian Rangers in Canada’s arctic sovereignty mission. Aileen Moreton-Robinson, writing on the

relationship between race, sovereignty and property in Australia examines how the nation is culturally constructed as a white possession. For the nation to establish its identity as a white possession, Indigenous people must be dispossessed from the land (2015). As Sherene Razack traces in her work, *Dying from Improvement: Inquests and Inquiries into Indigenous Deaths in Custody,* the disappearance and elimination of Indigenous people is critical to the Canadian state's claim to land. For settler colonialism to accumulate property, the Indian must be disappeared so the settler can become productive, bring civilization, and transform themselves into the original inhabitants of land (2015). Through this process, the settler and the settler state gain legitimacy. This becomes a settler colonial project of modernity that is rooted within liberal ideas of humanitarianism meant to relieve suffering by bringing colonized people into civilization. To do this, the settler must create the idea that Indigenous people always need assistance and must be saved (assimilated). Dirk Moses in his chapter, "Genocide and Settler Society in Austrialia," examines how Indigenous people are viewed as creating their own victimhood that require state intervention (2004). This myth that state intervention is necessary for prosperity and civilization is foundation to the settler colonial project in the north. The transformation of the arctic into white property is ideologically paramount for Canadian national identity.

In a Canadian context, the legitimacy of the settler state is created through a mythology linked to northern imaginary (Baldwin, Cameron, and Kobayahi 2011a). All Canadian settlers are enacting this mythology which becomes pivots to the settler colonial identity. Canada is Canada because of its ability to separate itself from the United States through its image of ice and snow (Grace 2007). Indigenous people are erased from this imagery except when they function to promote this sovereignty project.

In this project, I examine how the high visibility of Indigenous peoples and culture throughout the organization has led to an adoption of Indigenous land-based skills, land, clothing, and traditional foods as symbols of the organization. How does the arctic landscape and its Indigenous inhabitants get co-opted by the state? As domestic and international interest in arctic land and resources grows (Roussel and Payette 2011; Zellen 2009; 2008; Byers 2010), I explore how this process becomes part of Canada's push to utilize northern citizens as part of securing arctic sovereignty (Barker 2011; Sturm 2002; Stevenson and Stern 2006; Corntassel 2012; Stark 2013). Building off Indigenous environmental studies (Carroll 2015; Cruikshank 2005; L. B. Simpson 2004), I examine the role climate change is playing in pushing the state towards the militarization of the region. Using key thinkers working within an arctic context, I use this work to situate colonialism within the specific arctic context (Stevenson and Stern 2006; Stevenson 2014; Cameron 2015; Collings 2014; Christensen 2017). Using these long-term ethnographic studies, I am able to situate my research within these conversations about the relationship between Indigenous knowledge (especially about the land) and colonial governance—especially through the development and implementation of military infrastructure (Whyte 2017; 2018b; Nadasdy 2003; 2017).

The buy-in to join the organization is sold as an economic opportunity focused on community-based service, a strategy that obscures the imperial and colonial underpinning of the sovereignty-building project invisible and perpetuated by a humanitarian aid ideology (Weiss and Campbell 1991; Gilman 2012; Razack 2004; Calhoun 2010; Ticktin 2016; 2017) created by the post-Afghanistan climate of military service in Canada (Melnyk 2011). However, I challenge these assumptions by bringing to light the inherent colonial power dynamics that are the basis for this relationship between individuals and the state. Instead, I study how the military, and its

personnel, function as agents of colonialism where reconciliation masks a reassertion of Canadian sovereignty in the national and international scene (Coulthard 2007; Whyte 2018a).

Research Methodology

My fieldwork engaged standard ethnographic practice and my data collection was done primarily through informal interviews and participant observation. John Brewer (2000) defined ethnography as "the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without the meaning being imposed on them externally" (10). While my formal field sites were the 1 CRPG headquarters in Yellowknife and communities across the north, I also used my everyday life in Yellowknife and in communities to understand the political, social, economic, and gendered context of the region and settler colonialism as it existed within everyday life. Studying interpersonal encounters in everyday life, this research aims to incorporate the motives, values, attitudes, social skills, and knowledge of individuals into understanding interactions outside of viewing them as the performance of social roles (Goldschmidt 1972).

Studying these everyday encounters, this research examines how interactions between of Instructors and Rangers, especially Indigenous Rangers, highlight the unequal relationship the state maintains with Indigenous people. The relationship between these two culturally distinct groups demonstrates how "relationships among unequally positioned groups shape cultural processes" (Faier and Rofel 2014: 364). The power Instructors maintain, and the way this power is exerted and enforced, in the patrols becomes central to the focus of this study. In both data

collection and analysis, I aimed to go beyond a simple comparison between the two groups but demonstrate how these groups exist within a power regime.

Taking Field Notes

Within my field sites I gathered the majority of my observations through informal conversations and discussions. I spoke to Instructors, headquarters staff, and Rangers. While the Instructors and headquarters staff remained semi-permanent, the Rangers changed during every patrol. In the majority of cases, this meant that I could return to Instructors and speak with them over time but did not have the same exposure to Rangers. While I kept in contact with many Rangers via social media and would often catch up with them if they visited Yellowknife, sustained conversations and observations were limited to members of the headquarters.

To collect my data I used two separate notebooks: a jotting notebook and a field notebook. The jotting notebook was used to quickly mark down ideas, observations, and memos. Due to the nature of my fieldwork, I was often unable to take formal field notes, so this notebook was critical in allowing me to remember important details. The extreme temperatures and darkness and the fact that we were often on the move and I had limited access to my bag meant that I couldn't often write long and detailed field notes until I returned to my hotel. While on the land during patrols, I only carried this notebook with me to ensure my field notes would not be lost or damaged. I carried this notebook on my person and would often jot down my observations at the end of the night sitting in my tent by headlamp. However, I very rarely carried or used this notebook in public spaces. Early in my fieldwork, I found that the presence of this notebook made many of my interlocutors very uncomfortable. While on my first trip into a community, a group of young men agreed to talk to me as a group in their tent about their experiences as

Rangers. However, as soon as I pulled out my notebook, all three of them made an excuse for why they had to leave. Leaving me alone in their tent. It is also for this reason that I conducted no recorded (audio or video) interviews throughout the entirety of my fieldwork. My second field notebook was used to write down a longer narrative of my field notes. I often did this back at the hotel in communities or at my apartment at the end of the night.

To access the research site, I underwent almost a dozen research ethics boards. First, I did my institutional IRB at UCLA, then to access the military I completed the Canadian Armed Forces' Social Science Research Review Board which required sponsorship from the Department of National Defense, and approval from various internal government boards. Finally, access to communities required approval from the Nunavut Research Institute, the Aurora Research Institute (Northwest Territories), and the Explorers and Scientists Act License (Yukon), the last requiring a letter of approval from each of the six First Nations Governments whose traditional territory I would visit. Each of these approvals had various reporting and renewal requirements which I upheld for the entirety of my fieldwork spanning from 2018 to 2023.

Going on the Land

Each month (for about nine months of the year) eight to ten Instructors would travel to different communities, and I would select one Instructor and accompany them on the patrol—beginning with the planning and filing paperwork until the post-patrol report and the Instructor moved onto the next patrol and I would move onto to a new patrol with another

Instructor. This process generally took 3 weeks with approximately ten to twelve days 'in community' each time and the remaining time in the office completing the necessary preparations.

In planning which patrol I would attend, I often took various pieces of information into account: 1) the Instructor; 2) the makeup of the patrol and; 3) the feasibility of the location. While I never necessarily rejected a patrol based on any of these criteria, I tried to cover as many different types of patrols based on region, language, and demographics. Due to the nature of the research I always had to feel secure that I could trust the Instructor. Not only was I acutely aware of my very isolated location in hotels and tents with the individual but considering I am far from the most skilled bush lady on the planet, I had to feel comfortable with putting my health and safety into their hands.

Second, I tried to collect extensive background information about each community I wanted to visit. If possible, I would ask any Instructor who'd been to the community about the members and the region in general. As my fieldwork developed, Instructors would often recommend communities that I should visit. These were often places that had interesting histories, dynamics, or individuals or patrols they really enjoyed. Often I

Flight flying over a community
Photo by researcher

would listen to this advice because I found that Instructors who had good relationships with the patrol often yielded more positive experiences for me. I was more likely to be invited to a community member's home (or tent) for tea and people trusted me quicker. Finally, I would try to find any academic research done in the specific community. Some like Ulukhaktok, Inuvik, and Kugluktuk had various sources while other communities have very little information. In gathering background information, I usually try to figure out the size of the patrol and their general activity level.

From July 2019-December 2021, I attended almost two dozen patrols and traveled to close to thirty communities. Once I decided on a location and an Instructor to travel with, I would spend the week leading up to the patrol talking with the Instructor as they made their plan. If they'd previously been to the community, I would ask them questions about the place and people and if they hadn't, I would focus on questions about their philosophy on being an Instructor. I noted how they described successful patrols and their expectations of new patrols. Once I arrived in a community, our movements became very fast-paced and we often worked long days and nights. Because I only had approximately 10 days in the community, I focused on building connections with patrol members. I would attend all patrol-related events and mingle with members whenever I had the chance. The young women in the patrol were often the first ones to talk to me, often asking me questions about myself which I happily answered. Building engagement within a community was often the most complicated aspect of my research. Unlike many northern ethnographers who spend months or years in a community, the nature of my research meant I rarely got more than a superficial understanding of any specific community, and this became one of the greatest limitations of my research.

My Positionality

My subject position within this research was pivoted to how I moved across space and how I was received by different interlocutors. As a white woman arriving in predominantly Indigenous communities, the power I maintained was integral to how I conducted my research. My real and perceived connection to the military linked me to the institutions in ways that I could never separate myself from. This meant that I had to always be aware that all Rangers viewed me from this lens and what they shared with me was always with the knowledge that I was associated with (or part of) the institutional body that held economic power over them. While I always felt welcomed into communities, I also recognized that I was accepted into these spaces holding this power.

This was further complicated by my own connections to the military. While it sometimes gave me a form of legitimacy and access, predominantly among non-Indigenous patrols, it also permanently entrenched my identity (and ultimately research) with this power dynamic. In fact, I came to this project with a long history linked to the military. At the young age of sixteen I began the process to enlist in the Canadian military. At seventeen, I was sworn into my local reserve unit, completing basic training while finishing my last year in high school. I remained in the military for seven years, until being released in 2017 and attending graduate school in California. My time in the military has greatly impacted my personal life and academic career. Firstly, my access to this research is predicated on my military experience. My Masters research at the University of Toronto was my first endeavor studying the military. In this research I conducted interviews with military chaplains and service members suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Therefore, coming into this project, I not only had personal

connections to the military but had an intimate knowledge of how to navigate conducting research with the military.

I was able to leverage this military experience in securing my first meetings with the Chain of Command. This was confirmed when a year after being in the field it was confirmed that I was only able to get the meeting because someone else in the military spoke highly of me. In writing about her ability to use her status as a doctor to gain access and trust among the hospital staff where she herself studied medicine, Shahaduz Zaman (2008) explains her positional: "I knew if I could use my physician identity I would be able to overcome the antagonism of the medical institute […] I would be able to use my identity as an ex-student of the institution to gain access." After gaining access to the site through a personal connection she continues, "I knew his belief that I was 'one of them' might be problematic. He might not have realized that he and his colleagues would be among my observations, while his first statement was already considered as data" (137-8). However, similar to Zaman, my research interests were often viewed as silly, childish or useless. While Instructors would often point out the "good" or "bad" patrols I could study, they were often confused when I pointed out that I wasn't necessarily interested in making value judgments on what made a patrol good or bad, but instead to understand the experiences and interactions of Instructors and Rangers within the organization. In response, most asked me "what's the point of that?"

My previous military service granted me access and legitimacy in the eyes of my interlocutors. It gave me a sense of familiarity that allowed me to walk in spaces and talk in ways often closed to non-military people. My previous military experience meant I had an intimate knowledge of military structure and social norms. I understood military history—both its official history and also insider military traditions and social norms that allowed me to skip over a lot of

military social faux pas (Adler and Adler 1987). With my Ranger interlocutors, my military experience gave me credence and they saw me as having power and legitimacy on patrol. Many explained that they assumed I was skilled on the land and trusted *because* of my military service (an idea I come back to in a later chapter). However, this also had some negative impacts on my research.

While doing preliminary research on my very first patrol, I introduced myself and my (underdeveloped) project to the group of Rangers. The following day the patrol sergeant informed me that the patrol had agreed to let me join the group on the land. Eager and terrified of missing anything, I carried my camera and notebook with me and found myself taking hundreds of photos of the landscape and scenery. On the second last day of the patrol, I was sitting outside my tent and looking through my photos while waiting for my Mr. Noodles to cook on my jet boil when one of the women, Evelyn, sat down next to me and asked to see the photos. I handed over my camera and pointed out the buttons to go to the next photo. We sat in silence for a few moments and she finally handed me back the camera and asked what I'm going to do with the photos. I explained that I was still really early in my project but hopefully I'd use them in my dissertation. Eveyln looked confused and asked: "Aren't you a photographer for the military?" After asking a few follow-up questions, I understood that because I was always taking photos and the Instructor had asked me to take a group picture on the first day, my actions and association with the military were interpreted as being *part of* the military.[9] For the rest of my fieldwork, I always tried to remain aware of the fact that my separation from the military was not

[9] I had provided each member a consent form in English that was read out loud nd translated into the local dialect of Inuktitut and I tried my best to explain in non-academic terms.

always clear and my relationship with Rangers would be rooted within this uneven power dynamic and the ethical implications of receiving consent in these conditions.[10]

My connection to the military also affected how members of the military saw me. Meeting with the commanding officer of one of the N-Series operations,[11] He confirms that he only gave me access because 1 CRPG had "vouched that [I] was an insider." However, I am hesitant to position this work within the field of 'autoethnography.' While my military experience gave me this degree of access and knowledge, I cannot claim to completely be a member of the community. While in many ways my *master status* (Adler and Adler 1987) was much closer to the Instructors at the headquarters than the community-based Rangers, my gender, lack of combat experience and my lack of military uniform always marked me as an outsider.

Gender, Harassment, Suspicion

After only a few months, I remember calling one of my committee members crying that I had to leave the field because I couldn't handle the constant sexual harassment I was subjected to. It wasn't uncommon for me to walk into a room at the headquarters and have someone comment on my body and clothes in derogatory and sometimes violent ways. My body, face and clothing were of constant conversation. I felt completely powerless knowing that if I reported the comments to anyone in the chain of command, I would be completely discredited and my access to the unit would be cut off. On the other hand, I also knew these comments were part of a military initiation process. It became a delicate game of standing up for myself enough so I

[10] In all my patrols, I would always take the time to reconfirm consent from the individual every time I made a note about them. Furthermore, for the remainder of my fieldwork, I never approached a Ranger with a question (or wrote down observations) if they had not approached me first. I took their lack of engagement with me as a refusal to be part of the research. When a member would approach me, I would take the time to introduce my project again and explain their right to refuse.

[11] N-Series operations began in 2007 to show a federal force in the Arctic region. The operations bring reserve units from the south to different northern locations to learn about operating within an arctic environment.

didn't show weakness but in a way that meant I understood it was all a joke and in good fun. I smiled, laughed along and secretly added another piece of clothing to the pile of things that were unwearable. I understood these jokes as a powerful subliminal message of social exclusion (Faulkner 2005; Watts 2007).

As the only woman on the A Coy side of the building, I understood that my every move was surveilled and analyzed and my intentions were constantly questioned. Rumors constantly spread about my sexual activity and drinking habits. A night out with my friends was often reported back to all the men in the unit who questioned my drunkenness and promiscuity. Often my only defense to these assaults was humour where I innocently joked to my "dads" that I was a "good girl." Ensuring them I could be trusted and respected.

My positionality as a white and educated woman put me, as described by Carol Cohn in her work on the integration of women into the US military, as a "liberal feminist" made me "worthy of considerable initial suspicion" (Cohn 2000: 133). Even after two years in the office, one member insisted on calling me the "communist spy." A few other members never even acknowledged my presence for years. And on dozens of occasions, members would bring me right-wing media clips or articles with the assumption that it would entice me into an argument. I believe this process was a way to prove that my politics, and therefore my access to their lives, could never be trusted. Almost every time a new person joined the unit, my politics were 'outed' to the new member who would often revert to a state of suspicion, and I had to restart the work of building trust.

Research Limitation

Positioning myself in relation to the community-based Rangers was another matter altogether. As a white, settler Canadian I was faced with the ethical challenges and power relations that are involved in being an outsider conducting research with Indigenous communities. This was particularly apparent whenever I arrived in a community. In explaining my research I would always try to reassure my interlocutors that they had no obligation to speak with me, I did not work for the military and would not report anything back to the military. I am suspicious that this was ever truly believed. Instead, initially they thought I was an external evaluator sent to assess the patrol and almost instantly I could feel their alertness to my presence. Often only a few members of each patrol were curious enough to ask me questions about my presence and research, while others remained reserved and kept their distance.

This made me hyper-aware of what questions I asked. In thinking about my questions, I was influenced by the work done by Chelsea Vowels (2016), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), and Aileen Moreton-Robertson (2000) on Indigenous methodology. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's work, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* wonderfully outlines the dangerous consequences of anthropological research on Indigenous communities and poses critical questions that researchers must ask before they do research. The political and social conditions which made my research possible include the uneven power relations and systematic oppression of Indigenous people. This was compounded by the fact that I was perceived as having power in a military context and could ultimately control someone's employment.

This work has greatly shaped what kind of research I, as a non-Indigenous researcher, should be part of. Methodologically, this research made me question how to use my privilege to do research that creates value for the communities in which I study. Doing this research, I had to learn about the complicated dynamics of what could and could not be seen. I had to be aware of

what stories I should and should not tell and what research produces harm to the communities who share their stories with me (Angel 2022).

As an outsider to both Indigenous culture and small, isolated northern communities, I came to expect the uneasiness and confusion when observing or participating in military ceremonies or social interactions.[12] I learned to take cues from those around me—either observing quietly or actively participating if asked. In doing this research, I had to learn when it was appropriate to engage in conversation and ask questions but also accepted that listening and silence was sometimes the best contribution. At times, both these approaches were uncomfortable as I engaged in culturally, intellectually and emotionally unfamiliar territory (Regan 2010). My research involved having to navigate new customs and protocols, of which I had very limited understanding.

One of the most apparent limitations of my research was the complete vastness of the region. Spanning four million square kilometers and almost seventy communities with thousands of members, it was impossible for me to develop anything close to a representative sample of the research site. This was compounded by the fact that I had very limited time in any given community. I would fly into a community and remain for just under two weeks. While on patrols where we spent time on the land in tents, I was able to gain a much better familiarity than on patrols where we remained in the community, it was still extremely limited. This is in great contrast to many ethnographies about arctic communities (Collings 2014; Stevenson 2014; Briggs 1970; Vitebsky 2006). All these factored into the methodological focus of my research on Ranger Instructors. While Indigenous people in the north are obviously part of my research, my analytical and methodological focus was on the non-Indigenous Instructors who come to work in the north.

[12] These ceremonies included Swearing In ceremonies, Depart with Dignity ceremonies and parades. Among others.

While in Yellowknife, I conducted a series of interviews with instructors before and after they attended their patrols. This allowed me to gain a larger understanding of different patrols from the perspective of Instructors. The obvious limitations of this approach were that I only got one side of the story. While Rangers in all communities were extremely welcoming, answered my questions, and allowed me to participate in their patrols and community events, I remained cognizant of my outsider status and my inability to capture the complex and nuanced realities of these communities. Interpersonal dynamics and relationships could only be superficially studied and unlike the long-term arctic ethnographers I cited earlier, I was never viewed as more than a passing visitor.

Outsider Status

My outsider status within communities was almost always remarked in subtle ways. After traveling across the open tundra, the harsh -50 wind and blowing snow assaulted our group forcing us to make frequent stops as the patrol members switched off practicing using the military-issued GPS. Wearing the military-issued Mantra Canada Goose Jacket and Choco pants, I was well equipped for the unforgiving elements but after an hour, I prayed we'd stop soon so I could get off the snowmobile to do jumping jacks with the hopes of bringing some warmth to my extremities. As with every stop, once people got off their sleds, most dug into their bags to grab a hot thermos and gravitated towards the one or two small groups that seemed to naturally form. During all these stops, everyone would check in with their friends in the patrol to make sure no one was getting too cold or getting any white, frostbite spots on any exposed skin. Making my way towards Angie, she immediately asked me whether I'm cold and I could feel her scanning my face looking for any sign of frostbite. After half a dozen winter patrols, I'd become

accustomed to the question and the general distrust whenever I would assert that, no, I wasn't cold and was wearing a good jacket for the temperature. After telling Angie that I was okay and that after a few minutes of walking around, I was feeling good, I could see suspicion in her eyes as she started rubbing her gloved hands up and down my body, asserting "Umm yes, you're cold." As she rubbed my arms, she looked to the left where another group of Rangers had formed and were now looking towards us asserting: "Bianca's cold." After that, Angie's rubbing of me became a sort of ritual where if I ever went near her, she would assert that I was cold and rub my jacket or try to give me something warm to drink. One time she went so far as to tell the group that they had to stop and make me a fire. Feeling like an extreme burden, I repeatedly told anyone standing near me that I wasn't cold, everyone seemed to shrug me off and tell me that a fire would be good. Somewhere between annoyed and bemused, I would always return to my sled with the Instructor who would laugh at this bizarre ritual I'd become co-opted into. What I read this performance to mean was a sort of power play to establish my outsider status in the patrol. As a cultural guest speaker explained to a new group of Instructors, "You will be welcomed but never accepted into the north." And it is largely from here that my position is constructed within my field site. I, as a foreigner, had to be cold and taken care of on the land, because that was a marker of my outsider status.

Similarly, while on patrol in Nunavut my position as a white, female, southerner was especially poignant. Even though it was an unusually mild November, the conversation around whether I was cold was incessantly mentioned. This, I understood, became a way for the Rangers to take care of me, and in a sense, for me to remember that I must be taken care of. I came to realize that when Rangers told me "You look cold", they really meant "You're an outsider." Due

to the nature of my fieldwork as what I will refer to as a "constant tourist," it was always from this short-term, outsider status that I conducted fieldwork.

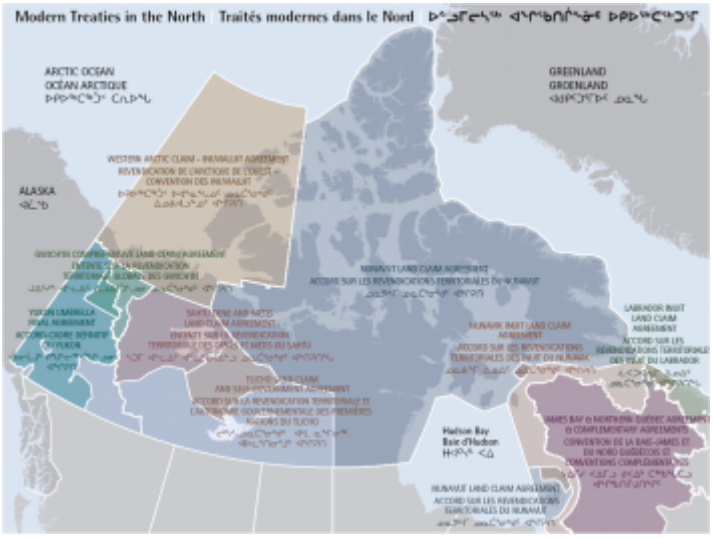
History of the North

Today's Canadian north, colloquially referred to as "The North " or "the Territories" is the vast, most northern region in Canada. Today, this area is split between three Canadian territories: Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. While the area covers just under 50% of Canada's total land mass, it has less than 15% of Canada's population. While often discussed as a unified entity, the area is geographically, politically, socially and economically diverse. Geographically the north is often divided between the *near north* and the *far north.* In more official terminology, the near north, or the sub-arctic is a large area dominated by the Canadian boreal forest. This is the traditional and continued territory of First Nations, predominantly Dene and Gwinch'in, who hunt moose, fish the fresh waterways and trap. During the peak of the North American fur trade it was home to many Metis people who continue to live throughout the region. While the northern parts of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta are all considered as being part of the 'near north', for the purposes of my own research, when referring to the sub-arctic region, I am specifically referring to the South Slave, North Slave, Det Cho and Sahtu regions in the Northwest Territories and all regions of the Yukon except for Old Crow.

The 'far north' is identified as the region north of the tree line, often referred to as the tundra. This is the traditional and continued home of the Inuit. Traditionally living as hunters and gatherers, the Inuit relied on hunting marine mammals and caribou. While the fur trade wasn't as instrumental to the influx of white settlements in the region, the whaling industry was a major influence. Regardless of this earlier contact, the Inuit were not aware of any claims to their

territory until 1920 when detachments of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) started being sent north to enforce Canadian law and sovereignty. For the first few hundred years after contact, the region was largely controlled by the Hudson Bay Company, under the name "Rupert's Land" through strategically established trading posts along the shores of James Bay and Hudson Bay. In 1869, "Rupert's Land" was surrendered to the British Crown and the region was renamed Northwest Territories. Over time, to keep up with the demands for fur, these trading posts went further inland to trade directly with the First Nations in the region (Damas 2002). With the trade industry came a massive increase in white settlement. This is particularly true along the west coast where in 1896 gold was discovered in what would later become the Yukon. The Klondike Gold Rush (1869-1899) became the first substantial white settlement in the north and the Yukon Territory was created in 1898. It was during this time that Canada began making a series of land title treaties with the First Nations.

These Treaties describe the relationship the Inuit people maintain with the state is relation to the land, ice, and water in the arctic. Land agreements describe how the federal, territorial and First Nations governments interact with each other and define First Nations ownership of and decision-making powers on Settlement Land. They address heritage, fish, wildlife, natural resources, water, forestry, taxation, financial compensation, economic development and land management. In the Northwest Territories 1900 marked the signing of the



first Land Treaty, Treaty 8, followed by Treaty 11 in 1920 (Fumoleau 2004). The Northwest Territories is the second largest territory, and half the population is Inuit, Inuvialuit, Dene and Metis. The NWT has a mix of resources and infrastructure setups that radically change the makeup of communities. There are thirty-three communities in the NWT and it is split into five regions. The Beaufort Delta in the north, the Shatu, the Det Cho and the south and north slave regions, with the majority are only accessible by air.

In the Yukon, the Umbrella Final Agreement is a framework for negotiating the individual Final Agreements. It was signed in 1993 by the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations. The Final Agreements are constitutionally protected modern treaties that outline First Nations' rights within their traditional territories. Eleven of the fourteen Yukon First Nations have Final Agreements with the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon. The Yukon is the most accessible territory and it has resulted in a massive concentration of the population in the city's capital Whitehorse with almost 70% of the population living there. This accessibility accounts for the high level of migration into the territory in response to various industrial growth.

In 1993, the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement was signed and in 1999 the Nunavut Creation referendum was enacted. The referendum was highly supported by people living in the far north and the territory of Nunavut was created. All communities east of Paulatuk became part of the newly formed territory. As the largest and newest territory in Canada, Nunavut is spread between twenty-five communities only accessible by air and is the largest land claim agreement in history. The territory is split up into three regions: Kitikmeot in the west, Kivalliq in the middle and Qikiqtaaluk in the east. The majority of Canada's Inuit population lives in the region and the land claims agreement addresses a broad range of political and environmental rights and

concerns over wildlife management, employment and land use and conservation. Similar to the Yukon, Nunavut has one of the fastest growing populations in the country due to the high birth rate.

History of 1 CRPG

In 1942, with the perception of the increasing threat from a Japanese invasion on the West Coast, the army formed the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers (PCMR), a component of the Reserve force modeled after the British Home Guard. This unconventional military allowed men that were too old, too young, or working in essential industries to contribute to home defense. The men who joined were only given a rifle, some ammunition, and an armband and were otherwise expected to use their own equipment. The theory behind the organization was that they would be the "eyes and ears" for the army in the region. Without any formal training, they were meant to report suspicious activity and use guerrilla tactics to repel an enemy force until professional soldiers arrive. However, once the war ended, the PCMR was stood down (Lackenbauer 2012: 32).

Figure 2: Map used by 1 CRPG to mark zones and patrols

Once the Cold War began, the Canadian Government realized it did not have the resources to station large numbers of soldiers in Northern or remote regions of the country. In 1947, the PCMR concept was resurrected as a cost-effective nationwide effort to promote security and sovereignty under the name "Canadian Rangers." Once again, Rangers were

untrained, lightly equipped, and self-sufficient. Rangers would remain in their home communities and use their local knowledge to act as guides and scouts, report suspicious activity and, if necessary, defend their territory until professional soldiers arrive. After the end of the Cold War the mandate that Rangers should engage with an enemy force no longer exists. In fact, they are explicitly prohibited from engaging in any form of local defense. This is also extended to aiding police in the discovery or apprehension of individuals (Lackenbauer 2006).

Interest in the Ranger Organization ebbed and flowed with the government's interest in arctic defense and sovereignty. For example, in the 1960s the Rangers' low cost meant that even though they factored little into Canada's defense plan, they were allowed to survive. This pattern of shifting interest continued well into the 1980s.

> Although Aboriginal leaders called for the demilitarization of the Arctic on social and environmental grounds, they nevertheless applauded the Rangers as a positive example of Northerners contributing directly to sovereignty and security. Media coverage began to emphasize the social and political benefits of the Rangers in Aboriginal (particularly Inuit) communities. Now the Rangers enjoy tremendous appeal to the federal government as an inexpensive, culturally inclusive, and visible means of demonstrating Canada's sovereignty (Lackenbauer 2013: 3).

As the Rangers grew into the 1990s, most of this growth happened directly in Indigenous communities and was advertised by the government as a way to build and reinforce an Indigenous-military partnership. By the 21st century, Canadian Ranger patrols were found in almost every community in the territorial north. Reacting to the perceived threat from international pressure over the Northwest Passage, the Rangers followed an upward trajectory in the early 2000s as the Harper Government revamped Arctic militarization. Canada's new approach to arctic sovereignty and policies was based on the preemptive and perceived future threat with the idea that Canada could lose something as quintessentially Canadian as the arctic.

The Rangers' task, “to maintain a Canadian Forces presence in local communities” fit squarely into this sovereignty mission.

While Canada has five CRPGs spanning across the country, 1 CRPG, due largely to the inaccessibility of the majority of the communities, has maintained certain differences from the other four CRPGs which have had a major impact on how they function. As the only CRPG with a predominately regular force staff, the unit suffers from high turnaround rates and a lack of corporate knowledge. While some members opt to extend their contracts to five or six years, most are recalled back down to their southern units to fill positions for their military career progression. This quick turnaround in the unit is further compounded by the lack of historical, political, social, or cultural training members get when they are posted to the unit. While the unit does undergo a yearly, week-long “standardization” session, most of the information passed down is logistical or bureaucratic in nature, and as one longtime member pointed it, coming to the unit is such a culture shock to new members that it is impossible for them to retain all the information, especially when they have no practical on the land experience with the Rangers.

Furthermore, because most of the members are there short-term there is very little access to information that would further explain the political, social, or historical context of the north and its inhabitants. While Professor Whitney Lackenbauer, who has held the position of Honourary Colonel for over five years, does a yearly presentation to address many of these gaps, this presentation is not mandated by the Chain of Command and only happens at 1 CRPG because of Lackenbauer's affiliation with the unit. This means that most Instructors head to communities simply armed with their own preconceived notions of the north—what they were taught in school, through media consumption and hearsay from previous headquarters members they may know. Most of the incoming Instructors at 1 CRPG tell me that they had absolutely no

idea what they were getting into and they've had to shift a lot of their ideas in order to function effectively at the unit.

Another major difference between 1CRPG and the rest of the CRPGs is the fact that the regular force sergeants posted to the unit do not undergo any specific screening to determine whether they would be well matched to the position.[13] In actuality, there is very little discussion on what exactly *would* qualify someone to be an appropriate and effective Instructor. Lackenbaur's (2007) study on Instructors is the first time any discussion on Instructors comes up in scholarship. He outlines the personality traits and leadership skills which "facilitate successful instruction of Ranger patrols." For Lackenbauer, this comes down to an Instructors' ability to be able to adopt a "culturally-aware approach" which allows Instructors to "acclimatize and adapt to the ways and needs of diverse communities" (66). Magali Vullierme (2018) argues that when Instructors go into Nunavik communities in 2 CRPG (located in Northern Quebec, James Bay and the Lower North Shore), it is the Instructors that are assimilated into Inuit culture and not the Inuit being assimilated into a military culture. Furthermore, Instructors must account for the vast language, cultural, and educational differences between the communities (with Western Yukon communities housing predominantly retired, non-Indigenous, government workers, and the Eastern Baffin Islands predominantly newly formed Inuit communities)[14] when they engage with different communities.

Instead, all the things Instructors know about the north and its inhabitants come through a "lessons learned" approach which creates a sort of genealogy of knowledge in how Instructors learn about the north and the methods they employ. In discussing this "lessons learned" approach

[13] There is additional screening to ensure the member will not be negatively affected by an 'isolated posting'—as is done for all members coming to Yellowknife. However, there is no screening to establish whether members will be effective Instructors.

[14] Many of these communities have low high school and middle school graduation percentages, high rates of FAS, and addiction, low incomes, and many people (especially Elders) only communicate in their regional dialect of Inuktitut.

to leadership, one Instructor explains how whenever he takes out a new Instructor out on the land, he says he repeatedly emphasizes how "the only way to make being an Instructor work, is to accept the Ranger way". However, what exactly that means, and how it is internalized by Instructors, and then utilized on patrols is vastly different. How Instructors adapt to the posting is central to my discussion.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is broken down into six chapters, with four substantive chapters, an introduction and a conclusion, each covering different themes. **Chapter two** examines how Rangers become part of the national imaginary of arctic sovereignty. I trace how Rangers express their military identity as the everyday acts of hunting, fishing, and traveling on the land which become co-opted into military practice. In this chapter, I argue that through the ambiguity around the purpose of "sovereignty Patrols' across the region, Ranger Patrols conflate Indigenous sovereignty and Canadian sovereignty. Through a general lack of transparency over the purpose of the organization, and a history of positioning patrols as a 'community service,' this chapter examines how the organization uses Ranger service as a way to mask the white, colonial framework from which military culture and ethos is constructed. These acts become part of Canada's arctic claim through the installment of military infrastructure across the region. **Chapter three** examines how the social imaginary of authentic indigeneity is constructed under a creation made and perpetuated by the military by tracing the organization's recruitment process. Presented as the eyes, ears and voice for the Canadian Armed Forces in the Canadian Arctic, Canadian Rangers are applauded as being positive and progressive examples of state-indigenous

relations. A major motive for this praise is that the organization is viewed as a twist on traditional settler-assimilationist politics. The non-indigenous, southern, regular, and reserve force soldiers who are posted to the units across the arctic and sub-arctic, view themselves as *assimilating* to Indigenous ways as part of being accepted by the predominantly Indigenous patrols. This goes against traditional ideas of Indigenous people *being* assimilated to be valuable to the state. More tempered approaches see the organization as a step towards reconciliation through the organization's apparent admiration and veneration of Indigenous knowledge, skills, and culture as the foundation of the organization. However, as I argue throughout this chapter, this argument completely removes the political, social, economic, and gendered power dynamics that have been established. This chapter examines the dangers in using concepts like reconciliation to describe what is inherently a colonial relationship that exists as the core structure of this military institution. Focusing specifically on the recruitment process this chapter will examine the risks of viewing the Ranger organization one-dimensionally and removing its history from the context of colonialism.

Chapter four explores the common praise that the Ranger organization is a progressive example of the integration of women into the military system with 35% female membership. Focusing on the hegemonic masculinity that underlines Canadian military ideology, I examine how Ranger service is viewed as a lesser form of military service, marking it as more acceptable for women. This chapter challenges the assumption that the organization's positive integration of women into patrols is due to the progressive incorporation of Indigenous values into patrols. Instead, it examines how perceiving the organization in this lens masks the colonial, patriarchal infrastructure that perpetuates a white, male, settler colonial gaze. **Chapter five** traces how Canadian Rangers in 1 CRPG are viewed as a critical part of the arctic defense strategy and a

cheap and easy way to maintain arctic sovereignty, especially in predominantly Indigenous communities in the high arctic. Focusing on how Rangers and Instructor talk and think about the pay system, this chapter examines how the payment becomes part of a civilizing process meant to bring Indigenous people to a colonial standard of behaviour. Linking humanitarian theory with work in Indigenous studies this chapter examines how the money paid to Rangers gets entangled with ideas of humanitarian aid. In doing this, this chapter examines how this positionality of 'humanitarian' and 'saviour' erases the colonial economic relationship that is created between Indigenous people and the state.

CHAPTER TWO:

We The North: Canadian Identity, Arctic Sovereignty and Canadian Rangers

It's the first night on the land with a patrol in the Mackenzie Delta and I'm sharing a tent with one of the female Rangers who'd been with the patrol for over ten years. Setting up alongside the other "female tents", in the frigid late January weather, it takes us over an hour to get our tent warm against the brutally cold -50 degrees. Hungry and tired after a full day of traveling, we sit as close to our wood stove as we can. As I impatiently stir my soup, waiting for it to warm up, Angie and I begin discussing her time as a Ranger. I tell Angie that I started my research with the Ranger after spending some time in the reserves. Without looking up from the plate in her lap, Angie seems to consider this and finally tells me that she "doesn't know anyone in the military." Confused, I smile at her as I use my spoon to point at the red Ranger hoodie she's wearing. "Angie, umm, you're in the army and so is everyone else here. Except, technically, me." Shaking her head, she tells me she doesn't see it that way as she shifts uncomfortably. Instead, she tells me she joined the Rangers because her father was the Ranger sergeant and a longtime member. She goes on to rattle off all her other family members who'd been Rangers for generations. Angie explains that many of the on-the-land skills she's learned were taught in reference to her assumed future as a Ranger. In fact, Angie tells me she'd always expected she would

Figure : A Ranger saluting a member of the headquarters after receiving their patrol certificate Photo by researcher

be a Ranger and her dad taught her land skills with this fact in mind. On the other hand, Angie's family history as a multi-generational military family seems to be completely unnoticed and unremarked by herself and her family. While thousands of Canadians can live their entire lives without ever interacting with a service member, the high percentage of Rangers across many northern communities means that almost every single person has had direct contact with a Ranger throughout their life. But for many of them, there is a disconnect between being a Ranger and traditional military service.

This disconnect between an individual's personal identity as a Ranger and military service became a central theme of my research. It was not uncommon for Rangers or Instructors to insist that Rangers were *not* military and that their role, mission, and symbolism were different. The answer to what Rangers were, if they weren't military, has become a central throughline of my work. How people answered this question and how they categorized the work Rangers do is the undertone to understand the political, social, gendered, and economic relationship that exists between Rangers and Instructors.

While on patrol with two of the newest members of a patrol in the South Slave Region, I'm sitting on a black folding camping chair by the entrance of the 10x12 foot wall tent while one of the members sits a few feet away on another chair at the foot of his cot, next to the wood stove as he stirs some vegetables in a cast iron skillet. The second tent member was right outside the tent flap cooking ribs over an open fire. The two men had invited me into their tent after a few days on the patrol and I asked them to tell me about their experience in the organization so far. However, as soon as I arrived, Anthony, who was cooking the vegetables, asked the first question, waving his hand towards the opening of the tent, he asked: "So how did someone from LA get into this?" As I've found myself doing on almost every patrol, I explain that I'm, in fact,

Canadian, and explain my own brief military history to explain the inception of my research interests. Anthony tells me he's super impressed and admits that it gives me more legitimacy to know that I was in the military. When I point out that technically everyone in the patrol is an active member of the CAF, he leans back in his cloth camping chair, perching precariously on the back legs with his hands linked behind his head and simply says, "Huh. I guess I never saw it that way." Looking towards his tent partner, whose body was now half in the tent and half outside, Anthony laughs and says, "Hey dude, we're in the army."

In this chapter I argue that the ambivalence that Angie and Anthony feel about their status in the military extends beyond their own identity. Instead, ambivalence around the purpose of "sovereignty patrols' across the region, puts into question how the military's presence in the region is read by different people, communities and Indigenous governments. Ranger Patrols, I argue, do the work of conflating Indigenous sovereignty and Canadian sovereignty. Through a general lack of transparency over the purpose of the organization, and a history of positioning patrols as a 'community service,' the organization is able to transform everyday acts of hunting, fishing, and traveling on the land into military practice. Situating military culture and ethos within a white, colonial framework, I argue that these acts become part of Canada's arctic claim through the installment of military infrastructure across the region. Indigenous Rangers very evidently seldom share in this national mythology.

History of Arctic Sovereignty and the Canadian Military

The arctic has fascinated explorers since the beginning of European colonialism and while states often funded these explorations, the question of who owned the arctic rarely raised concern. Today, Canada's northern border exists as an internationally contested space where

various state and corporate interests have slowly begun to encroach on the region to access the abundant natural resources below the ice. Until recently, the inaccessibility of these resources allowed Canada's claim to the region to remain largely unchallenged. However, once melting ice sparked interest from the world about accessing these resources, Canada found itself on the defensive trying to maintain its claim (Zellen 2009). This changing geopolitical climate brought with it a militarization of Arctic land by a series of Canadian governments. Canada's military presence in the Arctic has historically ranged from minimal to non-existent with a minor escalation during the Cold War. The post-Cold War era marked a process of state modernization in the region (Lackenbauer and Farish 2007) with the establishment of military outposts. The Canadian Rangers were born as part of a northern Indigenous militia. Federal investment in the organization ebbed and flowed based on government, international, and corporate interests over the next sixty years.

Figure 3: Photo of one of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line in Nunavut. Photo courtesy of A.L.

In 2007, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper stood in the small arctic town of Nanisivik, Nunavut and gave a famous speech declaring that Canada must "use it or lose it" referring to Canada's need to create clear delineations of what land, water, and ice in the north belongs to Canada (Roussel and Payette 2011). This declaration came months after Russia and the European Union made public and political moves to establish ownership of the arctic (R.

Powell 2008; Chivers 2007). As international and corporate interests threatened Canada's claim to Arctic land and resources, the Canadian state made pushes to militarize the region in an effort to ensure its arctic claim. Large-scale operations became yearly events meant to prepare southern soldiers to operate in the harsh and foreign environment.

However, as the commander of Joint Task Force North points out in an interview, the purpose is not to prepare soldiers to fight but to establish a military presence in the region as an act of sovereignty. These operations are about having a presence to protect through deterrence. "It is about a whole-of-government approach of visibility alongside the RCMP, Transport Canada, The Coast Guard, Environment Canada and others to have awareness of what activities are taking place." This Westphalian sovereignty (through physical occupation) allows Canada to establish the Canadian state in the Arctic. With both international and corporate interests quickly encroaching on the arctic landscape, Canada has returned to an occupation=ownership approach to sovereignty. The Indigenous people living in the region have now become an integral part of the visibility of Canada's position in the region. Indigenous people are literal and symbolic representations of this claim.

This ownership comes out as a form of environmental conservation in response to the effects of climate change. It places *Canadian* Indigenous people as stewards of the delicate Northern ecosystem. By establishing control of the climate change crisis in the Arctic, Canada can claim control over the economic benefits that can emerge. Chris Pearson traces the connection between warfare, the environment and the militarization of landscape (2012) where the military operates within "a distinct expansionary dynamic" (Hooks and Smith 2005) to take over land for the purpose of military expansion. Because Canada is the only country with an official military presence in the region, it has "adopted a 'proactive and aggressive' plan to

‘exercise effective control’ over its internal waters" (Coates et al. 2008: 118). In this sense, the uncontested occupation of Canadian citizens (the Inuit), the presence of the military (the Rangers) and Canada’s position as stewards of Arctic environmentalism (through, for example, the Canadian High Arctic Research Station in Cambridge Bay, NU) Canada is asserting sovereignty through the old maxim where “possession is 9/10th of the law” (Lackenbauer and Kikkert 2010: 5).

In the arctic, the Rangers (and surrounding Indigenous communities) are a vital part of this. Rangers not only live on the land—by standing in government lines, mailing letters, and paying taxes—but are active participants in the mapping and surveying of the region through their military participation. For James Scott (Scott 1998), this becomes important for the apparatus of legibility and control of the state. These mundane acts of bureaucracy become outward reflections of the core of the state (Sharma and Gupta 2006).

Quoting Joe Clark’s 1985 statement to the House of Commons, Lackenbauer demonstrates the ways the Canadian state intertwines Canadian and arctic / Inuit interests to conflate the two: “Canada is an Arctic nation…Canada’s sovereignty in the Arctic is indivisible. It embraces land, sea, and ice… From time immemorial Canada’s Inuit people have used and occupied the ice as they used and occupied the land… Full sovereignty is vital to Canada’s security. It is vital to the Inuit. And it is Vital to Canada’s national identity.” This, he argues, mobilizes Indigenous use of the arctic to justify Canada’s claim by co-opting Indigenous military participation into the sovereignty project, “security and sovereignty discussions became intertwined with the broader themes of militarization and Indigenous survival” (Lackenbauer 2013: 285-6). Recruiting Indigenous people into military service is part of the assimilation

process (Holm 1993). Military service, along with residential schools, became a critical part of the colonial project of 'integrating' Indigenous people (Cowen 2008).

Canadian National Identity and Indigenous Identity

From the iconic scenes painted by the Group of Seven to classic Canadian set literature and the Toronto Raptor slogan, "We the North," the Canadian national imaginary has been linked to the north. "The North has been rendered exotic, romantic, terrifying, sublime, enigmatic, otherworldly, and Intrinsically Canadian" (Sangster 2016: 3). Regardless of this romantic attention to the region, the mythology of the north is as a "frozen, empty hinterland, an imaginary and unpeopled place" (Hulan 2002: 6) largely excluded the Indigenous people living in the region (Baldwin, Cameron, and Kobayahi 2011b). Instances that include Inuit representation, often revolve around racist, colonial interpretations of Inuit life and social systems written from the perspective of European explorers. These descriptions, like those given by European arctic explorer Samuel Hearne in his book, *A Journey to the Northern Ocean,* become justifications for the dispossession of Indigenous people as "categories of race take on legitimating roles in the context of violent territorial dispossession (colonialism) through stereotyped constructions of difference" (Milligan and McCreary 2011:156). In reality, contact between northern Indigenous communities and the south was largely limited to missionaries, government officials, and explorers and it was from these perspectives that Indigenous world systems were described.

While historically within settler states culture and/or cultural difference was attacked by the state through assimilation practices with the goal of dispossession (Coulthard 2007). Today, the existence, and power of Land Treaties in the north mean that the state must adhere to certain

agreements. Arctic environmental and wildlife conservation becomes part of a co-management regime that positions Indigenous peoples, especially the Inuit, as environmental stewards (Zellen 2008; Nadasdy 2003). Cultural preservation becomes paramount to this goal. As Nelson Graburn (2006) illustrates this preservation is always in relation to its ability to further settler colonialism. Using the Ranger organization as an example, cultural preservation masks economic integration and cultural assimilation.

In the north, the cultural distinctiveness of Indigenous people is venerated due to the state's reliance on Indigenous labour, knowledge and Treaty Agreements. This has resulted in a push toward cultural revitalization through educational, social, and political programs headed by the state. These state projects of cultural revitalization are part of what Charles Hale (2005) calls multicultural neoliberalism which is positioned as "super progressive." But also disregards the ways Indigenous peoples are used to do the work of colonization. Indigenous culture and skills are tactically deployed, through organizations like the Rangers, to further Canada's colonial project. Indigenous people are incorporated into the state and their knowledge of the land and its resources is used to further the state's agenda. Like the sled dogs Nancy Wachowich (Wachowich 2006) (2006) writes about which are sold, euthanized, taxidermied and publicly displayed, traditional skills used by Rangers are "awarded cultural value as traditional, as artifacts, and as commodities produced both in and for local and transnational networks of exchange" (121). Recognition of Inuit cultural distinctiveness became foundational to Canada's multicultural project.

Military Service or Community Service?

There is some dispute confusion among the Rangers and Instructors of which way service is meant to go: some Rangers seem to believe the Rangers are meant to act in service of the community. With four years in the unit, Greg is considered one of the most senior Instructors and during the three patrols I attended with him, we often discussed his philosophy about what he thought was the purpose of Rangers. Sitting at his desk together one afternoon, there's commotion in the office about whether or not Rangers should help with flood relief procedures in a community. Greg, like many of the Instructors and headquarters staff I spoke with during my fieldwork, had a very strong opinion about this. We're each sitting on an office chair eavesdropping on the conversation after it's confirmed that patrol would not be helping with the flooding. The Instructor whose patrol put in the request is frustrated but his boss, the Company Sergeant Major (CSM), is adamant that the order was passed down and there was nothing he could do about it.

I look over at Greg and I see him shaking his head and he tells me that Rangers are representations of the CAF to communities and act as guides for the military. Community service is simply a byproduct. The community, he explains, cannot, and should not, consider the

Figure 4: Rangers travelling in formation in the Baffin
Photo by researcher

Rangers as something they can "call on." During the COVID-19 pandemic, this was often a topic of conversation for me with many Instructors. Many communities across 1 CRPG requested support from the Rangers to supply community food lockers and conduct welfare checks. However, as the new commanding officer explained, it was outside the scope of the organization. Under his command, Rangers should, and would, only be used in support of the Canadian Armed Forces. Communities, as he sees it, shouldn't be allowed to create a dependency on Rangers because, "sure they're a presence in communities, but they're not *supporters* of communities. Territorial governments are responsible for [providing aid]." This is very different from how many Rangers actually see their role. Especially in the high arctic, isolated communities that actively see Ranger Patrols as important times for members to get food and resources for their families and communities. In fact, while on patrol in the high arctic, I asked a group of Rangers what they thought about the unit's response to COVID-19 and they told me they were baffled by the directive that they were on standby for months but were never actually used for support. Especially in communities that had active COVID-19 outbreaks. Lackenbauer explained the historic relationship between Rangers and their communities like this:

> The special bond that the Rangers have with their communities leads to many local roles: providing honor guard for politicians and royalty visiting their communities, protecting trick-or-treaters from polar bears in Churchill on Halloween, or blazing trails for the Yukon Question and Hudson Bay Quest dog sled races. During Nunavut's two-week mass vaccination program against 'swine flu' in late 2009, Rangers played a pivotal role in guiding Nunavummiut through the process and helping them fill out paperwork. On the scientific front, Rangers have supported southern researchers working on ice shelves on Ellesmere Island, have set up huts for polar bear researchers along M'Clintock Channel, and have worked with Fisheries and Oceans to install navigation buoys. The commander officer at the time explained that having Ranger

> partake in such a plethora of tasks meant that Rangers could 'patrol with a purpose' (Lackenbauer 2012: 35).

Historically, it wasn't uncommon for patrols to hunt for food for community lockers or deliver meat to elders and young families in need. The removal of traditional days from patrols was marked as one of the clear indications that the Organization was, first and foremost, a military institution.

In many cases, this disconnect between what Rangers are, and should be is mitigated by Instructors who often allow subsistence hunting while on patrol. If they don't allow this, they would lose the respect (and probably the participation) of many Rangers. I would argue that this reality is very well-known among all levels of leadership. Often creative things are done to ensure that Rangers can still do these things without anyone getting in trouble. While Operation Nunakput, the leadership greenlit the Rangers setting up nets to collect fish (which they were allowed to bring back to their community) because it was set up as a "teaching exercise" where Rangers were teaching the reserve soldiers how to survive on the tundra (though, I'm not sure why a soldier would have a 50-foot fishing net with them in a survival situation).

In reality, the argument over what is a traditional skill and when it is appropriate for it to be used is something I encountered constantly throughout my research. In thinking about this question, I came to observe that in the simplest terms, a skill was deemed traditional when its sole purpose was to benefit the individual members or community and a skill was deemed military when it functioned to benefit the military. Returning to the example above, teaching the reservists how to fish was deemed legitimate because its purpose furthered a military skillset–arctic survival. On the other hand, a group of Rangers simply fishing while out on patrol was traditional because it did little for the state.

After it was deemed that patrols could no longer participate in traditional days while out on patrol, Instructors found creative ways to justify how something 'traditional' could actually be a military skill. While on patrol in the MacKenzie Delta, the acting patrol sergeant, Dominic informs the Instructor Michael that one of the elders,[15] Lucas, hadn't brought any food with him for the six-day patrol. Even though the patrol was given a 200-dollar advance to get food, Lucas had given the money to his wife to pay for food for herself and didn't have enough left over. Michael decides that in order to ensure success for the patrol, they would need to go hunting to ensure everyone would have enough food for the next week. Therefore, the next morning we find ourselves up early once again, ready to make the long, cold journey to a well-known caribou grazing area 150 km from camp.

Like the day before, it's freezing cold out as we travel by snowmobile, our path follows the river and the ice and snow is flat and we travel fast, only stopping once for hot tea, coffee and snacks. I have no idea where we are and my eyes scan the passing forest that spans both sides of the river as we travel. I only know we've arrived when the group stops at the base of a small mountain range and three of the Rangers take out their rifles from their cases, and sling the weapons across their backs and drop a handful of bullets into their pockets.

With the weapons ready we make the slow climb up the mountain; moving slowly to avoid the massive boulders and craters that litter the path. Sitting on the back of Michael's skidoo, I'm shocked when I look out over his shoulder to see hundreds of caribou grazing on the hill. I am startled out of my daydream of how beautiful the snow-covered tundra looks when I hear a gunshot and from the corner of my eye, I see a caribou drop 100 meters to my left. A few

[15] There is no age in which someone is designated to be an elder and throughout the communities I visited, there was often a different way to determine whether someone was an elder. In one place, I was told an elder is the oldest living member of a family and in another I was told it was an individual which the community sought advice from. Through my fieldwork, I identified someone as an elder if that is how they were identified by the patrol members. Because there are no age restrictions on who can be a Ranger, every patrol I attended had at least one or two members that were identified as elders.

more guns ring out in the otherwise complete silence as the other two hunters in the group try to hit one of the now-running caribou. I see two more caribou go down and within a minute the three successfully caught caribou lie alone, surrounded by only the tracks left behind by the other animals. Before leaving on the hunt the patrol had decided that they would only harvest three caribou and with the three animals laying still in the snow, each of the hunters went towards the caribou they had shot, tied the feet with rope to the back of their machines and dragged them to where the rest of the patrol had gathered on the flat peak of the mountain.

With the three caribou together, four of the Rangers who didn't hunt jump off their skidoos and each kneel next to one of the animals and begin to gut the three caribou with skill and proficiency only gathered through years of practice. As they work, they often place their hands inside the body cavity to warm them against the -50 wind that has been blowing relentlessly at the peak with nothing to block the arctic air. As they work, other members of the patrol hunch down to watch. The four sporadically provided explanations about what they were doing, and after butchering half the caribou, one of the female members, Gwen, who was working on one of the caribou, passes her knife to her son, the newest and youngest member of the patrol, and tells him to finish. Seeing this, another one of the men who was working on another caribou looks up to the young, female Ranger who'd shot the caribou he was gutting and simply says, "You too." The two switch positions and the older Indigenous man, whose day job was as a hunting guide in the area, knelt by the woman and expertly guided her through all the cuts.

Everyone is hungry, tired, and cold but there's an undeniable excitement about/from the successful hunt and we pack up at meat and having already packed the trail, the ride back is fast. We arrive at camp and like the night before, everyone is eager to get back to their tents to start

their fires and make dinner with the fresh meat. Sitting in our tent later cooking our portion of the meat, Michael explains that in his mind there is no way to separate 'traditional skills' from Ranger activities. Instead, he told me that he used the hunting trip as a way to train military skills. While traveling to the hunting location, Michael ensured that the less experienced Rangers would practice traveling to the location using the military GPS. This, he argued, justified the hunting. Rangers were practicing military skills and hunting was simply a byproduct of that skill development. However, the relationship between skill development and hunting goes even further. After four years working as an Instructor, Michael understands that in order to maintain Ranger engagement, there has to be a benefit for the community. In essence, according to Michael, it would be impossible to develop Rangers as simply a military asset. And this sentiment is echoed in many ways by individuals at all levels of leadership at 1 CRPG. The fact that Rangers are not *military* was mentioned to me countless times during my fieldwork.

If the organization should be seen first and foremost as a military institution, functioning solely in the name of the Armed Forces, then why don't Rangers see themselves as soldiers? If, then, Rangers aren't really military, but they're also not meant for community service and their role is being more and more militarized, what, or who, exactly are Rangers?

The Ambiguity of Ranger Identity

In many ways Angie and Anthony's disconnection from the military nature of their service is echoed by the CAF's own position on the Rangers within the larger military. As Whitney Lackenbauer points out in his critique, "Diversity Statistics, Self-Identification Data, and the Canadian Rangers: Underestimating Indigenous Peoples' Participation Rates in the Canadian Army," CAF data on Indigenous participation in military service refuses to encompass

Rangers into its calculation. The military officially only counts 2800 Indigenous service members, citing that this number does not include Canadian Rangers. Questioning this logic, Lackenbauer questions whether this omission misconstrues Canadian Ranger service as being a lesser form of service than Regular or Reserve Force members (Lackenbauer 2021: 1). This view that Rangers are not seen as military is definitely not new. If the military itself does not see Rangers as 'true' members of the CAF, then it is not surprising that Rangers themselves often don't associate their position with being members of the military. This is in direct conflict with the reality of the military's impact and visibility in the north. In every community I visited, every person I met who wasn't a Ranger, had been or was related to someone connected to the organization. As in military bases across the country, the identity of the community becomes linked to the Ranger organization. Military-issued Ranger apparel could be spotted throughout communities, along with license plates, flags, and bumper stickers often marking homes, vehicles, and family members of Rangers. Social, political, and economic life becomes intrinsically linked to military infrastructure (Lutz 2002). Going to isolated communities across the arctic and sub-arctic, I was shocked at the connectedness that existed with the Rangers. Almost every single person I spoke with had some connection to the Rangers and (ultimately, therefore, the military). Every time we'd walk around a community, dozens of young children would run up to us asking if we were with the Rangers. Many proudly exclaim they were (or were aspiring to be) local Junior Rangers.

Almost everyone I spoke with told me they'd never met anyone in the military before. Catherine Lutz, in her analysis of the "Homefront" in Fayetteville, describes how the civilian

town members become deeply embedded within the process of militarization but continue to claim their separation from the establishment: "In that distinction they hope to preserve their autonomy and, perhaps, the respect they might be accorded by others for whom they otherwise become latter-day 'camp followers'" (Lutz 2002: 173). The citizens of Fayetteville created a separation between the town and the base as a way to separate themselves from a state of dependency on what Lutz refers to as "war cycles." As she points out, the creation of the military base came with a host of social and political problems that are intrinsically linked to the military's presence in the area. Anti-war activism, the spread of venereal diseases and crime all drive the community's desire to separate from the base. On the other hand, I argue that within the Canadian north, the social and political separation that communities have with military identity and military cultural functions in favour of the state. The lack of identification of the Rangers as military personnel and instead as community actors renders the military's presence and influence in the region largely invisible.

Rangers and Junior Rangers on parade for Remembrance Day
Photo by researcher

The ambiguity of this relationship to the military extends to how Instructors are seen in communities. Quoting a Ranger Instructor from the 1960s, Whitney Lackenbauer explains that the misunderstanding about what a Ranger is can be traced almost to the inception of the organization. While the official operational tasks of the organization are "centered on the basic

premise that the low-cost, localized 'citizen-soldier' helps to assert sovereignty and security in remote and isolated areas […] It is doubtful if some of the Rangers really understand what the whole business is about […] It is the [Ranger Instructors] belief that some of the Eskimos think that he is the entire Canadian Army and that, as such, he is an eccentric but benevolent dispenser of free rifles and ammunition. The name they give the [Ranger Instructors'] in certain localities 'Kokiutit angayk'ok', 'Rifle Chief' or 'Boss of the Rifles', is sufficient indication of this" (Lackenbauer 2007: 196; 181-2). Sixty years later the ambiguity about what the role of an Instructor is within a patrol is still present. One Instructor explained the relationship to me like this: "We're the mentor, and the clerk and the money guy and the paperwork guy and the medic and the padre. We're everything to them." However, as Instructors spent more time within the organization, many of them express a loss of identity to being soldiers. In fact, when Instructors would introduce themselves to new patrols, they never referred to themselves as soldiers and often gave very little details about their combat roles. Even at the office, it wasn't uncommon to witness Instructors express these identity crises. After the war in Ukraine broke out, I was talking with one Instructor who told me he wished he could have volunteered to go, "I was trained to go to war and help people. But instead, here I am doing excel." In this sense, even Instructors with combat training and experience began to lose connection to the 'military' institution and began to see their own work as part of this lesser status of service.

Finally, the ambiguity about Ranger service is compounded by the reality of small-town dynamics where one individual may have multiple, overlapping positions. For example, the Ranger sergeant in a community may also be the Hamlet mayor and a member of search and rescue. This means that when dealing with an emergency in a community, they may be doing it from a variety of positions that are interlinked. This, I argue, creates greater confusion in

understanding the purpose and mission of Canadian Rangers within communities. Speaking with the commander of Joint Task Force North, he explains the confusion like this: “You may have a Ranger out there wearing one of his other hats, and he may already be out there as a volunteer and he can’t stay out because he’s not getting paid for three days. And we may receive a request that they’re over capacity and need additional support to be able to continue the search.” When this activation happens, the Rangers switch their role but that switch isn’t always necessarily very clear from the perspective of the community. This highlights how Ranger's work cannot simply be viewed within a binary of whether it is community service or the state exerting power in the region.

Developing Military Skills

The ambiguity over whether Rangers are truly militarized manifests in how they are trained. Instructors routinely emphasize that Rangers are not soldiers and therefore, not militarized. However, over the course of my fieldwork, I would see many examples of new policies that had the explicit purpose of transforming Rangers into more standardized and militarized versions of themselves. The most obvious evidence for the militarization of the Rangers comes in the issuing of the C19 .308 rifle meant to replace the 75-year-old Lee-Enfield the Rangers have been working with since 1947. Until this point, Rangers were issued the Lee-Enfields upon joining, without having to undergo any type of testing or assessment. Beginning in 2018, when the CAF started rolling out the new .308, they started undergoing a basic weapons handling and safety course with each patrol before they would be given the new weapon. For Richard, this change in the standard is important because “They’re still the army, they need to have some basics.” The course, which focuses on proper maintenance of the rifle,

weapons safety drills, and proper range voice commands, takes two to four days to teach for each patrol, depending on how quickly the members caught on.

The training was broken down into a theory component and a practical component. During the theory component, Rangers would be taught by a military-issued PowerPoint

Rangers at a gun range
Photo by researcher

presentation that went through the weapon specifications. In almost every version of this component that I watched, Ranger sat at tables, the rifles laid out on tables as the Instructor read from the weapon manual. During this time, Rangers would undergo hands-on lessons on safety precautions, functions test, load, ready, stoppages, and unloading, with the aim of doing the full military-standard Weapons Test before moving to the range component of the training. At this time, Rangers would head out on the land and set up a one-hundred-meter range and would fire the standard military weapons qualification test. This test would become the first time Rangers were expected to complete any training to the same standard as regular and reserve force

members. The implementation of this standard has had interesting effects on how Instructors view Rangers. The massive disparity in how well Rangers engage with the training has created an imbalance in which patrols are viewed as being good patrols.

After going through a particularly difficult day working with the patrol in the Baffins to pass their weapons test, Jackson, who was on only his second patrol and the first time in charge[16], goes over the test a few more times with the whole group after almost everyone failed the previous day. Looking back towards Richard, he asks, "How did I do?" Sitting in the back of the room, Richard shrugs, saying, "We'll see what they retain." As a proponent of the test, Richard strongly believes that the test is easy and that Instructors must go through every aspect of the test to ensure Rangers can be safe with their military weapons. In his mind, because some patrols are able to retain the test easily, it is a fair standard to hold all Rangers to. What Richard doesn't mention is the disparity in English proficiency and literacy that often determines whether a patrol will "catch on quickly."

Furthermore, due to low attendance by some patrols, especially in the high arctic where employment, hunting seasons, and medical travel (among other things) keep people out of the community for extended periods of time means that it has taken some patrols years to qualify all their members on the new weapons. Until all the members are qualified, patrols are extremely limited in what else they can do when an Instructor comes into the community. This has caused a lot of frustration among Instructors who feel as though patrols that aren't completing the training in high numbers are somehow less dedicated to the organization.

[16] Typically when an Instructor joins the unit, they partake in a process called "left seat, right seat." During their first patrol in the unit, they travel under the supervision and guidance of an experienced Instructor and the new member is responsible for observing the patrol. During their second patrol, the new member takes the "right seat" and once again travels with an experienced Instructor but this time they are in charge of the planning and operation of the patrol and the experience simply observes and gives advice when needed.

What this transformation shows is a move from a more laissez-faire mentality over the training of patrols towards a new militaristic approach. Patrols that accept these changes are viewed as more productive and more valuable. On my last patrol during my fieldwork, I traveled to Nunavut where I would go out on the land with what was considered to be "the best Nunavut patrol." With the same, competent leadership for almost 30 years, it is often a stand-in for what patrols in the most northern regions should aspire to. However, when I went to the community, it was Frank's first time there so all he knew of the patrol was its reputation. Once we arrive and meet the whole patrol, it becomes evident that what Instructors mean when they say it's a 'good patrol' they mean it's the ability to fit neatly into the CAFs mandate for Rangers—to be skilled on the land, lightly equipped, and able to mesh into a military environment. With very few women, the members are active hunters and with very few employment opportunities in town, Ranger patrols often have high attendance rates.[17]

Bad weather brought us off the land a day early but Frank wants to ensure that everyone still gets the amount of EUR "they were promised" at the start of the patrol so he decides to do his lecture out on the land. He tells the sergeant to plan a simple day trip to a nearby stop where we can stop for lunch and talk. So early the next morning, we jump back onto our snowmobiles and head to the iconic lookout. From our tour of the local community museum, we'd learn that location was a historically important place for the community and is one of the first places the Inuit of the region came into contact with settlers. Now the place is a beautiful vista that community members often travel to with friends and family. After giving everyone some time to explore around and have some coffee and food, Frank calls the group together and pulls out the Ranger Handbook. A 200-page military-issued book each Ranger (should be) given upon

[17] Female participation in patrols is often supplementary to full-time employment in town. When I asked why there were so few women in this patrol, all the members simply stated that women are working. During my time in the community, I was unable to confirm or deny these claims from women in the community.

enrollment. The book contains all the information a Ranger needs to know to operate effectively alongside the "green army." Frank opens the book to the section on military convoys and explains the history and importance of following proper military formation while traveling on the land. Back at our hotel later that night, Frank tells me that because the patrol was already the best, he wanted to bring them up to a higher standard. In his mind, bringing the patrol to a military standard is the natural progression of this task. Even patrols that were considered to be the highest caliber were viewed as falling short of a military standard.

Indigenous People and Military Service

Studying the motivations for Native Americans to join the US military, Tom Holm tries to bring light to the complex relationship Indigenous soldiers may have with the nation-state that "colonized, displaced, impoverished and exploited their peoples for over 200 years" (Holm 2007: 127). He challenges the assumption that soldiers were simply convinced by military propaganda where Native military service is "an irrational choice, or at minimum, one that would serve to legitimize them as American citizens, assimilate them into mainstream American culture, and ultimately destroy their identities as distinct peoples" However, as he argues, "Native veterans have chosen military service to maintain their identities and better serve their own distinct communities, rather than serve the cause of assimilation"


Rangers formed up for parade
Photo by researcher

(ibid). This logic is a common theme of why many Rangers tell me they joined their local patrol. However, what I argue is that this logic can be seen as a continuation of the settler logic.

Traveling to a small community along the Northwest Passage, it had finally stopped raining and the beautiful July arctic sun was coming out. I'm sitting on the water's edge when Beatrice walks up to me and asks if I'm enjoying being in her community. I tell her that it was beautiful and I feel very privileged to get the opportunity to come. Our conversation shifts and I ask Beatrice what she understands the role and mission of the Rangers is. Spanning her hands out in front of her, she simply states "To protect this." Intrigued, because of the community's position along the Northwest Passage, I ask her what they're protecting the region from. I see Beatrice contemplating the question and instead of answering directly, tells me about the cruise ship that went aground the previous year, and the community is still dealing with the negative environmental consequences. I asked Beatrice if she means that the point of the Rangers is to protect the area and she nods. Eager to see if she would tell me that in her opinion the patrol *is* about sovereignty, I asked "Whose land are you protecting? Whose land is this?" Without skipping a beat, she spread her arms wide towards the makeshift camp we'd made and simply says: "ours." Still confused by what she means, I ask her whether she's saying the land belongs to the military, Canada. Now it's Beatrice's turn to look confused and she says, "The Inuit." Feeling stupid, I awkwardly stumble over my words and say, "Oh, you don't see this land or yourself as Canadian?" Before I can even realize my mistake, Beatrice's entire demeanor changes, pointing both thumbs towards the large maple leaf in the center of her Ranger sweater, she pointedly tells me, "I'm Canadian, I'm more Canadian than you. You don't even live here," before walking back up the hill towards a group of women cooking dinner.

Over the course of my fieldwork, I often found my conversations with Rangers turning toward the question of protecting land. Whenever I would investigate what exactly they meant, I often got similar answers, however, I didn't make the same mistake again. I began to see the ambiguity with which the organization's core purpose is positioned to be an intentional strategy that conflates Indigenous self-governance and sovereignty with Canada's colonial sovereignty project in the region where the inclusion of Indigenous people into military service operates within the settler logic of elimination (Wolfe 2006).

Federica Caso, (2022) in her article on the Indigenous military service in Australia argues that contrary to the argument that Indigenous inclusion is a form of reconciliation, Indigenous inclusion in military service is a colonial process to produce "governable and obedient imperial subjects" (4). Tracing the history of Indigenous inclusion in colonial militaries, Caso argues that making colonial soldiers is a practice of governance to create docile bodies (Foucault 1977) that are "operationalized through institutions that discipline the body" (4). Building on Wolfe's settler colonial logic of elimination, Caso follows Wolfe's three phases of settler colonialism: confrontation, carceration, and assimilation, to show the history of the military organization within settler colonialism. Caso traces how, in the last stage, assimilation, "the figure of the Indigenous soldier became the face of assimilation, heralded as a model of assimilated Indigeneity because of service to the nation and loyalty to settler institutions" (11). However, working at 1 CPRG, this type of thinking would be difficult to find among Instructors and Rangers. Instead, on many occasions, Rangers have been described as "the most loyal Canadians." This idea is often supported by examples of Rangers showing deference towards their military service and uniform.

While I was out on a patrol, a member of a neighboring patrol passed away. On the day of the funeral, most members of the patrol decided to use the remainder of their EUR gasoline to travel to the neighboring community and attend the funeral "in their reds." The display of comradery displayed how deeply embedded into military culture patrols can feel. The power of a military uniform has long been examined as essential to a soldier's sense of camaraderie, cohesion, and esprit de corps (Krueger 2012) and that is definitely true among the Rangers. During every patrol, Rangers eagerly await their yearly clothing allotment—many of them displaying their new, clean uniforms and ranks with extreme pride. A member of the Baffins told me that members only wear their clothing on training nights to ensure they remain in pristine condition. On the other hand, members of a Kitikmeot patrol tell me that they wear their uniforms year-round to "show the community they are Rangers." While very different ideologies, both patrols demonstrate a veneration towards the uniform. During my first year at 1 CRPG, I witnessed a group of new recruits receive their uniforms and ranks. The newly appointed master corporal beamed as he ran his hands down the front of his sweater to ensure it was wrinkle-free prior to being photographed. After seeing him at a campground a few months later, he insisted I introduce him as "master corporal" to my friends.

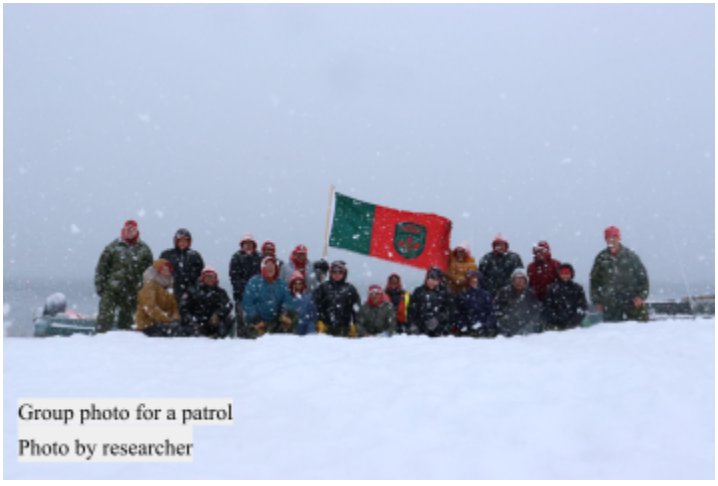
Toward the end of my fieldwork, I was invited along with an Instructor to a conference on arctic sovereignty. During our panel, the Instructor challenged settler colonial ideas that Indigenous people are anti-state and anti-government. Instead, he posits example after example of Rangers he *personally* knew who was extremely proud of being Rangers. A member of the audience questions whether Rangers experience a form of double consciousness.[18] As an Indigenous woman, she explains that she thought it was disingenuous for the military to claim

[18] Double consciousness is a concept created by Du Bois that examines the struggle African Americans face as they try to remain true to black culture while also conforming to the dominant white society. He describes this as black people perceiving themselves through the lens of the dominant society.

that Indigenous people strived for military service and that motives for joining the military are often much more complex than patriotism. As I argue throughout earlier chapters, I believe that she is alluding to the idea that Rangers' decisions to join the organization often go beyond a simple narrative of patriotism, and joining often has social, interpersonal, and economic motives. The point of this is not to discredit or delegitimize these experiences or feelings towards military service, but to show how Rangers and Instructors think about their service.

Rangers as Arctic Sovereignty

In many ways, the physical presence of Canadian Rangers in the arctic and their status as military personnel has become a core justifier for Canada's arctic claim. The military's enlistment of Rangers allows the Canadian state to make both literal and symbolic claims in the region situating Rangers as "human flagpoles" (Wright 2014)[19] representative of Canada's territorial agenda and nation-building project (Anderson 1991). Working from theorists such as Locke and Bentham, Deborah Cowen, in her book on the relationship between soldering and citizenship, shows how soldiering becomes viewed as a social service. "Despite major disagreement on the politics of war, classic liberals assume that military service is a means for the people to repay society for their dependence" where their "contributions to society allows the poor to be deemed deserving" (Cowen 2008: 19).



Group photo for a patrol
Photo by researcher

[19] For more on the debate on the use of the term 'human flagpoles in reference to Inuit Arctic relocation *see:* Lackenbauer 2020.

While providing services to Inuit has become a crucial way for the state to make the bodies of Indigenous people productive to the state, donning military uniforms further entrenches Canada's colonial claim. Not only are Canadian citizens living in the region using the bureaucratic and administrative elements of the state, marking them legible and controllable but the Ranger Patrols further a Canadian sovereignty claim through its establishment of over sixty military outposts for its use. Oscar, after transferring from a southern reserve unit, had very developed ideas about what he thought the Ranger organization was doing in the north. In fact, when I first brought up the idea that some members do see it as a form of community service, he quickly rolled his eyes, stating: "Come on. This is about sovereignty and control." To make his point he uses the example of Gris Fiord,[20] to describe what he refers to as an "underfunded military outpost." Having Rangers in the north allows the government to have a cheap, full-time presence, without paying to station full-time regular force soldiers in the region. Richard, an Instructor who's been with the unit for 2 years, has a more tempered approach. In his opinion, the Rangers are an exchange between the state and Indigenous peoples. An exchange from which the state benefits greatly. By remaining in communities, the citizens are given monetary compensation and hunting and fishing rights under their Treaty Agreements, in exchange, the state claims 4 million square kilometers of land. Killian McCormick sees these relationships of colonial intervention as coded in a moral language of democracy and rights which establishes citizenship as "a technology of government that aims to create specific subjectivity amongst target populations—one grounded in a market-centric, neoliberal market" (McCormick 2018: 162).

[20] It is important to note that at this point, Oscar had never been to the community of Gris Fiord, nor met anyone from the community from which he is basing his opinion.

Serving in the military as a Ranger writes you into this citizenship narrative with or without your knowledge or consent. In essence, as I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, the military gets positioned as a site of opportunity where "society's least productive subjects can be made productive by war" (Basham 2016: 261). The Rangers exist to further a state agenda of imperialism by becoming productive members of the Canadian military machine—not by servicing in combat, but by existing as guardians of the last Canadian frontier (Zellen 2008). Military services get sold to Indigenous communities as meaningful labour. As I highlight in chapter three, joining the Rangers is about being given access to opportunity (and income), and is not positioned as an obligation to the state (Bailey 2013). In doing this, the military becomes part of a "'civilizing process' through which Indigenous people are symbolically incorporated into the nation and the capitalist discipline of the labor process" (Gill 2019: 97). Studying the geopolitics of recruitment of young, low-income boys into military service, Victoria Bashman examines how "Military ethos initiatives seek to render bodies politically useful" (Basham 2016: 265). Rangers living and working in the Canadian north are rendered politically useful simply by existing.

Military Culture and Whiteness

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, I was unable to travel to the Yukon for the first two years of my fieldwork. When the restrictions were lifted in the fall of 2021, I decided to spend five weeks traveling across the Yukon where I would attend two patrols and visit five other communities. I began my trip like all the others with a long chartered flight into the community. I'm traveling with two Instructors, Chad, who was going on his last patrol and Roman who was only attending his second. The flight isn't long but I sleep for most of it and only wake up when

Chad shakes my shoulder, “We’re landing, look.” After almost three years at the unit, Chad had become one of my closest friends and we’d been planning a patrol in the Yukon together for months. After six years in the unit, Chad had been to almost all the communities but this specific patrol, nestled along the Yukon-BC border, was his favourite. Unlike many of the patrols I’d been on throughout Nunavut and the NWT, many of the communities in the Yukon were only accessible by road after landing in the capital. As I look out the plane window, I understand Chad’s admiration for the territory, as I see the Mackenzie Mountains looming over the 30,000-person city starting to take shape underneath me.

After landing and picking up our vehicle, we began the two-hour drive south with Chad and I in the first vehicle and Roman following in his own rented truck. I plugged my iPhone into the vehicle’s system and we sang along to country music as we admired the breathtaking scenery as the road curves and winds through mountain ranges and forests. As we drove, Chad gave me background information about the patrol and the community.

Mountain range outside Yukon community
Photo by researcher

In his opinion, this was the most unique patrol of the whole unit. Like much of the region, the community began as part of the gold rush and today, its location surrounded by mountains and lakes, makes it a popular tourist destination for hiking and fishing. The population of the community reflects this history. Many of the community members (and therefore, members of

the patrol) are descendants of these gold-rushers or transplants who fell in love with the area after visiting.[21] In fact, the patrol is dubbed the 'international patrol' with almost half the members immigrating to Canada from various European countries as teens or young adults. Many of them came to the small, unincorporated town for the life of adventure and naturally gravitated to the Ranger patrol.

Sitting as a group by the outdoor campfire on one of the first nights of the patrol, many of the members tell me they live off the grid and spend a lot of their time on the land. They tell me they use their 'Ranger skills' in their everyday lives. Andy, who lives in a small waterless, and powerless home just outside of town, says his Ranger skills are actually just life skills for him. As I talk with Andy, everyone in the patrol slowly trickles in, carrying cups of coffee and tupperware containers of homemade cookies to share with the group. Our patrol was taking place right in the middle of the region's moose hunting season and much of the conversation revolved around past and future hunting trips. These evening campfires were a nightly event and I eagerly anticipated them so I could ask the group questions.

I ask the group what they think the point of the Rangers is and they nod in unison when Simon says, "Sovereignty." I ask him to elaborate, especially considering the community doesn't even exist within the arctic circle. The landlocked (and quite southern) location of the patrol meant there was truly very little threat to the region. Shaking his head Simon explains that "it's about the big picture of Canadian sovereignty" and "being a presence" in the north. Established in 1994, the patrol was stood up as part of a major push to start patrols across the Yukon. Simon joined in 1994 and became the sergeant after a year and continues to hold the position. When I

[21] While there is an Indigenous reserve, Taku River Tlingit First Nation, no members of the community are in the patrol. When I asked why, members told me that they have repeatedly tried to recruit Indigenous people into the patrol but, "they never stick around." In fact, the lack of Indigenous membership in the patrol has become a major point of contention for the patrol whose members tell me they feel like they are being penalized for not having Indigenous people in the patrol. Unfortunately, I was never able to speak to any members of the reserve on why they did not join the patrol.

asked him why he joined, he told me he's always wanted to serve in the military but he never wanted to leave his small community. When the opportunity to become a Ranger came, he saw it as the perfect balance. Unlike many Rangers I spoke with in the high arctic communities, Simon sees his service as being towards the CAF. While he enjoys the community service aspect, he does believe that the primary motive behind his patrol is its military contribution.

What was interesting about this conversation is that after almost three years and thirty patrols, this was the first time I'd heard a Ranger talk about their job in such stark 'sovereignty' language. Over the course of the next month I traveled throughout the Yukon, attending two patrols and visiting with Rangers from four other communities. In almost all these patrols, made up of predominantly non-Indigenous people, the purpose of the organization was very clear: sovereignty. This is in contrast to patrols that I'd visited earlier in my fieldwork. When I brought this contrast to a group of Instructors back in Yellowknife, one Instructor posited that Indigenous Rangers didn't care about sovereignty because they weren't bought into the military ethos and culture.

The reason given for why (Indigenous) Rangers aren't bought into military ethos and culture is because they lack the formal military indoctrination service members go through to be "broken down so that a soldier, marine, airman, or sailor can be built" (Darda 2018: 82). Because Rangers are meant to join the organization fully trained, when someone joins the organization, there is no mandatory training, like basic training, that they must attend. This, in turns means that Rangers are seen as never being indoctrinated into the larger military structure. This lack of orientation to the military industry is read as a lack of cohesion on the part of Instructors–many of whom have more than 20 years of service. As a way to combat this lack of

universal ethos, the organization established a course called the “Canadian Ranger Basic Military Indoctrination (CRBMI).”

The CRBMI, I was told, was introduced as a method to lessen the disconnect from some communities. Since the creation of the course, the list of skills candidates learn has expanded to include military drill, military-standard weapons safety, and basic first aid. However, the core ideology of the course remains unchanged. The sergeant responsible for creating the yearly schedule tells me that the purpose of the course is to “centralize Rangers. to teach the Rangers “this is you, this is your objective.” However, he goes on to explain that the course should give Rangers “a sense of belonging so they can learn what role they play in the larger picture.”Due to the large geographical area 1 CRPG covers, many patrols may not know how/why they are connected to the large Ranger Organization**.** A big lesson Rangers are meant to take away from the course was explained to me by a headquarters member like this: “‘You don’t represent the community as a Ranger. You represent the military.’ A lot of them don’t get that so if we could teach that to 1600 Rangers, maybe they still won’t all get it, but enough will.” However, once again, this messaging goes against how almost all Rangers in the high arctic described their service.

On my first day at 1 CRPG, I found myself sitting with an Instructor who was finishing his last few months at the unit after four years. He tells me that one of the hardest things about being an Instructor is working with people who “haven’t bought into the military ethos.” He saw markings of a productive and “good” Ranger patrol as “buying into the military ethos, the unit and the mission”. Rangers, especially those in the high arctic, in his opinion are separated from the military establishment and therefore, become marked as unproductive patrols. Productivity for patrol, according to him, was directly linked to ideologically accepting military culture.

Maybe the reason so many Instructors struggle to decide whether they think having Rangers co-opted into a military ethos is important for cohesion is that the foundation of military socialization is designed to erase individualism and to ensure full commitment to the unit and the nation-state. However, what makes Rangers unique is that they don't go through this socialization and removing the community-based aspect of the organization (which military socialization must do) would be detrimental to the organization. This for some means there's a lack of patriotism, defined as an attachment to a homeland, a commitment to collective values, a sense of pride in the journey, progress, and ideals of the nation (Johnson 2018).

So what made Rangers like Simon different? Why was the military's mission across the north so clear to them when it was presented as being so ambiguous in other communities? What I aim to argue in this section is that patrols like Simon's aren't indoctrinated into military culture, they are indoctrinated into the white Canadian nationalist project.[22] Studying military culture in the wake of the Vietnam War, Joseph Darda (2018) examines how military whiteness is part of a discourse of liberal multiculturalism. Championing the idea that the old model of the nation-state as a unified, homogenous (white) whole is making space for more diverse arrangements of citizenship and nationhood, Will Kylicka (2007) fails to account for the harms enacted on racialized and marginalized communities. Building off Anibal Quijano's (2007) theory of 'colonaility,' Elisabeth Paquette examines how while residential schools may no longer exist, colonialism continues to persist within institutions as a direct result of the residential school system (2020).

[22] As I argue throughout this dissertation, the military is a state apparatus meant to further Canada's arctic claim. Rangers like Simon are already bought into the idea that the arctic is, and should always be, Canadian land. "There is a *presumption* that the Government of Canada is acknowledging the sovereignty of Indigenous communities by *allowing* these communities self-determination within the realm of culture [...] within such a framing, what becomes apparent or reinforced is the sovereignty of the Government of Canada, insofar as it allows for the cultural rights of Aboriginal communities" (Paquette 2020: 149).

Sherene Razack, in her edited volume, *Race, Space and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*, (2002) examines how racial hierarchies are created and established within social spaces. In her introduction, Razack examines how place gets racialized within a settler society and where "The racelessness of the law and the amnesia that allows white subjects to be produced as innocent, entitled, rational, and legitimate" (Razack 2002). Assumptions like Simon's blindly accepts Canada's arctic claim, rendering Canada's colonial, white supremacy invisible. "To contest white people's primary claim to the land and to the nation requires making visible Aboriginal nations whose lands were stolen and whose communities remain imperiled. It entails, including the national story, that bodies of colour whose labour also developed this land but who are not its first occupants" (Razack 2002: 5). Indigenous Rangers take up this space of being acknowledged within the national story as labourers of the land, but their sovereignty is made invisible.

Conclusion

Whenever I tell anyone about my research, the idea that it's somehow about arctic sovereignty is taken as a given. However, few, outside a core circle of academics that I'm in conversation with, question exactly whose sovereignty I am writing about. The idea that the arctic is Canadian goes largely unchallenged by the general Canadian imagination. This imagery is constantly reinforced by film, novels, poetry, and art about the north. Indigenous people were often removed from this imagination. As information and publicity about the Rangers grew, especially in relation to arctic sovereignty and climate change, Indigenous people were transformed from invisible to being admired as the guardians of the last frontier. As I traveled between the three territories, I understood the value of this position to be rooted within a

framework of whiteness. Arctic sovereignty–-and Indigenous peoples role in it–is only productive if it exists to further *Canada's* claim to the region. Indigenous sovereignty has little to no place in this narrative.

The transformation of traditional skills into militarized versions of it demonstrates this point. Traditional skills (which generally is a code for Indigenous skills) are never considered as valuable as military skills because only military skills are seen as exclusively working for the state. Traveling to the southern Yukon on a patrol I'd been told was "one of the best, " the patrol had very few Indigenous people and individuals with high-end gear. The patrol's ability to travel on the land was praised. As a light drizzle begins outside, the new Instructor to the patrol, Roman, decides he wants to practice search and rescue procedures. Roman breaks the group into four or five people and each group would rotate through a series of tasks. After giving out directions, the majority of the group goes on to do their respective task and Roman brings the remaining four Rangers into our shared MacPherson tent where he'd placed a military-issued map of the region on the center of the floor. The group, sitting, crouching or kneeling on the ground surrounds the map and Roman gives a scenario: Two hunters had gone out and hadn't returned. They told their families they were going out towards some rarely used trails east of town but should have been back by nightfall. A search and rescue is called and the

Patrol camp set up in Fall
Photo by researcher

Rangers are activated to lead the search. What do you do? The group, all experienced in the bush and many of the part of the local search and rescue detachment in town, hunch down to the map. "I've never been out that way," Parker says, scanning the room to see if anyone else has. "I would have to ask around to know what the conditions of the trails are out that way." The group nods in unison. "You know, some of the trappers in town head that way all the time," looking at Roman, Delaney continues, "so, I guess we'd have to ask them first before doing anything." The rest of the group continued to nod and to me, it seemed like they were satisfied with that answer and they looked at Roman to confirm they'd done the exercise right.

Earlier that morning, Roman told me that the point of this exercise was to get Rangers to "think more military." In his mind, he wanted the group to use the map to determine the route they would take and approximately how much time, gas, and food it would take to get there. To give them the hint, it'd even laid out some string and a military-issued compass right on top of the map so the Rangers would be drawn to use it. To his dismay, almost as soon as they sat down, the group moved the items off the map so they could get a better view of the terrain. Roman, tries again, "Okay…you can ask them. But what if they weren't in town? How would you determine how much time it would take to get there? Or what the safest route would be?" The group leans back towards the map and Parker is once again the first to speak, "Okay, well I've gone out this far before and I know this river is pretty safe to cross. Delaney, you got a cabin out this way. How do you get there?" Leaning over the map, Delaney uses her finger to trace along a map to demonstrate the trail she would use stopping at a Y-Junction. "This would take four or five hours of easy riding. And then, I would go that way," waving her hand in the opposite direction of the search and rescue location.

Once again, the group decided that they would need to consult community members in order to gain a better understanding of the terrain. Giving up, Roman picks up the compass and piece of string and starts working on the map to trace the route the group *should* take to get to the search and rescue location. The group watches him and as he finishes and puts the instruments down, you can see the faint line of a pencil marking the route from the town to the pinned location. As Roman leans back, impressed by his work, the four Rangers lean forward and inspect the route. Delaney picks up the compass and begins following the route just as Roman did. After the group mimics Roman's entire route, everyone leans back except Parker, who taps his finger on a river crossing Roman had drawn his route through. "Can't go through here. Ice is probably too thin. Have to ask the H&T guys to be sure."[23]

Sitting with Roman and Chad, Roman's "left seat", later that night, Roman tells us he's disappointed that the patrol didn't appreciate what he was trying to teach the group. Laughing, Chad who'd been at the unit for almost seven years, leans back in his chair and says, "Dude, they're Rangers. They're never going to be military." What this moment demonstrated is that not being "military" was always going to be considered a negative. Even though the patrol was confident that they could have discovered a safe route and perform the search, their methods of relying on community knowledge remains illegitimate to the Instructors. Roman's disappointment, I argue, is rooted in the fact that because the patrol was predominantly non-Indigenous, he assumed that they would be more susceptible to this militarized training and that their use of "traditional skills" was illegitimate.

The ambiguity that surrounds Ranger identity and military service functions as a tool the state can hide behind to mask the convoluted relationship between military service and Indigenous sovereignty in the arctic and sub-arctic. Ranger work and its link to the military

[23] Hunters and Trappers Association

institution, especially for Indigenous people, is hidden behind internal propaganda that the organization is a form of community service meant to strengthen arctic communities–and Canada's claim to the region is simply a byproduct of that relationship.

The continued policy changes that slowly shift patrols away from being semi-autonomous entities towards uniformed and standardized patrols demonstrate the shifting priorities of the organization. While I was constantly assured that Rangers were not military, and not being militarized, I repeatedly saw examples where military practices were encouraged and applauded.

Chapter Summary

Chapter five examines where Canadian Rangers fit within the national imaginary of arctic sovereignty. As military identity, through the everyday acts of hunting, fishing, and traveling on the land, becomes co-opted into military practice, this chapter examines how Indigenous and Canadian sovereignty get entangled through ambiguous language around the unit's mandate of "sovereignty patrols." Putting the unit's historical position as a community asset in conversation with the military's pursuit for established military dominance in the region, this paper examines how Ranger service is used to mask the settler colonial mission to integrate military infrastructure across the region. One of the core arguments of this chapter demonstrates how different Rangers understand their role within Canadian arctic sovereignty. As this chapter argues, this diversity is often linked to a Ranger's identity.

CHAPTER THREE:
Stars, Snow Drifts and High-Speed Internet: Bureaucracy and the Construction of the Perfect Canadian Ranger

It's late in the evening, and the sun has long set behind the mountain range that surrounds the remote Baffin community. After a full day of training, I return to the community's small school gymnasium with Greg and Neil to set up for an evening of administration with the twenty-five Rangers that make up the patrol. Greg, the patrol's Ranger Instructor (Instructor) traveled over 2000 kilometers from the headquarters in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories to work with the local Ranger Patrol. In the gymnasium, Greg begins setting up tables and chairs in the middle of the room as Rangers in red hoodies and new recruits in plain clothes begin filing. Greg sits the new recruits together at a table, and the older members sit on the other side of the gym. Greg sits at the table with the new recruits, going over the paperwork one line at a time. With little to do and not wanting to be a distraction or nuisance, I quietly sit in the corner watching as small groups work in hushed tones surrounded by stapled booklets of paperwork. Sitting next to me, Sarah, a long-standing member and the second in command (2IC) of the patrol, leans her head close to mine and whispers that she's glad she's not a recruit now. Shaking her head, she tells me that it's so much harder now than when she joined. Now, she tells me, the paperwork just seems to be never-ending. As she recalls, it was only a few years ago that joining the Rangers simply consisted of showing up, being handed an armband and a rifle, and signing a pay sheet.

The patrol sergeant, Neil, sitting at the short end of the table, rests his head in his left hand, while his right hand idly holds a package of stapled papers as he talks. Gazing at the stack of paper with disinterest, he skims his hand up and down, puts the stack down, and haphazardly flips through it. Sitting next to him is Robert, an elder who needs to get his security screening

forms filled out to be eligible for his new .308 rifle. However, because Robert is unable to read and write in English, he's never been able to submit the forms that were first requested in 2019. Neil looks apprehensive as he flips through the forms. Sensing his confusion, and wanting to be helpful, I push off from my table and slide my wheelie chair across to him. Before I say anything, he quickly hands me the papers and points to the last question on the first page: "Have you ever been convicted of a crime for which you did not receive a pardon?" Neil tells me he isn't sure exactly what is being asked, and both Neil and Robert admit that they are nervous they might make a mistake. In the last few years, horror stories have circulated around communities about people being kicked out of patrols or denied acceptance for falsely stating their criminal past. I agree the question is a bit confusing, and as I don't want to misinform them, I suggest waiting for Greg to come around to clarify. After a few moments of silence, Neil, still agitated, blurts out: "He barely speaks English and never went to school, how is he supposed to do this?" Robert clarifies (while Neil translates) that he only speaks Inuktitut except for the bit of English he learned in Ontario as a child TB patient fifty years ago. Ranger paperwork brings him a lot of anxiety.

The three of us sit in silent frustration, I awkwardly suggest they move on to the next question while we wait for Greg. Without a word, Neil turns the page, re-stacks the papers, and reads out the next question in Inuktitut: "Provide 5 years of past employment." Robert sits quietly, looking off into the distance. After a few moments, he places his hands palms up on the table, shrugs, and says, "Unemployed?" Looking down at the paper where Neil had just written 'unemployed', Robert looks at me and begins to tell me about his life, and in an indirect sense, about his "employment." In a mixture of broken English and Inuktitut, Robert relates in detail his early memories of life on the land with his family in the early 1940s, his move into permanent

housing to be near the Hudson's Bay trading post and his experience as a young man working and trading alongside Hudson Bay's settler-workers. He tells me about the places he'd fished and hunted to provide food and furs for his small family. He tells me about the places he continues to travel to with his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren as they learn how to thrive in the arctic region. Hearing our conversation, and sensing our deviation from the task at hand, Greg walks over to stand over me, reaching to turn the document so he can read what we'd written. Saying nothing, he scratches out the word 'unemployed' and replaces it with 'self-employed'. As he walks away, Neil and I look down, registering the change. Neil looks over to Robert and asks, "Okay, now we need your addresses for the last five years."

All the five men who were sitting with Robert filling out their security screening forms struggled to recall past employers, addresses and legal convictions. In some instances, the men worked together to try to recall where one individual lived at a certain time, trying to track down the details of a life story by recounting specific memories associated with a location. I asked one of the men how it is possible he doesn't remember where he lived. He shrugged and told me, "I don't live there anymore, why does it matter now?" To him marking his life by these seemingly arbitrary milestones seems unnecessary. Throughout the night I found myself in similar conversations. Rangers would turn administrative questions into avenues to tell me about their lives. Rangers like Robert, told me these stories to *justify* their value to the CAF, sensing that their very lives were the capital the military sought. I, a white, educated southerner, took on the role of a representative for the military in which I was tacitly asked to acknowledge the value of their experiences and lives (Mclean 2018; Gebhard, Mclean, and St. Denis 2022).

Over the years, these "administrative evenings" have become commonplace during yearly training patrols. Focusing on ethnographic explorations of such bureaucratic moments

entailed by joining and running a Ranger patrol, I explore how certain actions of Indigenous Rangers are venerated (or vilified) in response to embedded colonial myths and stereotypes about Indigenous people. While the unit is not an "Indigenous only" unit and some patrols have little to no Indigenous representations, images of "Indigenous" Rangers who do indeed make up the majority of 1 CRPG, have become a symbolic stand-in for the group as a whole. In fact, long-standing arctic historian and Canadian Ranger honorary lieutenant colonel Whitney Lackenbauer has pushed back against this "Indigenous only" image (2018), however, in dozens of conversations throughout my fieldwork, Canadian Armed Forces members and civilians often referred to the Canadian Rangers as an "Indigenous program" and Rangers have become a stand-in for indigeneity in the CAF. This idea is well-known throughout the patrols.Throughout this chapter, I examine this Indigenous imaginary as it is constructed and maintained by the Ranger Instructors who work at the unit. In doing this, I examine how the value of Indigenous knowledge and culture is prescribed by Instructors. I examine how Indigenous Rangers are simultaneously idealized and fall short of this idealization through a colonial lens of Indigenous authenticity. In doing this, I examine how the colonial construction of Indigenous people is used to prescribe certain (unattainable) standards. At the same time, I explore what skills, both "traditional" and non-traditional, Indigenous Rangers themselves valorize and seek to retain or gain. Lastly, I end this chapter by exploring how the concepts of reconciliation and recognition are used by the unit and scholars to describe the relationship between Rangers and Ranger Instructors. I put this in conversation with prominent Indigenous studies who theorize about the dangers and shortfalls of reconciliation and recognition in Canada.

On a patrol a few months later, similar administrative conundrums arose. One evening, I found myself sitting with another Instructor, Richard, as a group of recruits underwent the

enrollment process. All Instructors are combat arms trained, and before arriving at 1 CRPG, many had no administrative expertise. This means that while they are responsible for administering all the paperwork, many have little experience and, like the Rangers, struggle to understand what is being asked. While some Instructors have started requesting that unit clerks come along on patrols to handle administration, Richard, like Greg, finds himself filling forms line by line with everyone.

Unacceptable gaps in employment are a common occurrence for Rangers who work seasonally or on an ad hoc basis, making the employment history section of the paperwork particularly cumbersome. When Richard explained to a recruit that he can write 'hunter' or "self-employed" because traditional subsistence hunting is considered a form of self-employment. The recruit tried to explain that he "wasn't necessarily hunting" but was doing sporadic jobs around town. The Ranger, however, couldn't remember any details about employers or dates. Running his hands through his hair, Richard tells the recruit that it doesn't really matter—he just needs to fill out the form with no gaps and putting 'hunter' is the easiest and simplest way to get there. The recruit was determined, however, to explain his work history in a form that was representative of his lived experience (Collings 2014). The concept that Rangers can use the term hunter in their applications is relatively new and as Greg explained it to me, this subtle difference in language is meant to instantiate a form of respect. He tells me later in his hotel room that 'unemployed' isn't the best word to describe their work experience. After two years working at the unit, he knows that if there are any gaps in their addresses or employment history, the form will simply be rejected. He believes using terms like 'self-employed' or 'hunter' is both more accurate and allows them to feel respected. For Robert,

however, this attempt to convey respect only produced further confusion, misrepresenting his actual experience of intermittent wage labor and unemployment.

1 CRPG as Social Control

Since 2018 reliability screenings have become the first step of the recruitment process. While Rangers are not held to the same standard as regular force members, they are held to a higher standard than others in the community. Upon enlistment, all potential recruits undergo a reliability screen as part of a criminal record check by the commissionaires where Rangers are asked to list out all their criminal convictions. Everyone agrees that the question is worded strangely; however, the responsibility of understanding the question remains on Rangers. One of the unit's longtime commissionaire responsible for administering these criminal record checks tells me that a lot of Rangers lie about their criminal record. As the commissionaire sees it, they will always find out the truth. She tells me that she considers lying about a conviction a red flag and means that the individual is not truthful and reliable and should not be recommended for recruitment. She goes on to tell me that no one should be held only to their past because "everyone has one" but "we're trying to figure out who you are, and your convictions will tell us that." According to her, whether someone lies it is directly linked to some sort of abstract moral code everyone must live by. Morality is something instilled in everyone and people should simply know what's right and wrong. In this mindset, there seems to be little space for distinctions between intentional and unintentional lies.

However, what this commissionaire fails to take into account is that the criminal justice system, especially in some small communities, can be extremely slow and difficult to navigate. Furthermore, the over-criminalization of Indigenous bodies results in higher chances that an

Indigenous individual will be in the criminal justice system for petty crimes or minor offenses. Therefore, as many members explained it to me, when confronted with these omissions, potential recruits claim they forgot, they didn't want anyone to know about the past convictions, the convictions (and the judicial process) were not properly explained or they misunderstood the question.

In many communities there is a long list of people who want to join in order to be a Ranger. For many of these communities, the financial benefits of being a Ranger— military pay, EUR[24], and access to free gas, propane, and other resources.—goes a long way. Due to the limited employment in many communities, the Ranger Organization can be one of the few places where individuals can make an income. This is especially true in communities where subsistence food gathering is still prevalent. The Ranger Organization is advertised as a combination: of 1) high income; 2) supporting the traditional/bush skills; and 3) a place for individuals who struggle to find (or aren't interested in finding) full-time waged employment. While originally established as a pseudo-militia, now the Ranger Organization is positioned by the state as a financially relevant part of northern communities. However, as I argue, joining is only possible for those that are considered capable of meeting colonial social standards. The police check or security screenings become part of asserting control over social behavior. As one Instructor crudely put it, "If they want to join, they got to behave right".


Ranger out on patrol
Photo by researcher

[24] Equipment Usage Rate: Payment given to Rangers for the use of their personal gear while on patrol.

However, unlike in the regular and reserve force, the criminal record checks for Rangers are not a zero-sum game. The commanding officer has a lot of discretion in pardoning crimes. After leaving the hotel to meet the patrol 50 km out of town at a nearby camping spot, Brandon is approached by two men who aren't members of the patrol. We learn that one of the young men is related to a patrol member, who, along with his friend, wants to join the patrol. Standing in front of Brandon, one of the men looks nervous when he asks whether he can still join with a criminal record. Leaning against the passenger backseat door of his rented truck, Brandon laughs and explains that the CO can overlook convictions on the recommendations of the Instructor and patrol sergeant. There's an awkward silence after Brandon speaks and the man who spoke eyes shift between Brandon and his friend, who still hasn't looked up or spoken.

When the men approached I was sitting on the passenger side front seat with the door open and my body positioned so my body faced Brandon and my back leaned against the vehicle's dash so as Brandon speaks, my gaze shifts between the three men, waiting to see who would speak first. After what felt like ten minutes, Brandon laughs in a way that makes it seem like we were all in on a joke and simply states, "If we didn't accept people with convictions, we wouldn't have any Rangers." The two men laugh uncomfortably and thank Brandon when he tells them to get a recruitment package from the 2IC who we can see cutting wood a few meters away from us. And while the pardoning process isn't really as simple as Brandon made it seem,[25] Brandon positions himself in such a way that he has the power to decide whether this man can join– and receive social and financial benefits from the job.

[25] In the car ride back to town later that evening, Brandon clarifies when he tells me that while murder, rape and crimes against children are "big nos", the CO will pardon most other crimes if asked by an Instructor. This is especially true if the individual can demonstrate the crimes are in their past. For example, many Rangers were able to join their patrol even though they had multiple convictions against them. An Instructor's (and patrols segaraent's) recommendation that this "bad behavior" was in their past can often convince a CO to allow them to join.

This control over Ranger behavior extends into their careers. The threat that a Ranger who transgresses the established behavior will be kicked out of the Organization is forever looming. Once again, the CO maintains a lot of discretion over removing individuals. Speaking with other Instructors back at the unit, many of them agree that *technically* Rangers should be released if they are convicted of crimes, however, as Michael pointed out, a Ranger from one of his patrols was charged with domestic violence only a few months ago and not only got to remain in the patrol but also passed all the security screenings to receive his new rifle. On the other hand, depending on the politics of a CO at any given time, members can be released for minor offenses. Heading out on patrol in the South Slave, a man approached my sled and asked me whether he could join the patrol. I tell him I don't work for the unit but he could ask the Instructor when he arrives. He explained that he used to be a Ranger but "got caught with dope by the RCMP" and was released after receiving the criminal charge. Since his release, he has continuously tried to rejoin the patrol. However, even though marijuana is now legal in Canada, the charge sticks and he never passes the criminal record check. Even though the Instructor could vouch for the individual, for whatever reason, this option is never offered to the man by the Instructor or the patrol sergeant.

While the CO has leeway on what criminal charges can be excused, the seemingly arbitrary way this is enforced (especially by Instructors when they are in the communities) speaks to how power doesn't truly lie with patrols when it comes to recruiting their own members. However, there is very little continuity on how this is enforced. After Ranger Oliver in Nunavut "flags red" on his CPIC (Canadian Police Information Center), the Instructor Frank is faced with an ultimatum where, depending on the CO's interpretation of the criminal record, Oliver could face three options. In one interpretation, he could be released from the patrol, in

another he could be allowed to remain in the patrol but be denied a new rifle, or finally, he could stay in the patrol and receive a rifle. Sitting at our hotel dinner table, I watch as Frank awkwardly tries to explain that he isn't sure if he can issue Oliver the rifle he was promised. Oliver, sitting at the table, seems frustrated at Frank's vagueness and repeatedly asks Frank to clarify that he will in fact get the rifle by the end of the week. However, because Frank can't actually see what the criminal record says, and because he can't know the CO's intention, he can't tell Oliver anything. After Oliver leaves, Frank explains that he often feels awkward in these situations. Prior to arriving, he had no idea that Oliver would flag red and now feels bad that he may not be able to issue a rifle. Essentially, until the CO authorized him to waive the criminal record, he couldn't legally issue the rifle. However, Frank is further frustrated that he feels the CO doesn't have a strong position on how he will decide whether a Ranger will stay. As Frank explains, "Past COs were very strict. If you had this, this, or this. No gun and out of the patrol. But now, this CO may give them weapons, may keep them [in the patrol] without a weapon, or may kick them out. And it's all very unclear for [the Instructors]." While many Instructors believe that this leniency towards criminal records is important and necessary, the inconsistency with which it is decided is often frustrating.

Many patrols, like Oliver's, tell me they maintain hard lines for keeping individuals with criminal records out of patrols. For example, many members of the patrol who recruited Oliver (and I believe would advocate with 1 CRPG to keep him in the patrol), told me that they "don't allow bad people in their patrol." As one member explained to me on my first day there, "We don't want those people that cause trouble. We are careful not to let them in. Not that they really even ask." This stands in contradiction to the reality that multiple people, like Oliver, have criminal records in the patrol.

The internal politics of patrol mean that some patrols have established their own methods of policing their membership. Because of the increasingly strict demands on who can join the Ranger Organization has become a form of self-community-policing where only individuals who adhere to southern socially acceptable standards of social acceptability can pass the background checks needed to join. Even internal to the Organization, the social capital that comes with being a Ranger goes a long way in many communities. After the new CPIC requirements came into the unit, hundreds of Rangers were flagged as "red" meaning they are ineligible to carry a firearm. In the simplest sense, this meant that those Rangers could no longer be Rangers and the unit began a massive release process with hundreds of the approximately two thousand Rangers getting released. In many communities, this meant that long-term and respected Rangers would be released without the patrol's knowledge or approval. Or at least this was true if Instructors didn't fight to keep those members in.

Sitting with a patrol sergeant in the Yukon that had only one Indigenous Ranger I asked him whether these releases had impacted his patrol. Sitting on makeshift benches next to the group fire pit, Simon tells me that frankly, they don't have this problem. With a population of less than two hundred people, he tells me it's easy to know " everyone's business in town" so the patrol is easily able to internally police who joins. His reason is simple: "We don't want people with criminal records. It looks bad on the community and the CAF." Anyone with a criminal record, regardless of the crime, is blocked from joining completely. As I traveled, across many Yukon patrols, I found a similar sentiment. In one patrol, the group tells me that they have a very detailed internal vetting process to make sure "they don't get trouble." Because some of these communities are much larger towns, the same familiarity with each other doesn't exist. To

account for this, all incoming members must be introduced to the group by someone already in the patrol.


Patrol elder teaching how to use nets
Photo by researcher

The ways that different patrols decide who joins and the power that Instructors and the CO have in determining whether someone can join becomes part of a form of social control that ensures that individuals who want to benefit from being a Ranger behave a certain way. The overcriminalization of Indigenous people and the complexity of the legal system creates a hierarchy of citizenship where individuals who fit into a mold of certain behaviour are allowed to join and gain the social and economic benefits of employment.

The Idolization of "Real" Natives

As I demonstrated, while the unit policy states that Rangers in each patrol have the authority to decide who joins a patrol,[26] the reality is that the power Instructors maintain over the patrols greatly limits who is allowed to join. After three years of working at the unit, Ron, a French-Canadian Ranger Instructor, is on the last few months of his contract and has become disillusioned by his job. We begin our conversation by talking about Ron's belief that Rangers are losing their traditional skills, rendering them useless to the organization. In his mind, Rangers

[26] Unlike traditional units, the Canadian Rangers advertise their recruitment process as being community-led. All members are voted in by the other members. The reasoning behind this is that Rangers already know that community members and are the best judges of who would be valuable to the organization.

without the ‘right’ skills shouldn’t be allowed to join. When pushed on what exactly these skills are, he irritatedly swats his hand in front of his face and tells me: “you know, being good on the land.” What he doesn’t tell me (probably because he assumes it's common sense) is that what he means by “good on the land” is within a very narrow perimeter of cultural authenticity. Instead, he tells me that now Rangers are reliant on technology, and this has destroyed the cultural essence of the patrols.

The irony of this statement is that the military pushes Rangers to use military-issued GPS, Track-22s, and InReachs as part of their training. On many occasions, Instructors have told me they’re frustrated that Rangers are ‘incapable’ of learning how to use the technology they are given. Sitting with Ron, we discussed a new scientific program that asked 1CRPG for Ranger support. Essentially, as Ron explains it to me, Rangers would carry GPSs and ice-measuring scanners along whenever they go out on the land. This technology would automatically collect important data and send it directly back to the scientists. Rangers would simply have to continue going out on the land and occasionally turn on the machines as required. However, to his great frustration, the idea has not gotten a lot of traction from patrols. Ron tells me that, in his view, is the future of the Rangers—to go out on the land and use technology to further science or other research.

Instructors like Ron fail to see the ways they contradict themselves when advocating for different roles for Rangers. Their ideas about what Rangers should be capable of doing are rooted within settler standards of what Indigenous peoples’ authenticity looked like pre-contact. At the same time, he demands that Rangers ready themselves for data gathering and research. Ron expresses no uncertainty about what native skills are. Instructors routinely pursue or reject incoming recruits based on these assumptions. This image of authenticity is also deeply

gendered. Women, many of whom have been deeply impacted by familial and economic policies that kept (and continue to keep) women inside the confines of communities and not out on the land, are almost entirely erased from this image of the perfect Ranger. Billson and Macnini, describing the impact that the shift from nomadic to sedentary living has had on women, demonstrate how, "in one brief generation, they were resettled from a hunting and gathering economy based on sharing, reciprocity, and cooperation to a post-industrial society based on wages, accumulation of resources, welfare, and competitive norms" (Billson and Mancini 2007: 30). "Domesticated" Indigenous women are thus viewed as having lost the authentic qualities and abilities that would make them valuable to the organization.

Ron, for example, flatly states that all patrols before the tree line should be shut down because they are too corrupted by southern ideals to be "authentic". The tree line is geographically used as a recognizable separation between the high north and the near north. Colloquially the tree line is also used by Instructors to distinguish authentically Indigenous communities from the civilized south. Ron makes this point by using his hand to visually chop the map on his desk to mimic chopping it in half wiping the bottom half away—figuratively wiping away the existence of hundreds of Indigenous groups he deems unworthy of the label "Indigenous."

The embrace of southern media and ideology, especially by youth, is seen by Instructors as a primary force in the destruction of an "uncorrupted" Inuit culture. Southern patrols, especially those geographically connected to the south by road, are cast as inherently imbued with southern values. Instructors see themselves as witnessing the death of Native culture and communities as GPSs, and iPhones become commonplace among their younger Rangers. While many "accept" that more southern patrols have already lost this noble authenticity, they nurture

the hope that northern communities can hold onto this ephemeral capital of authenticity. Rangers who visually fit the Native image, especially male elders, become part of the classic fallacy of the "vanishing noble savage" described by Baker (Barker 2011:20).

Joanne Baker, in *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity* (2011), on the politics of Native recognition, argues that in the United States the demand for cultural authenticity forces Native identity into a colonial framework during recognition processes. She writes, "Everyone else seems to know exactly what a Native person is and looks like and just how far some of us deviate from it" (ibid: 2). Circe Sturm (2002) similarly details how Cherokee identity is socially and politically constructed and embedded within fixed ideas of blood, color, and race. Within 1 CRPG, Instructors who come to the unit with no political, social, or cultural training on Indigenous peoples, are left to construct these identities based on their own (colonial) imaginations. Because Instructors have so much power in deciding who can, or cannot join, or who is deemed valuable, or not valuable, this imagination of what is an authentic Native person becomes the status quo and reproduces itself.

Historically cast as warriors with no need for training, as Holm (2007) describes in his work on Native American veterans, Native people have by construct served in the military as scouts, code talkers, and in long-range reconnaissance. Rangers are similarly viewed as being naturally capable of being on the land in these roles. Studying British military recruitment policy, Heather Streets-Salter (2004) examines how certain groups are considered natural warriors and viewed as naturally suited to serve in the military. The premise, she argues, was that by appealing to a colonial society's cultural heritage and sense of masculinity, White officers would be able to recruit colonial subjects into service. Rangers are similarly viewed as being naturally capable of

being on the land in these roles. Importantly, Indigenous culture in these representations is inherently anachronistic.

Studying the politics of reconciliation in Canada, Courtney Jung examines how the "contemporary Canadian constitutional practice still roots Indigenous legal authority in its significance to the distinctive cultural identity of an Indigenous community *at time of contact* [...] Such legal interpretations allow courts to determine what counts as Indigenous cultural practice and to freeze indigeneity in the past" (Jung 2018: 253-4). The identity that Instructors create for Rangers–who they are, what they represent, and what they should be able to do–is rooted within this constructed past.

From their first contact with settlers, native people have been simultaneously described as "savage, barbarian, violent, heathen, backward and unevolved, while also "timeless, noble and proud" (Barker 2011: 29). Sioux historian Philip Deloria, in, *Playing Indian* (1988) explored the ways in which, throughout American history, the image of the Native has been idealized and villainized. Such (mis)conceptions, he argues, are constructed from a "collection of mental images, stereotypes, and imagining based only loosely on those material people Americans have called Indians" to create the image of the "real Indian people through a variety of European cultural lenses" (ibid: 20). This "noble savage", as described by Deloria, embodies the concept of the other who has not been corrupted by civilization and symbolizes innate goodness. This, Deloria argues, creates two opposing images of the noble or ignoble Native. Applying this to the present example, the Rangers who are good on the land, as Ron describes, are incorrupt. It is their (supposed) rejection of southern values that allows them to maintain this uncorrupted status. The 'real' Native Ranger is, as Ron describes: stoic, land-savvy, and authentically Indigenous. The legacy of this contradiction is still foundational to how white settlers engage with

Indigenous peoples. Robert's value is inherent in his status as a successful hunter and fisherman and in his (assumed) rejection of southern values—indexed by his inability to fulfill the administrative demands of the job.

The perfect Native—a strong, land-savvy, computer- and technologically-literate person--is inherently a contradiction in the eyes of the Instructor, while simultaneously being the standard they're asked to embody. When Instructors describe "good", "productive" or "valuable" Rangers, it is this impossibility they imagine. In Ron's ideal Ranger world, Rangers must be able to navigate on the land using only the stars and snowdrifts but must also be able to send coherent emails from their igloos—using high-speed internet. The question of whether Indigenous people are losing traditional skills associated with the land is repeatedly mentioned to me by patrol members. In many of these conversations with Instructors and Rangers, 1 CRPG is positioned as an important place for these skills to be practiced and passed on to younger generations.

The Spiral of Cultural Loss

When traditional nomadic Inuit communities were relocated into sedentary, government-created hamlets, individuals became dependent on establishing a wage economy and on stores, government offices (hamlet, post office, hunting and fishing, etc.), airports and private businesses (fisheries, fur trading). Community members were forced to join in this wage economy when federal mandates for residential displacement and consolidation made surviving solely on subsistence hunting and fishing very difficult. While on patrol in the Baffin Islands, a few local Rangers told me they struggled to balance the wage economy with their ability to go out on the land (Holen and Natcher 2017; Cameron 2015; Christensen 2017).

In his study on men in Ulukhaktok, NWT, Peter Collings (2014) ethnographically follows a dozen men born between the 1950s and 1960s, whom he defines as the first generation of Inuit raised in the context of a permanent village. Collings traces the unique challenges this group of men face as they try to balance cultural tradition with their contemporary way of life. Academically and within the community, this is framed in terms of cultural loss. In almost every patrol I'd visited during my fieldwork, conversations habitually turned to the fear that younger generations simply were not able to retain the knowledge that has historically been very important for survival and subsistence.


Rangers preparing to leave on patrol
Photo by researcher

As Inuit activist Sheila Watt-Cloutier writes in her memoir on the impact of residential schools on her life, there was a stark contrast in Inuit and southern understandings of a successful life. Many of the "Churchill gang" with whom she attended residential school "become high profile leaders" (Watt-Cloutier 2018: 44). She juxtaposes that success with what they lost as children. After a fellow student is killed by a polar bear during a school event, she writes: "There is no denying that accidents could happen in our home communities, but looking back at this particular tragedy, I'm struck by the fact that we Inuit children had been removed from the people who would have taught us life-saving skills out in our arctic wildlife" (ibid: 46). As she grows older and returns to her home community of Kuujjuaq, she confronts the skills she lost—in language, knowledge, and culture—as part of her

journey to becoming an arctic climate change activist. Her lack of language skills and local knowledge is intrinsically linked to her time spent at residential school. While she spent her entire adult life relearning these skills, she does not seek to replicate the culture of her childhood (2018).

Many elders I spoke with told me they worried about whether future generations would have the necessary skills. On patrol along the Mackenzie Delta, members emphasized the importance of learning traditional skills to ensure that each member of the patrol learns from their elders. As one of the long-standing elders from the patrol explains it, over the last 20 years, she's seen a rapid decrease in skills and interest within her community. Collings describes a similar experience in his own fieldwork almost 30 years ago. Many of the young men and elders he spoke with worried about the effects that community living would have on traditional skills. In the wake of colonialism, post-contact influences shifted the relationships within families and communities. Skills that were once needed to survive and taught generationally were now second place to other social, political, and economic relationships (Condon and Stern 1993). Skill loss in reference to language and tradition has been well-documented among Indigenous communities (Masud 2021; Daschuk 2013; McCarty, Romero, and Zepeda 2006), however, when Instructors take up this mantle, they do so in a way rooted within a colonial imagination of what the

consequences of these losses have on communities. What they claim is dying or vanishing is based on their own preconceived ideas about what Indigenous people should be like where young community members or women may be denied employment because it is assumed they lack the skills Instructors are looking for. As Lackenbauer writes, "While most Rangers over the age of 40 possess some knowledge of traditional practices, younger Rangers do not have the same level of previous exposure" (Lackenbauer 2007: 109). This sentiment is even documented by the military. A 2000 Canadian Forces Arctic Capabilities Study reported that "It is becoming gradually apparent that younger members of the Canadian Rangers are less skilled than older members in some aspects of survival in the Arctic wilderness. The reason for this can perhaps be found in cultural changes in the Aboriginal communities but the impact for CFNA today, and into the future, is an increasing training requirement for the Rangers if they are to remain effective" (cited in Lackenbauer and Mantle 2007). Ranger ideology thus prefigures Indigenous cultural "change" as a loss to effective deployment in their designated capacity.

Rangers seal hunting in Nunavut
Photo courtesy of J.J.

To combat this, some Instructors position themselves as pro-Indigenous cultural activists. One Instructor told me that he pushes Rangers to use their traditional knowledge while on patrol to make sure it's not lost. He takes it on as his personal responsibility to support the cultural life of his patrols. While the Instructor doesn't specify exactly what he means by "traditional knowledge," he assures me that the Rangers know. In another instance, while on patrol in the Kitikmeot Region, two scouts who guided the patrol used their maps saved in their InReach[27] to chart the route to our chosen camping spot. However, the further we got from town, the less sure the young men were of the safest route. They would often stop and consult with one of the elders for guidance. As Frank, the Instructor at the time, told me later, he really valued these moments as examples of important cultural knowledge being passed on to younger Rangers and saw this exchange as being critical to the cultural continuity of the patrol. The fact that the young Rangers were incapable of using the issued GPS—a military skill they were recently taught—was never mentioned.

On the other hand, other young men living in Nunavut told me that they still feel confident about their abilities going out on the land. Sitting with the three young men, they explain that they love going on the land but that doesn't mean that they can't also add new ways to do it. They don't see it as a cultural loss to use a GPS. They still confidently navigate the land by memory as their ancestors did, but they also use the additional resources available to them to make the trips safer and more enjoyable. Furthermore, there isn't a lack of desire for the knowledge, but they find themselves faced with more abstract obstacles: environmental changes that mean they can no longer rely on passed-down knowledge for navigation, the increasing costs

[27] An InReach is a two-way satellite communicator that works off a satellite network and works outside of cell phone coverage.

of being on the land and the growing necessity for wage employment in town, among them.[28] The effects of these changes are also present within the organization. How Rangers lived and worked in 1947 when it was founded may no longer be relevant today. However, as the young men pointed out, that doesn't mean that they are any less effective on the land.

When the prescription of what this loss looks like is determined by non-Indigenous outsiders, it becomes, as Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and Dina Gilio-Whitaker describe, "confined to a collection of well-worn myths and half-truths that have Native people either not existing at all or existing in a way that fails to live up to their expectations about who 'real' Indians are" (2016: 2). As Rangers convert to ATV and snowmobiles instead of dog sleds; motorboats instead of canoes; and rifles instead of harpoons and GPS instead of stars, cultural change, both demanded by survival within and outside the unit, is equated to cultural destruction (Collings 2014). Instructors shake their heads as Rangers pull out (military-issue, ironically) GPSs instead of simply knowing where to go or "reading the land." Many instructors used these moments to complain that Rangers were losing the "old ways of life."

As Joanne Barker explains, "People are looking to resolve preconceptions about Native peoples" (2011: 3) in relation to physical appearance and blood. While northern Canada has never followed blood quantum rules (the Indian Act of 1876 excludes Inuit and Métis), the politics of what it looks like to be "Native enough" persist. Peter, a Ranger newly recruited to his patrol, made sure he emphasized how much Inuvialuit blood he had, rooting himself within the complex discourse on authenticity among multiracial Native Americans (Sturm 2002). He also, however, argued against the use of "blood quantum" and status ideologies of belonging, emphasizing that he was raised as an Inuvialuit, on Inuvialuit land and planned on raising his

[28] In his chapter on the effects climate change is having on Indigenous communities, Robert Figueroa examines how Indigenous communities are disproportionately affected by climate change in relation to their culture, health, traditional livelihood, land sovereignty and economic viability (Figueroa 2011).

children the same way, regardless of how much Inuvialuit blood they have. As Kim Tallbear (2013) argues in her study of how DNA technologies are used by Native peoples, many people do not predominantly construct a sense of belonging and citizenship into tribes based on genetic ancestry tests. For many tribes, she argues, a sense of belonging involves accepting and being accepted into the tribe (*see* Barth 1969 *on ethnicity*).

While *The Western Arctic Claim: The Inuvialuit Final Agreement* (1984)[29] stipulates that recognized Inuvialuit must be of Inuvialuit blood and ancestry, it also states that someone "is of Inuvialuit ancestry or is considered by reason of Inuvialuit custom or tradition to be Inuvialuit if accepted as a member of an Inuvialuit community corporation" (1984: 4). While the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (or the Canadian Armed Forces in general) cannot legally exclude or include individuals into the unit due to their Indigenous status and doesn't collect statistics on Indigenous participation (*or work on Indigenous participation in the CAF see* Lackenbauer 2021), patrols with more Indigenous people are seen by Instructors as being more culturally authentic. On multiple occasions, different Instructors told me to travel to a specific community in Nunavut because the patrol was "authentic." When I asked for clarification on why this specific patrol was so authentic, I was told by one of the Instructors that the patrol sergeant was a "old, Inuit man who was really traditional."

This stereotype is reinforced by the unit during public appearances and photo ops where Rangers who "look" Indigenous are actively recruited to represent the unit. From meetings with the Royal Family to the locations picked for major CAF exercises, the face of 1 CRPG seems to

[29] This Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) was the first land claim agreement settled in the NWT and cover the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (which covers approximately 435,000 square kilometers in the Mackenzie Delta, Beaufort Sea, and Amundsen Gulf area). The agreement establishes Inuvialuit participation on various co-management boards in the region, including: Fisheries Joint Management Committee, Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT), Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope), Environmental Impact Screening Committee and Environmental Impact Review Board.

always be the stoic, Inuk, male elder. As Liam frankly explains, “It’s what sells.” This fact doesn’t go unnoticed by the non-Indigenous members of the unit. Sitting with a group of Rangers from a patrol with no Indigenous members, one member tells me that she suspects that their patrol didn’t get the top patrol award that year because of their lack of Indigenous members. When I asked why they didn’t have any Indigenous members, she turned my question back to me: “Why is everyone in Yellowknife obsessed with that question?” She goes on to explain that “every time someone from HQ comes down, they’re all happy with the patrol but always bring up the fact that people from the reserve aren’t members.” Throwing her hands up in the air she tells me she was born and raised in the community and says the question, and its implication, makes her feel racist (Diangelo 2018; Joyce 2022).

Traditional Knowledge

In 2018, after the unit received a formal complaint from a community that Rangers should not be allowed to harvest local animals while being paid by the federal government, the commanding officer officially removed traditional days from all patrol programming. Traditional days were times set aside during a patrol when Rangers could practice whatever traditional skill they wanted. Fishing, hunting, and harvesting were the most common and Rangers would bring whatever they caught back home to their families and communities following the sharing practices of that specific community. In a lot of ways, these traditional days were a defining feature of the organization. In fact, traditional skill training was instituted as a reaction to the perception of skill fade among younger generations. Writing the organizational history of the Canadian Rangers, Whitney Lackenbauer traces the roots of traditional training in the organization.

> Instructors concurred with elders that 'the younger generation of northern natives is gradually losing its knowledge of traditional skills. Accordingly, Ranger exercise specifically included time 'for the older members to teach and reinforce the knowledge to younger members of the patrol.' The Ranger concept was predicted on local knowledge, so passing along traditional skills such as igloo building, ice fishing, and special hunting techniques remain essential to sustaining the organization (Lackenbauer 2013: 314).

In essence, traditional skills being used by members of the military (Rangers) were part of the organization's function within the state's arctic sovereignty project while also providing skills and resources to communities. Throughout my fieldwork, Rangers from across the north spoke about the benefits of being able to practice or learn land skills in a waged capacity as being a major draw to the organization. Now that Rangers are no longer authorized to practice these skills in ways that benefit themselves or their communities (for example, using patrols as a way to bring food home), keeping Rangers employed in the region removes the mutual benefit that was the invisible infrastructure of the organization.

In this and in other ways, this chapter will show what is considered to be traditional knowledge that exists within a colonial context of remuneration. In essence, similar to the Yukon scientists and bureaucrats studied by Paul Nadasdy (2003), in his study on how state power is reproduced through bureaucratic, acceptable traditional knowledge becomes what the state can benefit from. Michael, an Instructor at the unit during the cancellation of traditional days, tells me he doesn't understand how patrols can function without traditional skills. "Where," he asks, "do we draw the line?" After heading out and arriving at our chosen camping location, it comes to Michael's attention that one of the patrol elders didn't bring any food and the patrol asks that they spend the following day tracking a known caribou herd to gather food for the elder and the group.

Michael agrees to the hunt, telling me later that he can justify it because Rangers are going to practice using traditional skills and military skills to navigate to the location. The next morning, Michael declares that some of the patrol's weaker members would be responsible for navigating the group with one using the military GPS and the other marking known landmarks. Later that night, Michael and I sat alone in our tent and talked about whether allowing the hunt was 'good' or 'bad.' Critical of the decision to cancel the traditional days in general, Michael asks why the organization leadership would tell him that the skills practiced navigating traditionally would be accepted but the hunting wouldn't: "Why is one thing acceptable and the other isn't?" These questions, Michael decides, are beyond the scope of his job description and he tells me he stands by the decision because it was what was best for the patrol.

The idea of the state using Indigenous traditional knowledge to further its own agenda is not unique to the Rangers. Studying Government and First Nations land claim and co-management negotiations in Southwest Yukon, Paul Nadasdy examines how traditional knowledge gets taken up within bureaucratic spaces. This bureaucratization, he argues, challenges the very nature of how traditional knowledge exists within Indigenous communities (2003). The logic behind the cancellation of traditional day misses is that knowledge and skills about the land, animals, and survival cannot be neatly placed into separate boxes. Nadasdy tells a story where a

Patrol lder teaching how to set a trap
Photo by researcher

wildlife biologist asked a member of the Klaune First Nation, "What exactly is traditional knowledge?" To which she responded, "Well it's not really 'knowledge' at all; it's more a way of life" (Nadasdy 2003: 63). Similarly, through a series of personal reflections, Robin Wall Kimmerer, a botanist and member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, uses the metaphor of braiding sweetgrass to demonstrate how Indigenous ways of knowing and scientific knowledge cannot be compartmentalized. Instead, she argues the compartmentalization and commodification of Indigenous skills and knowledge as something other than scientific knowledge undermines Indigenous ways of being (Kimmerer 2013). While on patrol in the high arctic, a group of Rangers decide to go hunting after being told they have downtime for the remainder of the day. To them, hunting is synonymous with being on the land. Why, one member asks me, would they be here if they can't hunt? Sitting with the group later that evening eating the freshly caught muskox, a group of young men tell me that they know that traditional days were officially canceled. However, in their opinions, it made no sense to go out on the land without hunting when they knew a nearby grazing area would guarantee they would return home with food for their families. For them, it made no sense to draw a delineation between when those skills are valuable to the organization and when they are not.

Receiving Gifts

Greg was known around the unit as the guy who could get stuff from communities. On almost every patrol he'd go on, Greg would return with coolers full of meat and fish and gifts of gloves, hats, animal skulls, and furs that he would tell us his Rangers gave him. He would often imply that Rangers gave him these items as a way to verify his acceptance into the patrol. These gifts, he claimed, demonstrated his social bond with the Rangers under his command. His receiving of

gifts, he asserted, meant that the Rangers had accepted him into their community and patrol and made him seem like a better Instructor to his peers. As Greg explains it to me, if Rangers respected him enough to allow him to give him gifts, then he must be extremely talented on the land. Before flying into a small Baffin community, I overheard him tell Liam that he can get him a walrus tusk or skull due to the community's close location to the arctic ocean where walruses live. When Liam offered to pay for the tusks, Greg assured him that he could get the Rangers to give him the tusks as a gift because they liked him so much.

Viviana Zelizer (2017) examines how gift-giving indicates intimacy. "Gifts are bestowals marked by intimacy as well as by the relative equality of donors and recipients" (78). The better the gift, the more intimate the relationship. However, what I saw between Greg and Rangers was not a relationship of mutual respect or equality, but rooted within an uneven, colonial, power dynamic. After being in the community with Greg and watching him engage with Rangers to get the tusks, I see him using his power as an Instructor to pressure Rangers. Rangers, it seemed, felt compelled by Greg's position of power over them to give these gifts. Greg's position as a representative of the state doesn't allow for the level of intimacy that he imagines.

But Greg was not alone in his expectation of gifts while on patrol. It's the day before everyone leaves for the monthly patrol block and I'm rushing down the hall to meet with Dean to go over the final plans before we leave the next day. I'm jogging down the hall when I hear someone call my name from behind. I look over my shoulder and see Bobby poking his head out of his cubicle. Surprised that any of the Instructors are in the office, I asked him whether he was going out on this patrol block. He tells me that he was but just had some last-minute paperwork to do and asks me whether I was also going out. I told him I was going to the South Slave Region with Dean. As I speak, a big smile comes across his face and he tells me that this particular

patrol is great because they always give out great gifts. Over the last few months, I'd heard rumors that some patrols will give out gifts to all the new Instructors they receive and Bobby confirms these rumors when he tells me that he got a pair of handmade fur mittens when he went. As he speaks, he pulls out his phone and shows me a picture of him standing next to a snowmobile, covered head to toe in fur-trimmed clothing, wearing a beautiful pair of gauntlet beaver gloves.

I ask whether everyone always receives a gift and why and he simply shrugs his shoulders and states: "Because they like us." I walk away from the interaction confused but admittedly excited about the prospect of being able to receive something as beautiful as those gloves. Later that night, I sat in the center of my apartment packing as I tried to figure out what I could bring with me to give as a gift in return. Usually, whenever I went on patrol I would bring a few mora knives and pocket rockets and give them out to members. I recognized that my desire to partake in a gift exchange was a manifestation of my own discomfort over receiving a gift whose purpose was to further entrench a power dynamic between "us"--the white, military, men– and "them."

1 CRPG As a Place of Recognition?

Long time arctic historian and Ranger expert Whitney Lackenbauer explained to me in an interview that the unit's encouragement (and veneration) of Indigenous culture, clothing, and food is a form of recognition of Indigenous people and culture. He writes: "The structure of the Rangers provides for the transfer of Indigenous knowledge amongst members of a patrol and thus the retention of traditional knowledge within a community" (Lackenbauer 2007: 109). In this view, the military is not only allowing this knowledge and culture to exist but is cast as an

active part of its survival. This argument gives the military the power to encourage, if not determine, what is and what is not authentically Native. We are left to ask: Whom does this pro-tradition stance benefit?

This view of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group as fostering cultural acceptance and recognition ignores its rooting in a colonial imagination of Native authenticity, and similarly ignores the perspectives of Indigenous people about loss and identity. The unit's imposition of colonial standards and its lack of Indigenous representation at the institutional or decision-making level makes self-critiques an impossibility. As David Gaertner argues, "reconciliation" cannot, by definition, be produced by the state; it cannot be "a product that the settler colonial government [...] manufacture[s], trade[s], and profit[s] from [...] a Canadian act of goodwill that can be manipulated to act as a demonstration of Canada's moral superiority in the international state order" (Gaertner 2020: 6). Building on Franz Fanon's (2008) work, Glen Coulthard examines how politics of recognition can never be separated from powers of domination. What was once "unapologetically assimilationist" is now simply "couched in the vernacular of 'mutual recognition'" (Coulthard 2007: 438-9). By having all the power to decide who can join a patrol and what skills are Native enough to be culturally authentic, the relationship between Indigenous Rangers and Ranger Instructors is emphatically contained within the dominant, hegemonic Canadian state (Coulthard 2014).

Madali Vullierme (2018), in her study of the relationship between Inuit Rangers and Ranger Instructors in 2CRPG[30] claims that Instructors' position in 2 CRPG is part of an assimilation process whereby non-Indigenous Instructors must assimilate into Inuit culture as part of their jobs. Ranger Instructors, she argues, assimilate to Inuit culture through their

[30] 2 CRPG makes up the Rangers located in Northern Quebec, Eeyou Istchee/James Bay and the Lower North Shore region and consists of twenty-eight Canadian Ranger Patrols in the territory: a total of 1,400 people, including seventy military and civilian executives, 700 Canadian Rangers, and 700 Junior Canadian Rangers (JCR).

"relationship to time […] and [their adoption of] the ways that Inuit raise children" (202). Through a series of interviews she writes about how Instructors adapt how they manage time while on patrol to Indigenous patterns and how (one, at least) Instructor changes the ways he raises his kids because he values how Inuit Rangers teach their children through observation and experience. Vullierme seems to disregard the broader context and meaning of assimilation–and appropriation. Taiakiake Alfred writes about the paradox of long-standing assimilation to dominant colonial culture: "As is typical in all colonial societies, First Nations today are characterized as entrenched dependencies, in physical, psychological and financial terms, on the very people and institutions that have caused the near erasure of our existence and who have come to dominate us" (Alfred 2009: 42). As the administrators of the patrols—who decides who joins and is responsible for paying Rangers—Instructors hold a lot of power. The very meaning of "assimilation" is entirely asymmetrical.

Conclusion

Only Indigenous people who fit the mold of indigeneity as it is constructed under the colonial gaze of authenticity are deemed valuable to the functioning of the Ranger Organization. In a heated conversation early in my fieldwork, a group of Instructors argued that the unit wasn't recruiting the "right type of Rangers."[31] They argued that it was Rangers with extensive land skills that they valued and that this "type" of Ranger was disappearing. However, the 'skills' these new, or young, Rangers seem to be missing are rooted within a fantasy about what Indigenous people are. It is important to note that over the last 75 years, zero patrols have been shut down because no members of the community had the skills to keep up with the demands of

[31] They attribute this lack of knowledge to the unit's recruitment push in the mid-2010s. In the aftermath of Stephen Harper's 2007 campaign promise to heighten Canadian arctic security and sovereignty, the commanding officer at the time tasked Instructors with upping the enrollment numbers.

the job. Furthermore, there is no data to support the idea that skills loss has impacted patrols in any significant way—let alone the fact that the unit doesn't even have a list of skills that are required to be a Ranger in the first place. As Instructors express these frustrations, they perpetuate the white supremacist pre-colonial fantasy of "a right kind of Native". As anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli points out in the case of Indigenous Australia, the multicultural legacy of colonialism creates a system of power according to which colonized subjects have the impossible task of meeting the criteria of an "authentic traditional culture" as created by the colonizer. Povinelli argues that Indigenous worth is assessed in terms of a precolonial authenticity that is removed from the realities of "bad settlement history" (Povinelli 2002: 54).

At the beginning of this chapter, I argue that someone's inability to exist within the colonial bureaucracy and social standards marks them as being a burden on the organization and difficult to recruit. I examine how this is done through the exclusion of Rangers who refuse (or are unable) to provide specific information—eg. birth certificates, driver's licenses, health cards, education records, etc. These individuals have become exempt from receiving the benefits of employment and are viewed as resisting or refusing the benefits of assimilation and are "assured a life of certain indignity" (Kirmayer and Valaskakis 2009: xi). As Deloria points out, the implication of this administrative burden is that individuals become "bounded by landscape, among a web of centers established by church and state, in ways that could be tracked and restricted. These structures represented a colonial dream of fixity, control, visibility, productivity, and most important, docility" (Deloria 2004: 27). This, I argue, has become another mechanism from which the state, through employment in the military, makes Indigenous people legible (Scott 1998).

This bureaucratic exemption is also combined with a more complicated and nuanced form of exemption based on cultural authenticity that recruits Indigenous Rangers based on their (traditional) land skills. The veneration of Indigenous traditional knowledge and culture masks the colonial legacy of state oppression. In this liberal discourse, military presence in the North is a humanitarian project that is about assisting a dying race into modernity. In this way, the pursuit of sovereignty in the Arctic comes dressed as a civilizing mission, that is "most quintessential of colonial activities" (Razack 2015: 7). Using ethnographic moments, my article traces how images of the stoic, noble savage continue to infiltrate colonial understandings of Native people. Indigenous people who do not or cannot fulfill these stereotypes are cast aside under the umbrella term of 'cultural loss.' As a response to this supposed loss, the military positions itself as stewards of cultural knowledge by allowing Indigenous people to use traditional knowledge, clothing, and food as part of their work. Through its performative acceptance and recognition of Indigenous culture and people, the military positions itself as part of its survival and therefore erases its role in settler-colonial violence.

Summary

This chapter used Indigenous studies theory to examine how colonial imaginations of Indigenous people, culture, and knowledge gets used by the military within the administration of Canadian Rangers. Due to the lack of cultural knowledge given to Instructors when they arrive in the north, their ideas and assumptions about the north and its inhabitants stem from their own imagination. This imagination is often rooted within settler colonial stereotypes that render Indigenous people as a rendition of a pre-colonial creation and leave little room for cultural change or difference. Rangers, especially Indigenous Rangers, who fail to meet these imposed

standards are looked upon suspiciously and their indigeneity and authenticity are questioned. Focusing on the administrative process that recruits and retains individuals in the organization, this chapter examines how Instructors' conscious and unconscious bias toward Indigenous people shapes how they recruit and administer Rangers in the high arctic.

This chapter challenges the notion that the high enrollment of Indigenous people into the organization exists as a testament to the military's positive and progressive integration of Indigenous people into the armed forces. Instead, this chapter explores how the very existence of the organization, and its administrative procedure work to further entrench Indigenous people into a colonial system. Instead, this chapter examines how Ranger Instructors interpret their relationship with Rangers as a form of equal and mutual respect, negating the power dynamic that is the foundation of the organization.

CHAPTER FOUR:
Women's Work and Military Masculinity Across Ranger Patrols

"I liked [when women joined the Rangers] because they make the tea." Sitting crossed-legged on the floor of the small hunting cabin with the patrol elders, I shifted uncomfortably as my gaze darted between the two men. Now in their late 70s, both men joined the patrol in the early 1980s and are telling me about the changes they've experienced with the Organization. As we spoke, Ethan translated for Louis, who spoke the local Inuktitut dialect. Louis tells me that the introduction of women in the patrol was the biggest change and had the greatest impact. While at first he didn't believe that women had a place in the Organization he now appreciates having them—especially once his great-granddaughter joined. As we speak I can feel the heat of the evening summer sun on my face as I look over my shoulder to the seven women in the patrol who sit hunched over a pile of freshly caught fish. I can hear their chatter as they filet the fish and prepare pots of boiling water over Coleman stoves.

Over the course of over 20 patrols across the three Territories, I observed that the participation of women, especially Indigenous women, was always valorized as an indicator of the progressive nature of the organization. Challenging this notion that the high female participation in the organization should be viewed as a marker of progress, the chapter examines how perceiving the organization through this lens masks the colonial, patriarchal infrastructure that perpetuates a white, male, settler colonial gaze. Focusing on the hegemonic masculinity (Gilder 2019) that underlines Canadian military ideology, I examine how the way Ranger service is talked about by Instructors constructs it as a lesser form of military service, marking it as more acceptable for women. Looking closely at Instructors, I explore how their understandings of

masculinity and their own experiences in the military shape how they perceive the contribution of women in the organization.

Female Participation in 1 CRPG

Throughout my fieldwork, traveling through the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and the Yukon, the role and position women held in patrols always seemed to be a topic of conversation. After opening its ranks to women in 1989, women flocked to the organization, surpassing the regular force participation of 15.3% and even surpassing the government target of 25%. Today, approximately 30% of the Rangers in 1 CRPG are women. At the 1 CRPG headquarters, the question of female involvement in the Rangers was always posed as a rhetorical question by the predominantly male staff. Whenever I asked *why* they thought women joined 1 CRPG, they seemed perplexed by the question. In the rare instance where one of them would attempt a response, they simplified the motivation to two main incentives. Firstly, the Rangers were seen as easier to join than other CAF elements and therefore it was easier for women to reach the minimum requirements. Rangers, unlike all other military personnel, do not need to undergo or maintain any physical, medical, or aptitude tests in order to join.[32]

Two Rangers eating freshly caught muktuk
Photo by researcher

Furthermore, because the Ranger Organization allows women to serve at home, they are able to stay in the relative safety of their communities. The ability to keep members of a patrol

[32] If a Ranger is determined to be incapable of safely going on the land, an Instructor can encourage their release; however, this is often done through informal conversation and very rarely forced.

within their own community (oftentimes the community they've lived in their entire lives) has the potential to shield women from the harassment and sexism that has plagued the traditional military since the integration of women (*see* Taber 2020 *on CAF gender discrimination*). Because Ranger patrols consist of family members, friends, and neighbors, Jane, who comes from a community along the Northwest Passage of less than 800 people, tells me she always feels safe while on patrol. Sitting with a group of women while we cook dinner, she tells me that she finds it reassuring to know her partner and uncle are always on patrol with her.

The Ranger Organization's structure as an "unorthodox […] soft security response", which allows community residents to work as Rangers inside their own communities (Lackenbauer 2018: 159) is juxtaposed to a more traditional military system seen throughout southern Canada and much of the world. This ability to remain in one's community, along with the continued use of traditional skills in 1 CRPG is viewed by female Rangers as a draw to join and remain in the organization in such large numbers. Because the majority of their training (besides the optional CRBMI and CRPLC) is done within a 150 km radius of their communities, Rangers are able to serve part-time in their own communities. This means that individuals do not have to commit to large relocations or even short-term deployments. Many of the women I spoke with said that being a Ranger, with only 1-2 weeklong patrols a year, is the right balance of having the opportunity to go on the land and serve their communities and being able to keep up with familial and professional obligations in the community. Staying within their community also makes the Ranger Organization more attractive than the conventional military for women with families who may not be able to leave their homes long-term. These obligations make it harder for women to leave communities in general, so the flexible and low minimum commitment level of Ranger patrols makes participating more feasible.

Because there isn't a quota dictating how many men and women are in each patrol, the emerging reality that more women are joining than men has reshaped the makeup of a patrol. In fact, when I first arrived at 1 CRPG, multiple Instructors told me that I needed to go visit a specific patrol in the Mackenzie Delta–a patrol they referred to as the Female Patrol. This patrol, they told me, was "overrun by women" and until recently only had two male elders in its membership.[33] Early on in my fieldwork, I decided to join the Instructor, Brandon, on this "Female Patrol" to see what made this patrol so popular among women and so unpopular among men.

It was an uncharacteristically warm fall when I arrived in the small community with Brandon. The lack of snow meant the entire community was covered in inches of deep, dark, sticky mud. After only a few hours in the community, it felt like everything I brought was covered in a layer of mud. As Brandon worked in his room, I decided to take a walk around town until the designated meeting time. Even though the community had wooden planks used as makeshift sidewalks, after only 30 minutes my rubber boots were caked in mud and my pants and jackets were splattered with specks of mud and dirt. I made my way towards the church, which would function as our meeting spot, and I did my best to scrape the mud off my boots against the wooden steps. I entered the building to find what looked like a minefield of boots and blobs of mud scattered all over the hallway. In just my socked feet, I tiptoed my way to the back room and saw a dozen people standing around the room or sitting in one of the coaches that lined

[33] When I asked the Instructor for the patrol why he thought there were no men, he told me that whenever he would try to recruit men, the "good ones" weren't interested and the rest couldn't pass a criminal record check under the new policies that came with the C19. In fact, when I went to the community, whenever I did ask about the low rates of men in the patrol, the women told me that the community's close proximity to Inuvik meant that even though it was a dry community, they still had access to alcohol and the negative legal consequences of addiction, along with a growing disinterest in traditional skills among youth, were a prominent problem. Why this was only presented as a male problem (because the patrol had quite a bit of young females) was never mentioned.

the entire room. I see Brandon standing at the front of the room with the patrol sergeant and I don't want to interpret so I take a seat on the closest couch next to a woman about my age.

I introduce myself and we begin small talk and the conversation quickly turns to my research and purpose on the patrol. We can talk, Anna looks comfortable, her body sagging into the extremely soft couch cushions and one leg crossed over the other and her foot jiggling up and down as we talk. Anna tells me that she loves being a Ranger because she has the opportunity to learn, and continuously practice traditional skills. Anna, who'd been a Ranger for almost six years and like most of the members at the meeting, Anna lounges on the couch on her phone as she chats with me, waiting for the next direction from her patrol sergeant. As we wait for instruction, Anna tells me being in the Rangers is one of the only times she gets to partake in traditional skills. She said while being a Ranger she learned a lot about traditional medicine from some of the other women and learned about hunting and trapping from the male elders. Throughout the 10-day patrol, Anna and other women repeatedly introduced me to local medicinal herbs and plants and explained their benefits. Every time she goes out, she finds herself learning new skills. She explains that her limited time on the land, for formal schooling and waged employment, greatly impacted her ability to observe, partake in, and master skills.

Like many of the women in this patrol, and in communities throughout the north, Anna's primary income comes from her wage employment in town. This means that she doesn't get the opportunity to partake in much of the subsistence economy due to a lack of time, equipment, and skill. In essence, being a part of the Rangers lets Anna go out on the land and learn skills from her community and elder skills that would be hard for her to access on her own. Any money she makes that can go towards subsistence activities is allocated to her male family members who spend more time doing them and are more likely to be successful hunting and fishing.

That is not to say that these skills are not passed down generationally outside of the Organization–Rangers are expected to come to the Organization trained to go on the land so these skills are taught outside this setting–but rather that being part of the Rangers provides access to a space where these skills become part of a waged economy women can partake in on a part-time basis. For many women, joining a patrol becomes a way to straddle time on the land with waged employment. With the potential to earn 5000-8000 dollars for 12 days of work, the Ranger Organization is positioned as a critical way to add significant income to a household. Furthermore, because it is waged, participants do not feel the same familial or social pressure to produce food or furs in exchange for the time and fuel consumed by being on the land. Women, like Anna, who have families and full-time jobs, tell me that they can rest assured that when they go out with the Rangers they are still providing for their families. While the rate at which women went out on the land decreased to make room for sedentary familial obligations and waged employment, many women I spoke with discussed the importance of the Rangers Organization is an important space for women to go on the land as part of waged employment.

Gendering Ranger Service

While research and statistics on gender in the military have made strides in documenting the effects of patriarchal values and masculinity, this work rarely mentions race (Taber 2009; Cohn 2000; Pierotti 2020). Tammy George's work on this lack of intersectionality demonstrates an "inability to address deeper structural issues of white supremacy, heteronormativity and patriarchy within the CAF" (George 2020: 43). Therefore, the inclusion of women into the military, and the positive elements of this inclusion, is from the framework of whiteness and all references to women in literature continues to lack an intersectionality perspective. Within my

research, the race of female Rangers is paramount to how they are viewed by Instructors and male Rangers. While white, female Rangers[34] are subject to what Annica Kronsell refers to as an "institution of hegemonic masculinity" that allows "male bodies and norms of masculinity" to dominate (2011), Indigenous female Rangers are not only gendered but racialized in ways that further alienates them from being viewed by Instructors as equal members of a patrol.

Within the Canadian military at large, the inclusion of women in its ranks continues to be viewed through a masculine framework. (Taber 2009). Therefore, while women are now allowed in these spaces it is with the assumption that they do not challenge or disturb the masculinity of military culture. In her investigation into understanding the deeper meaning of the "PT protest" made by male service members in the US military, Carol Cohn (2000) examines how protest over the different fitness standards becomes a way to understand the continued prevalence of sexism in the military. She writes that the insistence to highlight the difference between men's and women's PT performance is because fitness "is the one salient gender difference in performance, where women 'fail to come up to the male standard' as such, it provides a focal symbol for pointing to (what some men construe as) female inferiority." Instead, the insistence of making women meet the previous "male standard" instead of simply coming up with a more universal standard is a way to mask the reality that men are positioned as the status quo and the onus is put on women to meet this standard. She goes on to explain "In fact, I think the PT protest, and a whole genre of similar complaints about standards and special treatment, function for white men as a kind of shorthand, a symbolic code […] for anger about challenges to their sense of ownership, to their feelings that 'This is my military, a man's military'" (ibid: 138-9). Instead, standards that place women as generally brighter, more educated with fewer disciplinary problems, are rarely the standards these types of protests bring up.

[34] All female Rangers I met during my fieldwork were either Indigenous or white.

Because the Ranger Organization sees itself as promoting women's involvement in patrols, it positions itself as existing outside these gender conversations. However, by making a comparison between how women are talked about in patrols that have a higher percentage of non-Indigenous participation, it is possible to see how ideas about gender and race created within a military culture are present even within the Ranger Organization. To make this argument, I focus on patrols within the Yukon which are colloquially referred to as "the white patrols" due to the high participation of non-Indigenous people. After traveling to the Yukon, I came to see how females in these patrols are valued when they conform to the masculine status quo. Two women, part of the Whitehorse patrol, tell me they make sure they can keep up with their male counterparts. For them, being proficient on the land means fitting neatly into the masculine definition of what it means to be a Ranger. Like the archetypal warrior figure present with military cultures, as I argue within the previous chapter, within 1 CRPG there is an archetypal Ranger figure. This figure is inherently masculine and is critical to how women are thought about and treated. Sitting with a group of Rangers, the sergeant explains that he sees his patrol as an extension of the military and expects his Rangers to be up to a certain standard. This militarization of Ranger culture enfolds these patrols into cultural practices entrenched in the hegemonic military masculinity.

Studying the gender divide within the United States military, Martha McSally (2011) examines how certain types of service are deemed as inferior. Combat, she argues, is typically recognized as men's work. As a non-combat organization, Ranger work, I argue, is gendered as feminine and deemed a lesser form of service. This mentality is repeatedly reinforced by the Instructors who make a clear delineation between their own service and what Rangers do. When I first arrived at 1 CRPG, the 13 Instructors working in A Coy held over 30 combat tours

Rangers being taught the new weapon by an Instructor
Photo by researcher

between them. Making this separation very clear, Liam explains it to me: "Listen," he says as he pinches the corners of his combat uniform shirt and lifts it slightly off his chest, "this is military." Dropping his shirt to wave his hand in the air in front of his 1 CRPG map, he states, "That is Ranger." When I ask him to clarify, he reduces the difference down to training and intention. Soldiers, in his eyes, are provided specific training with the intention of using it in combat. On the other hand, Rangers are given entirely different training for a different intention. Lumping those two together is dangerous and incorrect.

And Liam isn't alone in thinking that being seen as conventionally military brings legitimacy and a sense of superiority. After snowmobiling with the patrol to the top of a famous local viewpoint, Frank and I wander over to the edge to overlook the ridge. As we walk, Frank confesses to me that coming into the position, as a reservist with no combat tours, he felt as though he would never be taken seriously. "You know, Instructors come in and they got these racks [of medals] and they can come in and say, 'I've done, this, this and this, and then I'm there and I'm like, 'hi, I'm just Frank.'" While having combat experience has no bearing on someone's ability to operate as an Instructor, the internalized idea that being a combat soldier makes you more valuable is very present and spills over into how Instructors viewed the role of Rangers.

Conforming to Masculinity

In patrols that see themselves as being more militarized they get held to similar standards to the conventional military. Women who are part of these patrols similarly get brought into this hyper-masculine military culture. Sitting with a group of Rangers from the Yukon I ask what it's like to have women in the patrol and Mark, pointing over to Lian, assures me that the women can do anything the men can do. In this context, Lian's value is intrinsically linked to her ability to perform to these male-centered standards. Lian's bush skills are valued because she is viewed as performing to a male standard. Speaking with another female member of the same patrol, she explains that she is proud that she's always able to keep up with the men in the patrol. Like for many women in the military, this pressure to conform to masculine standards was not always viewed as negative by women who are subject to these pressures. In her auto-ethnographic account of her experience as a woman in the CAF, Nancy Taber writes, "I was localized into the masculine military construct, where it was essential that I think and act like a male in order to be accepted and valued as an organizational member." This leads to a "privileging of men and hypermasculinity" that is enacted by both men and women (Taber 2009: 29). The characterization of essentialized gender differences, Powell and Sang (A. Powell and Sang 2015) argue, naturalizes that masculine skills are innate rather than acquired. This means that certain women are more suited to masculine processions "because they have masculine capital" (927). Lian and Delaney were viewed as innately capable of performing masculinity in this way.

Studying the discursive practice of female and non-heterosexual military service to reinforce hegemonic masculinity and heterosexuality, Bobbi Gilder examines how femininity gets positioned as a threat to military effectiveness (2019). In patrols where women couldn't, or

wouldn't replicate these performances of masculinity, the patrol was criticized as being less effective and valuable. After telling one of the Instructors about my interest in the role of women in 1 CRPG, he laughs and tells me, "if you want to know about women, go to [location in the Yukon]." Like many of the "white, Yukon patrols", he explains that this patrol is seen as more of a boy's club and the patrol sergeant made it clear that they don't want any women. After a long history of never recruiting any women into the patrol, the unit mandated the patrol would only recruit women, until headquarters decided enough women were enrolled. Since then, three women had joined the patrol. The Instructor juxtaposes the role women hold in the Yukon patrols with patrols in less economically prosperous areas where men push to have their female family members join so they can double, or triple their income. Being a Ranger in many of the Yukon communities is not viewed as an economic prospect but as a place for (male) locals to go out on the land where they can hunt and fish. According to the Instructors, there is little room for women in this space.

A year after having this conversation, I was able to travel to the community to join a patrol. After sledding a few hours to the top of a hill overlooking a beautiful valley, we arrived at Sean's cabin for lunch. Sitting inside the cabin, a few of the Rangers begin asking me about my research. I tell them that I'm interested in the role of women in the Rangers and decide to point blank ask them why they've been so resistant to allowing women in the patrol. Just as I ask the question, Elizabeth, one of the new women, enters the room and begins putting sandwiches together. I can tell she's quietly listening to the conversation. I decided to not back down and ask again, "Why haven't you allowed women to join until now?" Shifting uncomfortably in their chairs, Sean and Dylan seem genuinely perplexed as they seem to process the question. After a few moments, Sean leans back in his chair, with his head tilted to one side and hesitantly

responds: “Well I don’t think we didn’t let them join, I guess… they just never wanted to.” Dylan, seeming to gain some confidence from Sean’s answer, follows up by telling me that, in his opinion, women just “don’t like this stuff, they don’t like the cold,” pointing out the door.[35]

As I turn in my chair to look out at the breathtaking view, I hear Elizabeth scoff from the corner. Feeling a sudden wave of tension, I let the moment sit in silence wondering who would speak first. All three of us watch Elizabeth as she puts the finishing touches on her meal and begins leaving the small 10-square-foot cabin. Just as she’s about to leave, she stops directly next to me in the doorway and says: “you think that’s the truth? Look around. Look who’s here. Look what this is. That’s why we didn’t join.” As she speaks, I see Dylan and Sean looking around the room with (what felt like) the sole intention of not making eye contact with me or Elizabeth. After sitting in silence with the two men, I realized I probably wasn’t going to get any more details from them after Elizabeth’s retort. I decided to follow Elizabeth outside and asked her to specify what she meant. After I thank the men for their honesty, I find Elizabeth leaning over an open fire pit with a dozen hot dogs on a grill. I position myself directly in front of her and ask: “you think that’s bullshit?” Without looking up, and her focus on using a stick to move the hotdogs around the grill, Elizabeth lets out a dry laugh, “Yeah, I think it’s bullshit. We didn’t join because it’s a boy’s club and what woman would want to be out here, alone? With all of them.” Another woman in the patrol tells me that she’s always wanted to join the patrol, and even though her husband had been in the patrol for years, she felt like joining was never an option. Now that she’s in, she always feels like she has to prove herself constantly. She also referred to the patrol as a “boy’s club” and told me that her biggest hesitation in joining is not wanting to

[35] The idea that women are not interested in male-dominant jobs and hobbies is not unique, especially in the context of the military. The United States military has been officially and officially citing this as research to keep women out of combat arms roles (Trobaugh 2018; Young and Nauta 2013). This naturalizing of gendered qualities posits that men and women simply have different qualities and reproduce gender inequality throughout society (A. Powell and Sang 2015; Ellemers and Barreto 2009).

interfere: “This is a chance for them to go out and do their thing without having women in the way.” I asked what has changed to make her join and she tells me that “times have changed and I guess the patrol did too.” Both of these women’s experiences speak back to Cohn and Taber’s assertion that women often find themselves trying to fit into a male space. And while both women confide in me that they feel as though they can keep up with the male skills, they often find themselves being gendered by the men.[36]

This reproduction of gender separation within this patrol was also placed on me. The day before heading out on the land for an overnight trip, Wyatt, the patrol sergeant, holds the last meeting to iron out all the final details. Following the procedure most patrols follow, Wyatt begins confirming tent groups, the vehicles, and the gear everyone would bring. Looking at me, Wyatt tells Elizabeth that because she’s the only other woman, she would have to bring a tent for us to share. Not wanting to force Elizabeth to share a tent with me, I shift uncomfortably and tell the group that I don’t care about sharing a tent with men and that usually, I just go wherever the Instructor goes. Shaking his head, Wyatt informs the group that it’s best if I share a tent with Elizabeth “to keep the women together.” What was interesting about the interaction was that up until that moment, it seemed that for the majority of the patrol, the question of our gender wasn’t really considered. As many members explained to me, there’s never been women in the patrol, so they’ve never had to think about it. However, Wyatt’s comment on our femaleness, especially mine as a young, unmarried outsider, was put under the spotlight. I felt, in that moment, that I was not only viewed as an outsider, but as a threat by what I can see, hear, or do in the company of the men. It became clear that the patrol wasn’t sure how to proceed.

[36] Studying the barriers women and girls face in male-dominated professions, Powell and Sang (2015) examine the effects marginalization from formal and informal groups have and are a form of symbolic violence reproducing gender inequality.

The Position of Indigenous Female Rangers

Traveling with a patrol that had predominantly Indigenous members I saw how Indigenous women's racialized position affects how they were viewed and valued by Instructors and male patrol members. Instead, I argue that settler colonial stereotypes about Indigenous women render them incapable of ever fitting a hegemonic masculinity model like their white counterparts. Women who do try, are ostracized.

While on patrol in the Kitikmeot region in mid-July, Dahlia, a single Inuk mother of two, tells me she joined her patrol because it was one of the only ways she could get out on the land. Her limited economic opportunities, and her limited skills on the land, along with the demands of childcare meant that Dahlia rarely got to participate in land-based activities. After arriving by boat at our camping location, everyone is busy unpacking their gear and setting up the tents for the week. After having most of the men repeatedly insist that they carry my gear and set up my tent, I am unsurprised to see that the group has naturally split itself by gender. The men work to pull the boats onto the beach and carry everyone's bags to the camping spot, while I can see the women going through the gear as they start setting up sleeping pads and creating makeshift cooking areas. After awkwardly ensuring them that I can carry my own gear, I see Dahlia walking toward me. I give a weak smile, to prove to everyone that I was in fact not struggling to walk up the beach's incline under the weight of my bags. Dahlia, who'd talked to me a lot about her kids and home life my first few days in the community, fell into step with me. As we walk, I ask her what she's most excited about during the patrol. She quickly tells me that she just loves being on the land and she wants to go hunting. Without skipping a beat, she tells me that she grew up going hunting and fishing with her grandfather. Dahlia goes on to tell me that she grew up as a "tomboy" and continues to like traditionally male activities. When I ask her whether she

goes hunting a lot, she looks at the ground, shifting uncomfortably on her feet, and admits that since her grandfather passed away a few years ago, she never gets the opportunity and that was a big motivator to join the patrol.

The following morning, after a group of men pull a dozen Arctic char with their fish nets, they bring the majority of the fish to the women who begin using it to prepare lunch for the whole group. As the women work, I and a few of the young men begin goofing around. Sitting on some of the massive boulders that lined part of the beach, a few of the younger men in the patrol are trying to convince me to eat the char's eyeball. They tell me that it's a rite of passage and if I want to hang out with them, I have to eat it. Having previous experience with the pranking nature of many Inuit, and as an avid fish-hater, I'm highly skeptical that this act of bravado (which would make me look cool to the men) would be worth it. I hesitantly shake my head, admitting to the men that I'm obviously not cool enough and that they can gladly eat it for me. As the men laugh at my cowardliness, I see Dahlia join the group. After glancing down at the fisheye in Conor's hand, Dahlia proudly declares that she always eats the eye as she snatches it from his hand and pops it into her mouth. Over the course of the week I spent with Dahlia, I understood her declaration and her insistence of being with us, as a way of inserting herself within a male space. A few moments later, she bluntly makes this point to me, whispering as the women prepared fish for the group, telling me that she was more suited to fishing (and hanging out with the men) than cooking.

Throughout the entire week, we spend on the land, Dahlia repeatedly seems to actively remove herself from what she referred to as the "women's work" in the camp. As the week went on, Dahlia would repeatedly interlace her desire to hunt and fish with the men with stories of her female ancestors hunting and fishing alongside their fathers, brothers, and husbands. Dahlia

never questioned her right to be there or take up space. However, that doesn't mean her desires didn't make her the victim of gender bias. In the week I spent with her patrol on the land, I never saw her really engage in either of the gendered activities. Like with preparing the fish, Dahlia would almost always avoid spending time with just the women. However, it didn't seem like she was often welcome to work with the men. Instead, Dahlia would hover awkwardly on the outskirts. When I mentioned Dahlia's desire to engage in the more traditional male activities, the men in the patrol all seemed quite dismissive, alluding, or straight up telling me that she couldn't keep up or had the necessary skills to work with them. When I asked Conor, a young man who'd spent the majority of his life on the land, why they didn't encourage Dahlia, he simply shrugged stating "She's not a man.


Nunavut Community
Photo courtesy of AL

The pressure on Indigenous women to conform to life in town under colonial policies functionally worked to erase their presence on the land (Goeman 2008). Furthermore, colonialism trained men to be more self-sufficient on the land and the younger men would often tell me that they had no need for women. Ultimately, they see her as incapable of keeping up with the men who've spent the majority of their lives on the land together. In her book on the effects cultural change has had on gender among the Cherokee, Theda Perdue (1998) examines how the indoctrination of patriarchal, sexist, and homophobic social forces have impacted the foundation of Native

women's and men's identities and social roles and responsibilities. The introduction of colonial ideological, religious and economic practices have shifted Native social values (Perdue 1998). Instead, the internalization of patriarchal colonialism "has led to a move away from gender relations based on shared power to a stance of domination […] The sexist attitudes promoted throughout the history of colonization have been internalized to such an extent that even when First Nations' self-determination is emphasized in policies and tribal governments, many practices remain male dominated" (Weaver 2009: 1554).

Dahlia was not alone in her desire to partake in traditional skills. While on patrol in the Kitikmeot Region, Annie was the only woman who came out on the land with the group. Sitting in my tent after a long day of traveling, I'm exhausted as I begin my nighttime routine. As I take out my braids, Annie pokes her head into my tent and asks me if she can visit with me. I eagerly invite her inside and clear the top of my cooler to make her a makeshift seat for her. As I pull my comb out of my bag, Annie runs her hand through her own short hair and asks me whether my almost waist-length hair bothers me out on the land. As I shrug, Annie tells me that she could never have hair like mine. Stating instead that she's more of a tomboy than she presumes me to be. Wanting to continue the conversation, I ask Annie what it's like being the only female on the patrol and she tells me that she doesn't notice because she "grew up always around boys." Like Dahlia, Annie sees herself as belonging within this male space. However, in every instance where groups of men would go out to hunt or explore new regions, Annie always remained at the camp, insisting she was more comfortable cooking or fishing from the central hole we'd made just on the outskirts of the camp. Once again, Annie's *desire* to be proficient on the land didn't necessarily measure up to the skills she possessed.

The Development of Land Skills Under Colonialism

By the time women were introduced into patrols, many lacked the same level of proficiency as their male counterparts while on the land. This, combined with the rising cost of going out on the land, forced some women to opt out of land-based activities to fulfill familial obligations in town. This only intensified the knowledge gap. Today, many Rangers tell me that they have almost exclusively male-only hunting parties. While women partake in some land-based activities, it is with much less frequency and intensity. According to many of the male Rangers I spoke with, the high rate of women in patrols is attributed to the fact that being a Ranger is a paid position. Many see it as a way for women to have the opportunity to get out on the land even if they lack skills but without the imposition of being a financial burden.

As Martha Dowsley concludes in her ethnographic study of women's changing relationship to the land in the 20th century, lack of skill, equipment, and social support make spending time on the land very difficult (2014). While only a few generations ago, all children were experienced at going on the land, these barriers, along with rising economic costs of traveling on the land, have played a major role in its decline. a Junior Ranger leader from the Baffin Islands tells me that she rarely gets the opportunity to partake in the community's fall narwhal hunts even though she would love to go. Because she doesn't have her own boat and must stay home to take care of her young daughter and work, she leaves the narwhal hunting to her common-law partner. She tells me that she understands the importance of dividing family labour in the most profitable way. Because her partner is a better hunter and never graduated from high school, it makes sense to them that she remains in town to take care of their home and

waged employment, while he participates in more subsistence activities.[37] Jens Dahl, in his work "The Integrative and Cultural Role of Hunting and Subsistence in Greenland" (1989) examines the relationship between subsistence hunting and wage employment among Greenlandic Inuit. He describes how gendered divisions of labour are divided between men doing the majority of subsistence work while women are more prone to stay within the household with paid employment. The historical and contemporary effects of colonialism on Indigenous women, largely shifted their relationship with land-based activities (Tester 2006; Billson and Mancini 2007; Ohmagari and Berkes 1997; Condon and Stern 1993; Guemple 1986).

These changes had a reverberating effect. When traditional nomadic Inuit communities were relocated into sedentary, government-created Hamlets, individuals became even more dependent on establishing a waged economy. As communities grew, stores, government offices (hamlet, post office, hunting, fishing, etc), airports, and private businesses (fisheries, fur trading) became staples. The introduction of this waged economy and assimilation politics continues to have a great impact on subsistence hunting. Over time, many community members were forced to join in this waged economy when federal mandates made surviving on subsistence hunting and fishing largely impossible. While on patrol in the Baffin Islands, a few local Rangers told me they struggled to balance their waged economy with their ability to go out on the land. This became particularly true for women who take on the brunt of familial, household, and economic responsibility.

While traveling across patrols in Nunavut, one of the major reasons that limited women's ability to partake in land-based activities is waged employment. In many communities I visited, women remain responsible for maintaining the household and taking care of children. Things

[37] For more on the relationship between educational outcomes and employment among northern Indigenous communities see (Kleinfeld and Andrews 2006; Robertson 2018; Williamson and Vizina 2017).

that were once done on the land were now within government-established settlements. In his ethnographic study of the impact of the forced relocation from nomadic living to rigid housing, Frank Tester notes that "Gender roles were also dramatically reordered with the move to rigid-frame houses and the end of camp life. While the household was not dependent to a considerable degree on predominantly male wage employment, the traditional roles of women in choosing the location for a tent, preparing and sewing the skins for the tent or *qarmaq* cover, and controlling the allocation of interior space were replaced by labor and decisions made external to the household. The role of women was redefined as a typically 1950s qallunaaq and suburban one" (Tester 2006: 238). The repercussions of this transformation to rigid-frame houses are still felt in communities today. Because women were now remaining within the community, they began taking on the majority of the waged employment.

Studying the impacts of relocation on Inuit women, Billson and Macnini describe the shift like this: "In one brief generation, they were resettled from a hunting and gathering economy based on sharing, reciprocity, and cooperation to a post-industrial society based on wages, accumulation of resources, welfare, and competitive norms" (2007: 30). Because this sedentary lifestyle was largely foreign, they began to mirror gender role and gender expectations of the white settlers. In their study on the effect sedentary living has had on Cree women living in the subarctic, Kayo Ohmagari and Fikret Berkes draw similar conclusions. "The role of women was considered equal in importance and complementary to that of men. Women were in charge of the bush camp and were generally, but not exclusively, responsible for food processing, fire-making, and cooking. After the Cree settled into permanent villages, women lost their role as equal partners in the bush; all-male hunting teams became more common than family-unit bush camps" (1997: 200). The introduction of land agreements, treaties, Christianity, and residential

schools all played a role in shifting families away from nomadic living and undermining the role of women within families and communities.

In a 1993 study on the gender roles of youth in Holman (now called Ulukhatok), Richard Condon and Pamela Stern examine how the evolution of post-contact influences shifted the relationships within families and communities. Skills that were once needed to survive and taught generationally were now second place in other social, political, and economic relationships. Precontact, women, and men were dependent on each other for survival where one could not function without the other. Discussing this relationship, Condon and Stern explain that "A woman needed a man to provide food and other raw materials obtained through subsistence hunting and fishing, while a man needed a woman to sew clothing, maintain to soapstone lamp, butcher animals, and provide a variety of other household essentials" (1993: 392). In a study on Belcher Island Inuit, Lee Guemple similarly argues that what is central to Inuit gender relations is the implicit obligation to perform the work associated with one's gender for the benefit of members of the opposite gender (1986).

At the same time, the lack of educational and employment opportunities, especially for men, made partaking in wage employment extremely difficult. Almost 50% of Inuit and Inuvialuit in the Canadian arctic are unemployed with 42% of men and 14% of women labeled "discouraged searchers"[38] in a 2017 census (Statistics Canada 2017). Due to the lack of opportunities, finding waged employment in the Westernized sense is quite challenging. Working as a public servant is the most common form of waged employment in communities. In a study conducted by J.S Kleinfeld and J. Andrews (2006), they correlated education levels with employment, marriage, divorce, crime, and political activism in Alaska. Through their analysis,

[38] Discouraged searchers are defined as those who want employment and are available to work but are not seeking work because they believe they cannot find suitable work).

they examine how rates of post-secondary education are changing the dynamic within Indigenous communities in the arctic. The educational gender gap, which favors women, is directly linked to high rates of female employment within the increasingly information-based, globalized economy. The history of Indigenous education under colonialism established gendered learning which continues to have measurable impacts on society (Robertson 2018). For example, in Alaska, women are getting degrees at a rate five times higher than their male peers. This allows women to take advantage of work opportunities catering to these academic pursuits. Furthermore, a lot of post-secondary education programs are not adapted to account for the traditional cultural role of Indigenous men (Williamson and Vizina 2017).

Sitting on the tailgate of a pickup truck at the patrol's gun range, I speak with one of the patrol's only men and elder, J.T. Between the sound of gunshots, he tells me the biggest difference between the "old Rangers" and now is that the patrol has a lot more women. He says that this is why the patrol started to "die" and had to be re-established. When I later spoke with the patrol's Instructor, I understood that the patrol always maintained high membership, however, until recently, the patrol was made up predominantly of women–the skills (or what was viewed as a lack thereof) was the logic behind why the patrol was seen as 'dying'. For years, J.T. tells me that he was the only man in the patrol, so he was often doing most, if not all, of the manual labour: cutting wood and pulling sleds out of the snow. To him, the biggest problem was not that he didn't want women in the patrol, but simply that they lacked experience on machines and in the bush. Over time, the women began to foster and develop these skills, and the patrol was once again considered successful.[39] When I asked him why the men are so much better at being on the

[39] The success of a patrol is determined through a metric developed to determine whether a patrol is efficient and effective for military operations. Each time an Instructor goes on a patrol, they are meant to assess whether the patrol can work autonomously, or in military speak, is "DAG'd Green." Patrols that are assessed as weak are "DAG'd Red," meaning they are viewed as lacking the essential skills indicative of a successful autonomous patrol.

land, he chuckles, leans back and waves vaguely in the direction of town stating: “Cause the women are busy.” I take this to mean that once many of the women are old enough, they begin working within the community and therefore fall behind their male peers in learning certain bush skills. These limitations in learning and practicing bush skills forced many women to learn skills later in life.

After joining a patrol in her late forties, after attending university outside the territory and then focusing on her career and family within the community, Jenny tells me she’s really had to take the time to learn from elders in the patrol. As we talk, Jenny is practicing fileting a fish using a technique an elder, Emmanuel, showed her and a group of JCRs. Laughing as she looks from her fish to Emmanuel’s as she struggles to follow the same smooth movement that Emmanuel does in one move. Putting down her knife she looks at Emmanuel and tells me, “Sometimes I’m like the kids. I have to sit and watch. But I’m getting the hang of it now.”

Women’s Skills on the Land

Unlike regular and reserve force members who are trained in exactly the job the CAF expects them to perform, Rangers, who are expected to come to the unit ‘trained’ only have these passed down skills to use when on patrol. Within many communities, specifically these skills are gendered and the skills enter the patrol through this gendered lens. Patrols that have a disproportionate number of females or males struggle to have a wide array of skills. However, in many cases how these skills are valued is highly gendered. Patrols that lack the more masculine skills are deemed to be lacking. Across almost all the patrol, the division of these gender roles was very evident with the training of the new C19 rifle. Across the board, Instructors cited women as being much less comfortable with the weapons and ranking much lower during the

shooting evaluation. Some of the women even ask if they can keep their weapons locked up because they don't feel comfortable having them in the house. This goes against the common narrative that Rangers are experienced hunters who use weapons year-round to hunt on the land. However, this is only because even though 30% of Rangers are female, the status quo for who a Ranger is, is male and a proficient hunter. Female Rangers are 'othered' as being outside the norm.

The problem with this view is that it distorts the reality of what Rangers are capable of and who makes up most of the ranks. And this is rarely accounted for when the Instructors talk about Rangers. At 1 CPRG, it is still expected that Rangers are the ideal male, land-savvy hunters and when patrols do not produce these types of Rangers, it is seen as a failure by many Instructors. The patrol is seen as ineffective.

The "Female Patrol" in the Mackenzie Delta is a good example of this. When we traveled to the patrol, Brandon, the Instructor, told me that he'd worked hard for the last two years to bring the patrol up to the right standard and he considers it one of his biggest accomplishments. Brandon highlights that one of the biggest downfalls of having a large percentage of women in the patrols means that they lack skills on skidoos, firearms, and using machinery. After a late spring patrol in 2019 (before I'd arrived at the unit), the patrol struggled to make it back to town after members kept repeatedly getting stuck in the snow and slush. Brandon and the patrol elder, J.T. found themselves constantly having to tow or pull the women's sleds out being they "lacked the skills to navigate the land." Brandon cites this incident to explain why this patrol was lacking skills. However, after observing the patrol for 10 days, I realize that what he means is that the patrol lacks many of the skills typically attributed to men in the north. For the 10-day patrol, the women were proficient at preparing traditional food, making traditional clothing, and traditional

medicine. However, because these skills were valuable to Brandon, they were undermined and undervalued.

Traveling out with the patrol, it was decided that they would "camp" in a nearby area where almost all the members had cabins, preparation once we arrived in the location was almost minimal. It was clear to me that this was an extremely popular location and every cabin I entered had all the amenities possible–some even with televisions hooked up to solar panels and satellite dishes. After only about an hour everyone is settled in and everyone starts to make their way to the central location where we'd parked the vehicles. The sun is shining bright and everyone is in just their Ranger hoodie, combat pants, and rubber boots. After everyone gathered, it was decided by the group that one of the male elders, J.T., would teach a class in setting snares and one of the female elders, Laurie, would teach a class on collecting and preserving local herbs used for medicinal purposes.

Sitting with Laurie later that evening, she hands me an old Vaseline container which she explains holds a homemade medicine she'd made. The ointment, as she explained, would help with the intense arthritis I'd been experiencing for months due to my Crohn's disease. As she explained the ointment's medicinal properties, she interjects stories of how past family members had used the ointment to cure a variety of ailments. That is why, she explains, she always ensures that the patrol takes at least one day out of their patrol to collect and mix traditional medicine. Now, alongside lessons on trapping and building emergency shelters led by other patrol members, Laurie always teaches a lesson on traditional medicine. And like J.T., who uses stories from his past and his family's past to teach trapping techniques, Laurie tells stories of creation and historical accounts to explain the importance of medicine. Many of the women I spoke with actually seemed quite proud of the skills they have, and the things they've learned from members

like Laurie and tell me they find them helpful for their daily lives. And while it fits firmly into the 'traditional skills' category that so many Instructors are eager and proud to partake in, sitting with Brandon later that evening, he laughs as I sit on the bed and sniff the mixture before applying it to my hands. I wonder, would he have laughed if it had been an animal antler given to me as a trophy by a male after a hunt?

Division of Labour

After a late breakfast the patrol heads towards the chosen camping spot where we planned on setting up four MacPherson tents. Each two-person tent group heads out to find a location to put their tent. Brady, sharing with his wife, works to set up his and Beth's tent while she starts setting up their gear for the weekend. I'm sharing with the Instructor Dean who heads out by snowmobile while I work to shovel a patch big enough for our tent. Just as I finish, Dean returns with a bundle of skinny, twelve-foot trees, tied together, dragging behind his skidoo. He unties the bundle and directs me to limb the trees while he heads back out to grab more.


MacPherson tent
Photo by researcher

While seconds I'm already sweating as I drag twelve-foot trees up the small hill to our camping spot and swing my ax to remove the branches to create our A-frame tent poles. As I work I notice two members of the patrol,

Linny and Jamie, sitting on their snowmobile right next to the pile of limbed poles I'd made. As I struggle to drag one of the trees up the hill, Linny begins yelling down directions. After almost twenty minutes of her telling me how to do things better, I find myself getting irritated and decide to take a break as I wait for more trees to get dropped off.

In just my sweater, I sit on a bare rock and see Linny make her way toward me. As she sits down, she exhales loudly telling me that she is "also" exhausted. I don't have time to comment before she reminds me that she'd cooked breakfast for everyone. Reflecting back on my own frustration, I begin to think about the ways that gendered labour is often not accounted for with the Rangers. Linny goes on to explain that if her late- husband had been out there with her, her 'camp' would already be set up. As she speaks, I can see her looking towards Brady and Beth who work together to set up their camp. "He knew how to put up the tent and get the wood and I did the other stuff while he worked." Looking over to Brady and Beth, I can see that a similar dynamic occurs.

After Dean returns with the last few trees and I start working again and I hear Jamie start laughing as I struggle to carry three tied together trees through the almost waist-deep snow. Looking at me as she gets down from her snowmobile, "Bianca, you're more of a bush woman than I am. Teach me how to do that." Laughing as my foot breaks through and I fall knee-deep into the snow for the the100th time that day, I laugh alongside her and tell her that ironically, I actually learned a lot of bush skills by watching Rangers on other patrols so it's funny that she praises the skills now. In a more somber tone, she tells me that in all seriousness, she does actually spend a lot of time on the land but it's usually with her father and brother. Because they work as a team, they're usually the ones that prep all the wood and so she just never learned how to use a chainsaw or set up the frame for the canvas tent.

Like Beth and Linny, Jaime seems more comfortable doing more traditionally female tasks. Every meal she could be found prepping and cooking food alongside the other two women. Earlier that day, Jaime had prepared lunch for the entire patrol. However, like my own bias with Linny, it seems as though Jamie doesn't feel like her contribution to the patrol rivals the more traditionally masculine manual labour. She tells me she's discouraged that she can't provide that kind of work to the patrol and confides that she's embarrassed that she views me as "more useful." As Susan Marlow explains in her analysis on the value of women within the world of self-employment, "gendered characteristics associated with the feminine are deemed subordinate to those of the masculine" (Marlow 2002: 84). Jaime didn't see her contribution of cooking and cleaning as being as valuable. This is because, overall, the majority of care labour, paid and unpaid, is performed by women. As Fiona Jenkins (2020) highlights this labour is only noticed or recognized when it is lacking. I imagine that if Beth, Linny, and Jamie hadn't participated in the patrol, the omission of their labour would have been noticed a lot more than it was when it was being done. Or at minimum, as many men explain when I'm on a patrol with little or no women, the men would have had to "make do" or be sent on the land with coolers packed full of food made by their wives, mothers, daughters or sisters.

Conclusion

The inclusion of women into 1 CRPG is viewed as a progressive example of military culture change in the wake of Operation Honour[40] in the mid-2000s. The high rate of women's participation in the organization speaks to this. However, as I argue throughout this chapter, the reality is not that simple. While women do join the organization in much higher numbers than

40

within Canada's conventional military, the way women are thought of, and their labour, is valued. However, regardless of this high participation, the culture that only values women through a male gaze remains present.

Whenever Instructors refer to Rangers, it's almost exclusively in the masculine and they only seem to highlight gender when it's female. The long history and continued impact of colonialism throughout Canada has had major repercussions on how gender is thought about in 1 CRPG. The bush skills and knowledge held by women and their overall role and knowledge within a patrol is rarely considered as important as those of men. Instead, I argue that the Organization's military roots and influence, along with the continued effects of colonialism within Indigenous communities, means that the admiration of women in patrol is largely superficial. By contrasting how women are talked about in patrols with predominantly Indigenous participation with patrols with predominantly non-Indigenous members, we can see how the influences of colonialism and the patriarchy play out within the organization. As I demonstrate, patrols with large numbers of non-Indigenous women follow a more conventional military view on gender. Women in the patrol are expected to perform to the standards set by men. Women like Diana and Delaney are seen as productive members of their patrol by their ability to render their gender invisible.

What I aimed to get across in this chapter is that this invisibility of their gender is only possible by their whiteness. Indigenous women like Dahlia who try to perform masculine in similar ways have the opposite effect and end up marking their gender as hypervisible. This hypervisibility allows it to be criticized and judged as being inferior to the status quo established under military masculinity.

Chapter Summary

Chapter three focuses on the gendered dynamics that exist within patrols, especially across cultures–Indigenous, non-Indigenous, and military. The chapter examines how misunderstandings and misinformation about Indigenous gender roles are interpreted by non-Indigenous Instructors when they arrive at 1 CRPG. This chapter shows how these misunderstandings, combined with masculinity dominating military culture across the military, dominates how Instructors value women's contributions to the organization. In doing this, it traces how this labour is valued by the patrol as a whole. This chapter challenges the idea that the high percentage of women in the unit should be considered a progressive example of shifting military culture. Instead, by examining predominantly Indigenous, versus predominantly non-Indigenous patrol, it is possible to see how patriarchal and sexist underpinnings of military culture are masked behind the high number of women. And more than this, it is possible to see how the differential inclusion of women is vital to the patriarchal project of the military, cementing white masculinity as normative and keeping in place white practices that render Indigenous men and women as less than Rangers.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Military Wealth: How Money Shapes Indigenous-State Relations Among Canadian Rangers

"We're essentially colonial overlords," Oscar tells me the first time we meet. After almost a year of conducting ethnographic fieldwork with members of the Canadian military working in the arctic, it was the first time I'd heard someone refer to the colonial implications of the job. Oscar is new to 1 CRPG and he soon tells me that while he knew the unit's mandate and location meant he would be working closely with the local Indigenous people who live in the Canadian arctic and sub-arctic, he was surprised by exactly what that relationship looked like. After working there for less than a month, he sees the job in financial terms. "Our job is to exist, in part, to artificially financially support communities that the government wants to control for purposes of sovereignty. It's no mistake that when we go to a community, we can drop 50-80 grand." What was interesting about Oscar's opening comments to me was that he equated the role of 1 CRPG to his job as a civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) operator while in Afghanistan.[41] Describing his job, Oscar tells me that being a CIMIC officer was just "paying local people to not become Taliban." The money they gave out "artificially propped up" communities to achieve larger political goals. In our conversation, he makes direct comparisons between this role and what he sees 1 CRPG financially doing in communities.

Through this chapter, I focus on how Rangers are financially compensated for their work in patrols. Rooting my argument in theories at the intersection of capitalism, colonialism, and whiteness, I explore how someone's value is based on how much value they can produce for the organization. Rangers who are willing (and able) to invest in gear that benefits the organization are seen as being more loyal to the organization than those seeking financial compensation for

[41] CIMIC works as a military-liaison capacity in support of military missions.

this work. This difference, I argue, is rooted firmly within a racialized polarity where non-Indigenous (predominately white) Rangers are deemed to be 'better' Rangers than their (poor) Indigenous counterparts.

Group photo of Rangers
Photo by researcher

Like Canadian military personnel, Rangers are paid according to a standard military pay scale.[42] However, they are also paid what is called an Equipment Usage Rate (EUR) for the use of their own personal gear while on patrol. Unlike traditional military units, Rangers are provided almost no gear and are expected to join the organization with the ability to travel and survive on the land.[43] While a minority of Instructors do not support the idea of EUR,[3] many do, and as one explains it, "many [Rangers] have and need snowmobiles, sleds, and ATVs for their everyday lives. So why shouldn't they get paid to bring that stuff out instead of having a bunch of C-CANs full of stuff they can't use?" As he

[42] As a subcomponent of the reserves, Canadian Rangers are paid through the reserve pay system. This means that they are only paid a daily rate when they are on contracts, called "Class A". Similar to all CAF members, the daily rate is dependent on rank. In 2021 the lowest rank of private makes about 100 dollars and a sergeant (the highest rank in a patrol) makes about 160 dollars a day.

[43] In response to the high cost of living and the low employment rate throughout the north, finding work as a Canadian Ranger is considered quite lucrative by both Rangers and Instructors. Whenever a Ranger uses any of this gear on "Ranger time" they are paid the daily rate. For example, if a Ranger brings their own personal tent, snowmobile, sled, generator, ice auger, and tools they'll make just under 500 dollars a day on top of their pay rate. The main reason for this structure is that it removes the onus on the military for providing, maintaining, or replacing gear as they would within traditional regiments. However, many Instructors believe the benefit of this system is for Rangers because Rangers have access to this gear at any time. Secondly, the EUR rate is often discussed as a main motivation behind why people join patrols in the first place.

explains, for a typical patrol, getting EUR payment for a sled averages to about 2000 dollars for the 10-12 days. Taking into account all the gear a Ranger could bring; they can make more than $5000 in those days. For an Instructor in his last year at the unit, he sees this money as critical to the financial prosperity of Rangers in communities. Many Instructors and Rangers have told me that in many communities Rangers wouldn't join for only the daily rate because it is not sufficient for the time and effort away from their employment, families, or subsistence activities to be worth it.

Every time the patrol goes out, the EUR is managed by the Instructor who tracks what equipment each member provides and pays them accordingly in cash at the end of the patrol. At the beginning of each patrol, the Instructor collects a list of all the gear each member intends to bring. In theory, before heading out on land, all this gear is inspected by the Instructor and the patrol sergeant, and any damages are noted down. At the end of the patrol, the Instructor has a final pay out where he gives each member an envelope of cash with the amount of money corresponding with the gear they provided.

While this payment for gear exchange seems straightforward, over the course of my fieldwork I came to see how EUR became more than simply paying individuals for the use of their gear but taking on a political and social quality. By examining how some Instructors take on a role as benevolent actors, I highlight how this payment system becomes part of a civilizing process (Elias 2000) meant to bring Indigenous people to a colonial standard of behavior. Linking humanitarian theory with work in Indigenous studies this chapter examines how the money paid to Rangers gets entangled with ideas of humanitarian aid. This positionality of 'humanitarian' and 'savior' erases the colonial economic relationship that is created between Indigenous people and the state. Building on ethnographic material, I examine how this

relationship is further compounded by the stereotypical idea that Indigenous people should not seek out wealth.

The Civilizing Process of Humanitarianism

With most Instructors coming to the unit with no exposure to the social and economic conditions of the north, the high rates of unemployment and poverty among Indigenous people is often shocking. Many Instructors explain that their only point of reference to understand what they see is their experiences on deployment. With over 35 years of service and multiple deployments around the world, Liam identifies as a 'political lefty,' as sees his work largely within the context of humanitarianism. He laughs as he tells me that he believes that Instructors are following in the footsteps of missionaries: "We're just a bunch of Catholics and Protestants coming North and pushing our southern ideals." Having served in both Afghanistan and Bosnia, Liam tells me he's "been in the thick of humanitarianism" where he worked alongside the United Nations: "I carried a wad of cash to our contracts to get schools and homes built." While Liam links this to the Christian ideal of 'helping', what he doesn't mention is the colonial civilizing mission that predicted this care (Lester and Dussart 2014).

Studying the liberal interventions the Canadian state uses to justify the territorial dispossession of Indigenous people, Krista Maxwell (2017) examines how settler-humanitarian ideology gets used as a moral cover to mask the colonial project of elimination (Wolfe 2006). Using the concept of "settler-humanitarianism," this colonial project is advanced by the fallacy of alleviating Indigenous suffering. As Sherene Razack points out, violence occurring on peacekeeping missions is justified "in order to save them from the excesses of their own society"

(2004:8).[44] Similar to the "bureaucratic heroes" (2014) Lisa Stevenson writes about in her work on the tuberculosis epidemic (1940-1960) and the suicide epidemic (2014), doctors, teachers and administrators—and the military[45]—all become part of the Canadian humanitarian goal of bringing the Inuit to Canadian standards (Weiss and Campbell 1991). Viewing the employment of Indigenous Rangers under this lens allows us to see how employment as a Ranger can be seen as an economic exchange for labour that can mirror a state hand-out for behaving according to prescribed colonial standards. This is further compounded by the fact that often only people who are deemed 'innocent' are worthy of aid (Gade 2010; Ticktin 2016; 2017). As Liisa Malkki (2015) examines in her work with Norwegian aid workers and volunteers, their desire to help is shaped by who they believe is the appropriate beneficiary of aid and how they should act. Just like bringing Indigenous peoples into civilization saved Native peoples from genocide (Barker

Old Hudson's Bay building
Photo by researcher

[44] While the violence Razack is overtly citing is the torture and murder of Shidane Abukar Arone by Canadian peacekeepers in Somalia, she uses this as a starting point to examine the more covert intersection of humanitarian, colonialism, and imperialism.

[45] The intersection of humanitarianism into military practice can be traced to the time of Alexander the Great. Aid has been part of military practice in almost every armed conflict since (Weiss and Campbell 1991). Historically, humanitarian aid workers have defined their role as non-political and impartial with the aim to minimize violence and treat all sides equally. Militaries, on the other hand, have historically been seen as taking sides and looking for enemies. Over time, Western militaries have emerged as "crucial vectors for delivering 'humanitarian' 'developmental' benefits, including basic infrastructure, education, and healthcare" (Gilman 2012: 174).

2011), Indigenous people having jobs as Rangers is viewed as saving them from unemployment and poverty. Significantly, unemployment and poverty are seen as unrelated to colonization and more often than not are regarded as an outcome of Indigenous failure to modernize.

After traveling to a Nunavut patrol which at one point had one of the highest suicide rates in the world (Epstein 2019), Frank and I talk a lot about the money he gives out as EUR and the effect he thinks it has on the community. After snowmobiling to a famous lookout overlooking a beautiful waterfall, we slowly make our way to the cliff's edge as Frank explains that he sees 1 CRPG as having two separate roles. The organization allows the government to have a foothold in the region, while also providing much-needed employment in communities. However, what Frank fails to acknowledge is that these 'roles' are not separate. As Michael Barnett (2011) points out, this type of care or aid provided by the state is part of empire building where the aid provided is self-serving state interests. The employment of Indigenous Rangers does not exist outside of Canada's colonial investment in the region but exists precisely to further it.

Myths and Misconceptions

The image of who is good enough to be a Ranger is rooted in a colonial, pre-contact imagination. The lack of cultural, social, or political knowledge about the north handily supports Instructor construction of Indigenous identities that come straight out of the colonial imaginary. Instructors easily exercise their power to choose who can, or cannot join, or who is deemed valuable, or not valuable, believing their actions to be humanitarian ones. In this way, a colonial economic order is maintained through the fiction of assisting Indigenous people into modernity. The process is rife with contradictions. Once Rangers are seen as seeking out wealth (remember this wealth is considered aid and not standard employment) they lose their authenticity as

Indigenous people in the eyes of some Instructors. While on patrol in the Baffins, the acting patrol sergeant ensured that his vehicle, two extra sleds, and gear were rented by the incoming Instructor for the entirety of the patrol. This ensured him just over eight thousand dollars more in EUR than any other member. While sitting with a group of Rangers, I overheard them discussing how the previous sergeant would spread the money out among members and they were upset that the newly elected sergeant didn't follow the practice. While on my patrols, I generally saw two philosophies for dealing with this type of problem. Some Instructors would ensure that this extra income was spread evenly throughout patrol members while claiming it's none of their business who gets the money. In these cases, the Instructor justified this by stating that because the sergeant does the most work and they should get the most reward, while others still simply err on the side of nepotism and pick their favourite Ranger. However, this causes a lot of problems and competition in certain patrols. While out with a group from the Delta region, the old sergeant used to provide all the gear, and even years later, many of the longtime members whispered to me about how they still held this against her. Now, the new Instructor ensures that he rents gear from different people each time he goes out. He explains that

Instructor teaching land skills to a group of Rangers
Photo by researcher

he feels like it's his responsibility to make sure that money is spread out. Once again, this becomes another way that instructors hold tremendous invisible power in patrols and can have a major impact on the economic and social development of patrols.

In her repertoire of work on the role of money within tribal gaming among the Florida Seminoles, Jessica Cattelino (2008; 2018; 2010) examines how the influx of money (and materiality) made the Seminoles seem less Indian in the eyes of the non-Indigenous residents. Simply put: "American Indians enjoy political autonomy under conditions of economic dependency, but Indigenous economic power undermines their political status" (2008: 100). Using this as a theoretical starting point, I examine how Indigenous 'greed' and 'poverty' both become used as a method to delegitimize Indigenous identity. When the CAF implemented Operation Laser (Op Laser) as part of its role to help combat the spread of Covid-19, Rangers, for the first time ever, were mobilized under full-time Class B contract—meaning they now had full-time pay and benefits for the 4–6-month term.[46] Now, Rangers, who have historically only worked for a maximum of 12 days a year, had access to the same pay and benefits as a full-time reserve force and regular force soldiers in the north. During these contracts, Rangers were expected to remain in their communities, have 24-hour communication with their Instructor, and be ready to be deployed with little notice. Like the regular and reserve force soldiers deployed throughout the country, the Rangers were paid for this work.

After months of telling me that the entire organization was a "scam for communities to get money from the government," Cody, a member of the headquarters staff, tells me he finally has proof. After months of sitting by the phone, a handful of patrols across Nunavut asked permission to support their communities by hunting, fishing, delivering goods, and conducting

[46] These contracts would be extended and changed repeatedly until 2022.

welfare checks, but were denied.[47] Smirking, Cody leans over his desk, tapping a finger to the side of his head, and tells me, "See, they don't want to help, they want the 200 dollars a day EUR that comes from using their sleds." He goes on to explain that if "Rangers really cared about their communities, they would just go out and get it done on their own accord and not expect money." In his mind, Indigenous people should not take economics into consideration and should, as he put it, "care about their communities like they used to." Like Seminoles, Indigenous Rangers who were seen as benefiting from economic opportunities were viewed suspiciously. Indigenous people who desired or accumulated wealth were seen as taking advantage of the system.[48]

In the introduction of her book on the politics of recognition in Australia, Elizabeth Povinelli (2002), examines how capital ventures into mining as a way to alleviate poverty challenged Marriami and Marritjeban territorial rights and sovereignty. Using traditional land for personal gain–and not simply subsistence activities—is viewed as disingenuous. Poverty and suffering on Indian land is what makes Indian's Indian. Under colonialism, Indigenous people were partly defined by the absence of money and property (Cattelino 2008).

The most common example of this argument is the decade-long fight by activists that seal hunting should only be using traditional means. In her award-winning documentary, *Angry Inuk* (2016) Arnaquq-Baril tells the story of the impact of the seal ban on Inuit communities who rely on sealing for both personal substance and to sell. Throughout her film, Arnaquq-Baril follows

[47] All the requests were denied by Joint Task Force North (JTFN), not 1 CRPG. In conversations with Rangers after the fact, many of them expressed confusion as to why these requests were denied. They were under the impression that community support was their primary mandate and were confused when the Halmet's requests for aid were denied. I believe that this confusion was partly due to a change in the commanding officer (CO) in July of 2020. The incoming CO was adamantly against the organization's historic role in local, community service. Under his command, the mandate of the unit shifted away from community support to being an asset for the regular force to us as guides and scouts during training in the arctic and sub-arctic.

[48] This follows a similar argument as one posed by theories of settler colonial dispossession. Following critical Indigenous studies scholars (Coulthard; Barker; Byrd; A. Simpson; Goeman; L. B. Simpson) Robert Nichols (2018) argues that the accusation that indigenous people hold a contradictory claim (that land was stolen but also that no one has rights over land) produces a recursive logic of settler colonial dispossession.

how misunderstandings and misrepresentations of sealing by white, southern Canadian, and international organizations (Greenpeace, IFAW, and the Humane Society among others) spread false information about seal hunting and the impacts it has on communities. This came through when a law was adopted in the early 2000s citing that Inuit could now hunt seals for food and for their own use but could not sell sealskin products. Arnaquq-Baril and lawyer/activist Aaju Peter


Community in Nunavut
Photo by researcher

continuously try to demonstrate that the inability to sell sealskin products has devastating effects on communities. By not allowing the sale of sealskin, the Inuit became excluded from the international monetary economy. Therefore, this imposition of settler colonial laws undermines their ancestral rights, and their ability to prosper economically and hinders contemporary understandings of Inuit life and culture. The adaption of colonial law to influence hunting and fishing has created a distinction between subsistence and commercial harvesting meant to maintain colonial control under the gist of protecting endangered species: "The question is not *if* endangered species should be protected, but *how* it should be done" (Dahl 1989: 40).

This narrative is simultaneously paired with the idea that Indigenous people are the makers of their own poverty. After 3 years in the unit, Mitch is finally able to attend his first

patrol. Because he is an officer, he rarely gets the chance to go out to communities. In preparing for his trip, Mitch tells me that he wants to understand why things are so difficult in the north. Upon arriving in the small Baffin community, Mitch begins talking to Rangers and community members. Overhearing many of these conversations, it became obvious to me that Mitch began his "investigation" with the original premise that the difficulty, poverty, and suffering he was seeing (or even just assuming) was made by the locals. Sitting with a group of middle-aged men, I overhear Mitch turn the conversation toward issues of drugs, alcohol, violence, and suicide in the community. As Mitch explains, in his opinion, the societal issues their community faced were directly linked to a lack of ambition to join capitalism. If they would just become entrepreneurs and become capitalists, they could solve these problems. For Mitch, the economic disparity was a matter of personal failings and not social, political, or economic policies.

Like the university setting that Carol Schick criticizes, these internal policies create a space that "functions in ways that privilege whiteness" where "whiteness persists as what is worth knowing and as an identification worth performing" (2002: 100). Belonging in this space is conditioned on performing to a predetermined standard that inherently privileges the white, wealthy members and potential recruits. In her chapter on her family's privileged positionality as white settlers, S.J. Adrienna Joyce explores how national narratives of belonging, based on race, shaped her family's benefits from land policies that actively dispossessed Indigenous people and restricted Black or Asian land access. Their success was viewed as a result of work ethics, while completely erasing the white skin privilege that became the foundation for her family's generational wealth (Joyce 2022). Like Joyce's family, the merits these Rangers associate with being good Rangers become part of the "myths of meritocracy" which remove one's social position from consideration of their upward mobility.

Criticizing this very logic, "if", as Aileen Moreton-Robinson articulates, "Indigenous people behave properly as good citizens, then their poverty would disappear" (2015: 172). Similar to Indigenous people's overrepresentation in the justice system or suffering from addiction, their poverty is not attributed to colonialism (Razack 2015; Povinelli 2002; Cunneen 2006). His understanding completely disregarded the politics of dispossession and the continued effects of settler colonialism on Indigenous people in Canada (Coulthard 2014; Alfred 2009; Moreton-Robinson 2015). To support this claim, Mitch tells me about his own childhood poverty and his subsequent wealth created through entrepreneurial endeavors. Mitch strictly associates his current wealth with his ambition and his ability to make the right decisions for himself and his family. In her article describing her life growing up in a middle-class, white settler family, Sheelah Mclean (2018) examines how colonial policies and myths framed economic inequality as the outcome of personal merit and not oppressive practices. Success is simply a matter of good instinct and the desire to work (Rusu 2018; Weber 1992). This all becomes part of the colonial scripts "that frame Indigeneity as inferior while simultaneously constructing white settler identity as superior, effectively naturalizing settler colonial power" (Gebhard, Mclean, and St. Denis 2022: 8). While Indigenous people should be able to overcome poverty, they must do so in ways that don't challenge colonial assumptions about Indigenous wealth. For example, Inuit who seal hunt simply for profit are at best, greedy, at worse, no longer seen as being truly Indigenous. However, their *inability* to overcome poverty is a personal failing and not a process of colonial oppression.

The Fallacy of Reinvesting

After three years of ethnographic fieldwork in over 20 communities, I came to understand this worldview as rooted in misconceptions about wealth across the north. Firstly, as Duhaine et al. (2017) articulate in their report on economic disparity across the circumpolar arctic, globalization has created even greater gaps between the economic structure, socioeconomic conditions, and social inequalities of the richest and poorest communities in the north.[49] Secondly, myths about Indigenous people in Canada perpetuate ideas that Indigenous people don't have the same traditional costs—eg. They don't pay taxes, they hunt and fish all their food and they're paid to live in the north.[50] All of this combines to tell Instructors that the money they give Rangers is disposable income. As one Instructor explained to me, Rangers should benefit from the opportunity the military is giving them. "If they were smart," he tells me, "they would use this EUR money and just buy more stuff that they can use to make money." Explaining it further, the Instructor tells me that if Rangers invest this money in gear, they can use it while on patrol, get EUR and they can use it for other subsistence activities that will also produce an income.

The fallacy of reinvestment is that the expectation that Rangers use their pay to reinvest in gear. When Rangers fail (or refuse) to do so, they are viewed as failing themselves. After returning from a patrol, one Instructor tells me that he gets frustrated when he returns to the same community year after year and the same people still don't have machines. "I know I came here and gave them thousands of dollars, how do they still not own a machine?" However, for some Rangers, these assumptions about someone's economic situation cause a lot of frustration. As

[49] As they demonstrate, with globalization comes a greater proportion of non-Indigenous people. This influx creates wealth. However, not everyone is a beneficiary of this wealth and misconceptions can be made about who has wealth.

[50] For more in-depth and thought-provoking debunking of common misconceptions about Indigenous people see Chelsea Vowel's book, *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Issues in Canada* (2016).

Mark explains it: “You know what’s frustrating? This idea that Instructors have come here and tell us that if we go out on one patrol, the machine basically pays for itself. Like where does that idea come from? Sure I make $2000 on a patrol, but I have bills to pay. By the time I’m done with everything, I may have a little bit left over. It’s ridiculous to think like that.” Andy, sitting close by and nods along with Mark as he tells me that he and his wife include Ranger pay into their yearly income and that money goes, first and foremost, to living expenses and isn’t just “fun money” or “gear money” as many Instructors assume. In another patrol that was dominated by non-Indigenous members, the only Indigenous member was routinely criticized by the patrol’s Instructor for never having “the right gear.” After being in the patrol for almost 20 years, she owned neither a snowmobile nor an ATV (meaning that she always had to borrow from another member). And while this never stopped her from coming on patrol, and giving money to another member, she was still considered a less valuable member.


Instructors on a ATV rented from a Ranger
Photo courtesy of CR

The fallacy that this kind of reinvestment is possible is so common among Rangers that it almost becomes an expectation. It’s only Peter’s second patrol so he tells me he’s still feeling out “how the whole thing works” and admits that he was surprised that Rangers even got paid for their gear. Laughing, he tells me that no one ever told him what EUR was until Michael “just dropped a bunch of money in my lap at the end of the last patrol”. Laughing at the memory, he

tells me that for him, being a Ranger just seemed like a cool part-time job but had no idea on his first patrol that he'd be going home with close to five thousand dollars because of all the gear he provided. After talking with Michael and older members, Peter tells me it makes sense that he reinvests the money into upgrading his gear. He rationalizes that most of the gear he uses in his personal life and the more gear he has, the more EUR he could get on the next patrol. And this isn't an uncommon plan.

Sitting on a cooler, I talk with Patrick, a young father from a small community along the Northwest Passage, about his motives for becoming a Ranger. He tells me that because he doesn't own a sled or boat it's extremely hard for him to get out on the land and he relies almost exclusively on social assistance for income. As a Ranger, Patrick hopes he can purchase his own sled or boat so he can go out on the land to hunt and fish and get more EUR on future patrols. In the 12-day patrol, he and his spouse will make close to 4000 dollars in pay, food allowance, and EUR. They tell me they want to put as much of it towards a sled as possible but admit that after paying off other debts and necessities not covered by their social assistance, they won't have much left over. After only being in their patrol a few years, they quickly understood that the only way to make substantial money is by already having money.[51] In reality, long-term savings are difficult to achieve if you're living paycheck to paycheck or on social assistance. Like the poor workers being pressured to invest their income that Viviana Zelizer (2017) writes about, once any money comes into the home, it is quickly used to purchase necessary items, and very little can be put towards savings or large purchases (like a snowmobile or a boat). Patrick is influenced by the external pressure that having gear makes him more valuable to his family, and the

[51] The idea of putting EUR money towards new equipment (which will in turn provide more EUR) is a common recruiting tool used by Instructors to highlight one of the major benefits of being a Ranger. However, as I will discuss throughout this entire chapter, the reality is much more complex. The assumption that using EUR money like this assumes an already established living wage and EUR is supplementary to that.

community, and the Organization. However, this is further compounded by the fact that because Patrick doesn't have much gear, he gets significantly less EUR. Therefore, while he originally joined the Organization because he was intrigued by the pay, he didn't realize that his lack of equipment would greatly hinder his ability to make a large income.

Unlike Peter, for Patrick, the money he makes in EUR isn't simply for 'new toys' but necessary for survival. Members, like him, who are missing equipment must either borrow it (oftentimes forfeiting the EUR payment to that individual), simply go without or miss the patrol entirely. This often means that the patrol in general has less gear, fewer spare parts, and less reliable equipment. When going out on the land, these things are often taken into consideration by the patrol and they limit what the patrol is capable of taking these things into consideration. Once again, this creates a polarity where patrols with wealthier members are viewed by Instructors as being more adventurous, more willing to take risks, and more willing to push their boundaries. But this rarely seems to take into account the inequality that exists across patrols.

In one patrol, almost every member I spoke with told me that all incoming members are vetted for what kind of gear they own. After asking almost a dozen members how much money potential Rangers should invest in their gear prior to joining, the answer hovered around thirty thousand dollars. With the intention that the majority of the money made on patrol would continue to be invested in the gear. While walking along the Yukon River, Riley explains it like this: "We expect people to have top-of-the-line gear. Sure, if your machine breaks down, that's one thing. But if it's a piece of shit and you got thirty people ready to go and your machine won't start because it's old, or whatever, yeah that's not okay. And it's probably going to piss people off." However, what becomes apparent is that there is no malice on the part of the Rangers who believe there should be a minimum financial investment to join. Simply, due to the high (at least

assumed) economic positionality of all the members, not investing in gear is seen as a choice and not a result of necessity. As Riley explains, almost all the members of the patrol come from high-paying government jobs or are self-employed.

[52] Because there is such a long waitlist for some of these wealthier patrols, many have created interesting ways to determine "who would be the best fit for the patrol." In the rare instances when a spot opens up in the patrol, the patrol spends a lot of time debating whether they allow someone to join. It took Jay years of attending every meeting without pay before he was officially made a member. To him, this was a sign of his dedication to wanting to be in the organization. He was willing to be in the patrol without getting anything in return. To him, those who aren't willing to make that sacrifice, aren't fit to join. However, like many of the internal policies established in the patrol to ensure incoming members have a specific caliber of gear before joining, this type of dedication comes with a certain amount of financial freedom. Being able to attend meetings and even patrols without payment isn't necessarily financially possible for a lot of people. Speaking to me privately after his first visit to the patrol, the new Instructor for the group admits that he's impressed by the dedication shown by recruits like Jay. Thinking back to one of my opening vignettes of Cody's frustration that Rangers in Nunavut won't work for free, that creates a situation where recruits like Jay are seen as being more dedicated and valuable to the Organization. As a member of some of the Yukon patrols explained to me, many people who come to the Yukon are not only seeking out lucrative employment but "a sense of adventure." This, they argue, is a huge draw into the patrol. However, while seeming benign,

[52] This has created an increase in the non-Indigenous population in the Yukon and especially in communities near the territorial capital of Whitehorse. This is caused by resource development and the increase of government and public administration jobs. Many of these positions are high paying jobs that attract qualified southerners to the north.

what this does is create an ideology where people who are not seeking out wealth from being a Ranger are somehow more *willing* to be there.

And the money they make on patrol is just "fun money" that some use to buy gear, toys or put away for vacation. Diana, who owns her own seasonal business in town, tells me that all her Ranger money goes back into her gear. "Yeah, you know, I'm lucky I'm in a position where I work my ass off during the summer and then I can put my Ranger money aside. I don't need it." In this specific patrol, none of the Rangers I'd spoken to consider this to be a barrier for others that may not be in the same economic position. As most of them explained it to me, individuals that weren't 'go-getters' probably wouldn't be attracted to the Rangers anyway. The Rangers, to them, isn't about money—it's about getting out on the land and utilizing bush skills. This is obviously much different than how Rangers in smaller, less economically prosperous communities talked about joining. Where money is a central part of what makes the Organization attractive.

However, the creation of a dichotomy where it's either one or the other–wanting to be on the land versus simply a means to make money–creates a moral division where those like Diana, Riley, and Peter, who are willing to do the work and seem to care very little about the money, are viewed as being more valuable to the organization. Lacking gear was not only viewed as making the member less valuable to the organization but became part of a narrative that Indigenous poverty was a self-fulfilling prophecy. Instructors saw themselves as giving Indigenous Rangers every opportunity to achieve wealth, their assumed inability to accept the opportunities, or even frustratingly, reject them, reinforced colonial ideas that Indigenous people simply cannot make the right decisions. In their edited collection on helping professionals, Gebhard, Mclean and St. Denis (2022) show how these white saviors position themselves as benevolent help to

Indigenous people. Like the prisons, teachers, police, and medical staff meant to civilize Natives, Instructors become benevolent actors guiding Indigenous Rangers.

Two Instructors who'd both been in the unit for years and had traveled to almost every community across the region sum up our long conversation about money in patrols like this: "What makes a difference between all the Rangers is what they get out of being a Ranger. In the NWT, it's money. How much money can they get?" Pointing at a small community in the south slave region, Liam tells me, "Here, they tell me that if I want people to come to Ranger meetings, I need to raffle off a plane ticket. If I make an incentive, they'll come. That's bullshit. That's not how this works. But here," sweeping his hand across Nunavut, "it's what they get out of going out. If there's a whale hunt, they ain't coming on patrol. But if they can get to go out [on patrol and], hunt, fish, learn stuff. They're in. And down in the Yukon, they want the prestige of being in the military, without doing the military stuff. The money isn't what's important. The money is just for fun." In a similar vein, Chris explains the differences in the territories like this: "In the Yukon, it's a boys club, they just want to go out and have fun. But further north, where they're poor, they need this shit, and this food, to fucking survive."

Economics of Traditional Days

After arriving in Qikiqtarjuaq at the height of their whale hunting season, Richard hoped that the draw of receiving their new rifles would mean that Rangers would opt to go on patrol instead of hunting. While in the past, this wouldn't necessarily cause conflict because the activities could take place at the same time, with the new "no traditional day mandate," Rangers had to pick. However, as Richard predicted, there was a massive turnout and after conducting

three days of classroom training, it was time to head out on the land and set up a firing range for the final live test.

Traveling across the small bay to where the community was originally established in the 40s before being relocated to its current position, we set up the targets 100 meters out, on the flattest part of the land. With only six Rangers firing at a time, the remaining dozen are left largely to their own devices, to hang out, chat, or eat until they're called up to shoot. It's a surprisingly warm day so late in the fall with a warm sun and light breeze. Taking advantage of the nice weather, most of us sit outside, chatting as we look out towards the water. For most of the morning, we can see a large commercial vessel making its way toward town and many of the Rangers speculate whether it's an uncharacteristically late barge coming in to deliver goods before the winter, or whether it's a commercial fishing boat—the former sparking joy and the latter eliciting a much more somber response. Our speculations are soon resolved when we see a dozen small local boats leave the communities' dock and head out towards what seems like pods of narwhal and belugas entering, and trapping themselves, in the bay. Sitting next to me, Seth tells me that the community didn't win any territorial tickets to harvest the belugas but that the narwhals were fair game for anyone to harvest. Seth tells me that the previous day the

Seal skin harvested by Rangers while on patrol in Nunavut
Photo by researcher

community got almost a dozen whales and the tusks could bring eighty to a hundred thousand dollars into the community

With this information in mind, while I was drawn to the magnificent spray from the belugas going ten feet in the air, the fishing boats (and my fellow spectators) were much more interested in the narwhals. A few Rangers seem agitated as they pass a pair of binoculars among themselves, yelling out directions to the boats even though it was clearly impossible for them to hear. After a while, someone has the idea to tune their radios to the local station where they can communicate with all the boats. However, as soon as we tune into the radio, we hear a rumor that a two-tusked whale was spotted, and the group seems to explode from the excitement of potentially seeing the hundred-thousand-dollar tusk.

Rangers begin talking among themselves about asking to leave the shore and join in the hunt, especially considering many of them had already finished the qualifying test and had no reason to remain on land—especially when their entire lives could be changed if they could simply get that two-tusked whale. After one Ranger bravely pitched the idea to Richard, he made it very clear that absolutely no Rangers would be allowed to attend the hunting. Standing in front of the group of disappointed Rangers, Richard explains that the unit (Dahl 1989) has discontinued the "traditional day" meaning that Ranger time was strictly meant for military-mandated training and no hunting or fishing would be taking place "on the Queen's time." Speaking with me later in the evening, Richard explains that since the traditional day was canceled, he never allows any "traditional skills" during his patrols. While he vaguely seems to acknowledge that the patrol was upset about not being allowed to hunt, he also doesn't seem too concerned when he just shrugs and states, "Come on. This is still the army. We need standards."

Richard goes on to explain that he doesn't understand why they're upset because they're making their daily rate and EUR to "just sit on the beach and shoot."

Instructors like Richard are the first to simultaneously criticize Rangers for *not* having the required traditional skills they deem necessary to be a successful Ranger, while also stating that traditional skills have no place in patrols. This division is delineated by who is benefiting from the activity. The narwhal hunting Richard denies was for the individual and the community. Jens Dahl, studying the relationship between industrial and commercial modes of production among Greenlandic Inuit, examines how certain forms of 'traditional' Inuit lifestyles–hunting and subsistence living–is viewed as being inherently incompatible with development. "These activities are traditional *because* they are outside an imaginary sphere of development and modernization" (1989: 24). The narwhal hunting, in Richard's eyes, did nothing to further Canada's sovereignty mission in the north and therefore, was not a skill that should be developed on Ranger time.

Ranger and Instructor preparing a boat for patrol
Photo by researcher

Conclusion

As I pointed out in the introduction of this chapter, the Ranger Organization is often applauded as a cost-effective way for the state to maintain a military presence in sparsely populated regions of the north. For many of the Instructors I spoke with, the cost-effectiveness of the organization was often cited as benefiting the individuals and the community. Arctic historian and Ranger specialist, Whitney Lackenbauer alludes to this point when he describes the income made by Rangers as supporting Indigenous economies. As he explains it, while the income made as a Ranger may seem small in comparison to the extremely high cost of living in the north, it goes a long way in some places."Although the influx of several thousand dollars into a community at the end of a Ranger patrol or military exercise might appear paltry, this Ranger pay can constitute a substantive part of an Indigenous economy that balances short-term paid labour with traditional harvesting activities, thus supporting a social economy that does not conform to Western models" (Lackenbauer 2019: 75). As Lackenbauer highlights, the income made through working as a Ranger has undeniable positive effects in the north. Using data from the Nunavut Harvesters Support program, David Natcher in his work in Davin Holen's chapter on the relationship between subsistence hunting and market participation highlights how subsistence activities are "a formidable constraint" that can cost an average of 200 CAD a weekend (2017: 103). As Natcher states this cost is prohibitive for low-income families who must use income towards other household costs (especially when the potential to catch something isn't guaranteed). However, the economic realities of settler colonialism in the north have created what Julia Christensen and Paul Andrews (2016) refer to as welfare colonialism.[53] In their chapter on homelessness in the Northwest Territories, Christensen and Andrews

[53] Coined by Robert Paine in his book chapter, "The Path to Welfare Colonialism" (1977), the term refers to the uneven political and economic life faced by Indigenous people.

demonstrate how the relationship established between Indigenous people and the state has created a dependency on the state for their basic needs. This dependency simultaneously becomes the basis for Indigenous citizenship into the state, and the cause of their denial of it. As Leanne Betasamosake Simpson highlights, this type of benevolent support works to further Indigenous dispossession while simultaneously blaming Indigenous people for the effects of this dispossession. "'Fixing' the 'social ills' without addressing the politics of land and body dispossession serves only to reinforce settler colonialism because it doesn't stop the system that causes the harm in the first place while also creating opportunity for neoliberalism to benevolently provide just enough ill-conceived programming and 'funding' to keep us in a constant state of crisis, which inevitably they market as our fault" (L. B. Simpson 2021: 42). Rangers who fail to 'reinvest' in gear that would support their work as Rangers are blamed for these 'social ills.'

Thinking that Ranger pay should be reinvested in this way puts the onus on individuals and not the state to change the social-economic reality of the north (Vowel 2016). Giving a presentation to a group of incoming commanding officers who could one-day command soldiers deploying in the north, one asked me why conditions were so bad in the north and why it was the responsibility of the state to save them from their self-made poverty. Aren't, as he pointed out, Indigenous people getting enough support? This question not only fails to account for the invisible infrastructure that makes life livable in the south but makes invisible the state-created conditions of poverty rampant through the north. And he is not alone in this type of thinking. In a report published by the "Canadian Center for Policy Alternative-Manitoba," Shauna MacKinnon (2013) argues that while Indigenous poverty in Canada is a "matter of basic social justice and human rights," it is also a concern for the Canadian economy with, "the Aboriginal population

will be a significant source of labour in Canada's future." Indigenous suffering isn't enough, it needs to also have economic consequences on the settler state in order for it to be deemed legitimate.

While this type of thinking about wealth, poverty and state assistance is a well-documented phenomenon that has been debunked repeatedly (Joyce 2022; S. Carter 2019; Sterzuk 2011; Vowel 2016), it obviously continues to permeate within the Ranger Organization, and the military at large, and has economic consequences for those who are labeled as poor and lazy.[54] When Dot, a Ranger responsible for running her local Junior Ranger Program, must cancel training because the kids (and sometimes even Rangers) don't have the gear to survive in the elements, the patrol gets coded as lazy or unreliable. Like Indigenous farmers who were given poor farmland, prevented from purchasing equipment and blocked from the market economy (S. Carter 2019; Toews 2018), poor Rangers are viewed by Instructors as being part of a self-fulfilling prophecy of inferiority (H. Carter 2022: 213).

Even patrols that focus on reinvesting are conditioned to do it in ways that benefit the state. After ending a patrol in the South Slave region, one of the longstanding members quit. Shocked, because after 12 days with him, he seemed extremely committed to the Organization, I ask what happened. Richard, the Instructor responsible for the patrol, tells me that during the final payout, William had told one of the members to submit 100 dollars of her EUR to the collective pot. While this had been a custom that had existed in the patrol since its inception, many of the new Indigenous members disagreed with the practice. When Nicole refused to pay and claimed that William had no control over her personal income, a shouting match ensued with William threatening to leave the patrol. According to him, having the fund was for the good of

[54] What becomes interesting about the dichotomy between patrols is that historical all-volunteer military forces have predominantly come from low-income and/or marginalized communities so the idea that military personnel in the 1 CRPG should be wealthy is uncommon (Bailey 2013; Scanlan 2014; Cowen 2008).

the patrol and he was frustrated that the incoming members were refusing to participate. When I asked Richard what he thought about the situation, he tells me he thinks the collective pot is a great idea. To him, those who didn't want to 'pay up' were greedy and didn't have the best for the patrol in mind. Nicole's 'self-interest' went against the unwritten ethos of the Organization.

Because the employment of Rangers is constructed in this goodwill narrative, it becomes part of a benevolent colonial mission to provide the illusion of financial support in the region. However, by investing only in individuals that the military deems 'worthy,' it further entrenches Indigenous people into a capitalist system that is predicated on a double bind of assimilation and needing to remain traditional. "By placing Indigenous peoples in a never-ending cycle of victimhood, and Canadians in a never-ending cycle of self-congratulatory saviourhood, while we both reinforce the structures of settler colonialism that set the terms for exploitation in the first place" (L. B. Simpson 2021: 80). Organizations like the Ranger organization masks the poverty experienced by Indigenous people, that is created, and continues to be perpetuated by the colonial state, by positioning it as aid.

Chapter Summary

Rangers in 1 CRPG are viewed as a critical part of the arctic defense strategy and a cheap and easy way to maintain arctic sovereignty, especially in predominantly Indigenous communities in the high arctic. Focusing on how Rangers and Instructors talk and think about the pay system, this chapter examines how the payment becomes part of a civilizing process meant to bring Indigenous people to a colonial standard of behaviour. Often talked about in terms of humanitarian aid by Instructors, chapter four examines how the money paid to Rangers and how they spend it, gets entangled with ideas of humanitarian aid. In doing this, this chapter examines

how this positionality of humanitarian erases the colonial economic relationship that is created between Indigenous people and the state in the organization. Challenging this, this chapter examines how framing pay as a form of humanitarianism, the cost-effectiveness of the organization was often viewed as benefiting the individuals and the community more than the state. This in term, gives the illusion that the organization's presence in the north exists to support northern communities and misrepresent the sovereignty and state-building project that is the foundation of the organization. This is compounded by Instructors' scrutiny of how Rangers spend their pay. By insisting that Rangers should reinvest their pay into gear that will further the state's mission, and applauding patrols that do this, it further demonstrates the fallacy that payment is more than a way to keep northerns (especially Indigenous northerns) invested–and accepting of–the military's expansion into the region.

CHAPTER SIX:

Introduction

In August 2022, the Canadian Rangers celebrated their 75th anniversary. 1 CRPG celebrated this milestone in Dawson City where the first patrol was established after the Second World War. Seventy-five years later, the organization's red sweaters are a common sight across all three northern territories. The Ranger Red sweater was a common social marker identifying you as a member of the organization. Throughout my time in the field, it wasn't uncommon for people to identify me as someone from headquarters. I was often mistaken for a journalist or photographer. While this caused issues in obtaining consent, it was also a beacon that drew strangers to me whenever I was in a community. It was often in these moments of misidentification that I learned a lot about how outsiders saw and thought about the organizations.

Before taking off with a group in the South Slave region, I'm sitting on top of our piled gear strapped down with a tarp and blue rope on top of a *qamutiik* waiting for the rest of the group. As I'm waiting, a young man walking past stops and asks me if I'm with the Rangers. I tell him I'm a researcher studying the unit and I am waiting for the group to show up. He starts inspecting my gear and tugging on all the ropes to ensure my stuff is securely tied down and proudly tells me he used to be a Ranger but was kicked when he got convicted of a drug charge. He asks me to jump down and begins shaking the mound under the blue tarp, a common practice I'd seen Rangers do to ensure stuff won't shift when we start traveling through trails. Nodding in approval he leans against the snowmobile and begins telling me stories about his time as a Ranger. As members of the patrol begin showing up with the sleds and *qamutiiks,* he asks me whether he could join the patrol again. He tells me that he is no longer smoking weed and says

that would make him a good Ranger again. I shrug, unsure what to say, and scan the small parking lot and look for the Instructor, David. I don't see him yet and I tell the man that if he's serious about joining, he should stop by our hotel in a few days and ask for an application.

As I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, the Ranger organization often sparked a competitive sense of citizenship. Being a Ranger guarantees that the individual passes all these administrative checks through a colonial bureaucratic system. In a sense, being a Ranger marks an acceptance into white, southern society and standards. Long service as a Ranger meant that, unlike the man I spoke with, the individual was able to go a long time under this colonial scrutiny and pass. In fact, Rangers with dozens of years of service were venerated. Even Instructors who met Rangers with thirty years of service often bragged that this individual was in "their patrol." This was especially true among Indigenous, male elders who existed as figureheads for ideal Rangers. Their assumed land skills along with their ability to integrate into the military institution made these types of Rangers practically and symbolically valuable to the organization. A key theme of this dissertation is to highlight how this admiration is restricted to how well Indigenous people, culture, and skills can work for state ambition.

Throughout this dissertation, I aim to understand where Rangers fit within the national sovereignty and military narrative. Traveling to dozens of communities and meeting hundreds of Rangers, a central question of this dissertation asks: how does the organization's link to Indigenous people and Indigenous identity become part of Canada's aspiration for arctic sovereignty? In doing this, I examine how the social imaginary of authentic indigeneity is constructed under a colonial creation made and perpetuated by the military. Focusing on the politicization of reconciliation and assimilation politics, I examine how the admiration and veneration of Indigenous knowledge, skills, and culture removes the political, social, economic,

and gendered power dynamics that have been established, and continue to permeate the state's relationship to Indigenous communities. Instead, using the Rangers as a case study, I explore how this admiration only exists when Indigenous people function to further the state's political agenda. Using key Indigenous studies thinkers, I show how Indigeneity that resists the state is vilified and othered. The effects of the vilification are seen through the exclusion of Indigenous people from accessing the benefits of the organization and being excluded from the national narrative of belonging holds Rangers to a higher standard of citizenship.

Social Exclusion as a Form of Power

It isn't uncommon for Instructors to tell me that Rangers are considered 'the best' members of a community. Their acceptance into the organization places them at a higher status than non-Rangers citizens. However, this plays out very differently between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Rangers. As I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, for Indigenous people, it becomes a moral separation. People who become Rangers are ethical and morally superior to their non-Ranger counterparts. They've been able to retain their traditional knowledge and skills while also learning to adapt to modernity and working within southern (colonial) systems. On the other hand, non-Indigenous people who become Rangers do not hold the same status of moral superiority but are simply viewed as being more adventurous than non-Rangers. This covert colonialism functions to hold Indigenous people to a standard they are expected to fail, while holding non-Indigenous people to a standard they can easily meet.

The assumption that there is no need to control non-Indigenous people through these administrative forms was evident when I traveled through the Yukon. The justification by non-Indigenous Rangers for the lack of Indigenous representation in their patrols is rooted in

racism that views Indigenous people (especially those living in larger cities) as incapable or unsuited for the position.

The increasingly strict demands on what type of person can join the Ranger Organization has become a form of self-/community policing where only individuals who adhere to southern socially acceptable standards can pass the background checks needed to join. Even internal to the Organization, the social capital that comes with being a Ranger goes a long way in many communities. After the new CPIC requirements[55] came into the unit, hundreds of Rangers were flagged as "red" meaning they are ineligible to carry a firearm. In the simplest sense, this meant that those Rangers could no longer be Rangers and the unit began a massive release process. In many communities, this meant that long-term and respected Rangers would be released without the patrol's knowledge or approval. What is interesting, is that while many patrols tell me they maintain hard lines for keeping individuals with criminal records out of patrols, the reality of this is much more complicated. For example, many members of a patrol along the Northwest Passage, who recruited Oliver (and I believe would fight 1 CRPG to keep him in the patrol), told me that they "don't allow bad people in their patrol." As one member explains to me on my first day there, "We don't want those people that cause trouble. We are careful not to let them in. Not that they really even ask." This stands in contradiction to the reality that multiple people, like Oliver, have been flagged for having criminal records and are very likely to be removed from the patrol by the administration.

Sitting with a group of Rangers late one evening after Oliver was told he couldn't receive a weapon, the group–all childhood friends– tell me that it's ridiculous and that Oliver was a great

[55] Canadian Police Information Center the military uses to conduct criminal record checks. Since issuing the new rifles, the military has mandated that all Rangers receive their CPIC in order to receive their new rifle. This new mandate caused a lot of problems for individuals who had past or current criminal records and many had to be released from the unit.

person and member of the patrol. Because the Instructor can't actually see the criminal charge and simply receives a list of Rangers not allowed to have a new rifle, the ambiguity about the criminal record causes even more confusion for the patrol. Angered, one member tells me that it should be the patrol's decision to decide whether someone would be dangerous to the group and not some "random piece of paper." These releases, hundreds over the course of the four years since the process began, have had devastating effects on patrols and individuals and in many ways became part of the colonial fabric meant to distinguish good and bad Indigenous people on behalf of the state (Cunneen 2020).

Snowmobile and qamutiik carrying Canadian and Ranger flag on the land.
Photo courtesy of J.J.

On the other hand, patrols with little to no Indigenous representation internal vet potential members through these standards before the military ever gets the chance to reject them. Sitting with Simon in the southern parts of the Yukon, I asked him the impact these releases have had on his patrol. Sitting on makeshift benches next to the group fire pit, Simon tells me that frankly, they don't have this problem. He explains that one of the biggest things he looks for when recruiting new Rangers is their standing in the community. Instead, as a patrol, he tells me they know "everyone's business in town" and make sure they internally police who joins: "We don't want people with criminal records. It looks bad on the community and the CAF." In a similar

vein, many of the colloquially termed "white patrols" explain that they have a very detailed internal vetting process to make sure "they don't get trouble." In spending time in these communities, it became very clear that there was a link between how these patrols understood the relationship between "good candidates" and Indigenous people.

Therefore, the exclusion of certain people from the organization is done first through the administrative placed on Rangers that inherently benefits non-Indigenous people living in the region and then secondly, through the exclusion from the financial, material, and social benefits that come with being a Ranger.

Jens Dahl's study, *Saqqaq: An Inuit Hunting Community in the Modern World,* demonstrates how Inuit communities get implicated within a neoliberal framework by becoming dependent on the state, and then how the state uses their existence and dependence as a core of state control in the region (2000). Since colonization, the Canadian state has systematically worked to make Inuit people increasingly dependent on the state, by discouraging/killing dog sleds, enforcing Western education, medicine, and language, and forcing them out of nomadic lifestyles. However, at the same time, the state provided few opportunities for employment, making Inuit people dependent on a system they could not afford to be part of. This created a host of social services across the arctic meant to help Inuit join the Canadian welfare state. These services became part of predatory accumulation[56] where the state extracts resources from

[56] Working from Marx's idea of primitive accumulation, Philippe Bourgois presents his idea on predatory accumulation as the idea that the neoliberal state causes systemic issues (eg. the global narcotics industry), but also sets up the systems to solve these issues (eg. the mobilization of taxpayer-funded public services) (Bourgois 2018: 293). While for Marx the model of primitive accumulation is about throwing peasants out, making them landless and forcing them to enter the labour force and be exploited. Bourgois takes this theory one step further where in predatory accumulation, they are no longer drafted as workers but rather, capital extract resources from people who do not have wage-labour resources. This is done through the creation of services used by poor people and which ultimately create money-making industries that the state can capitalize off of. In the arctic, a similar cycle of predatory accumulation is taking place. Settler colonialism was simultaneously working to erase Inuit ways of life (making Inuit peoples dependent on state assistance for food, housing, education and healthcare, etc), but also needed them as part of Canada's sovereignty mission.

individuals who, in the state's eyes, are resourceless. The Canadian Rangers are an example of this process.

Due to the extremely low levels of employment in the arctic, Canada positions the Ranger Organization as a lucrative opportunity for communities. Not only are Rangers highly paid, but they are provided with resources (such as food, gasoline and equipment) as part of their job. The Rangers use these resources to go out on the land, where, alongside hunting and fishing, they patrol the arctic and physically occupy space under Canadian sovereignty. The state could not benefit from the Inuit under capitalism in the traditional sense through modes of production and the Ranger Organization became a way for this relationship to happen. As one Instructor explained it; "the Rangers make an economy. It's a way for the government to give money, without just giving it." This "free hangout" idea has been present since the inception of the organization. Whitney Lackenbauer, in his chapter "Canada's Northern Defenders: Aboriginal Peoples in the Canadian Rangers, 1947-2005" traces how state officials talked about the organization. "[A policy-maker] wanted to make sure that rifle issued to [the Inuit] were not 'free handouts.' After all, a rifle was 'a major asset to an Eskimo and something he has to earn by hard work,' […] His underlying message: the federal government had to inculcate the Inuit with proper values to succeed in a capitalist world" (Lackenbauer 2011: 353). The Organization brings Indigenous people into its state-building project through financial incentives and then uses this participation as part of its sovereignty project.

Putting these Indigenous patrols in conversation with the wealthier, non-Indigenous patrol, colloquially referred to as 'the white patrols,' colonial imaginations about Indigenous people and wealth renders Indigenous people into categories of either greedy or less willing to act for the state than their non-Indigenous counterparts. The humanitarian undertones of the

process become part of a civilizing process meant to bring Indigenous people to a colonial standard of behaviour. Instructors become benevolent actors meant to bring economic and social prosperity to the north by giving people a mission and purpose. Employing Rangers, especially Indigenous Rangers in the high arctic, isolated communities allows the state to mask its colonial sovereignty mission under the guise of social welfare and Indigenous integration and pride in the Canadian state. Studying how Indigenous and non-Indigenous people understand their place and position in this process allows us to see how ideas of race, whiteness, and indigeneity are constructed from a colonial, military perspective.

Settler Colonialism and Canadian Rangers

Will was almost a caricature of the military when I met him. His quick, talkative, and assertive mannerisms demanded attention and after running into him in the office kitchen, I felt compelled to follow him to his office when he invited me in to "tell me the truth about Rangers." Sitting down, I felt intimidated as Will continued to stand only a few feet away and began using his hands to mold a pistol holster, repeatedly pulling out a gun to place it in the holster and feel the fit against his hip. At some point during this exchange, he must have noticed my obsessive attention to the gun. Laughing at my obvious discomfort, he tosses the gun and holster back into the gym bag stating, "Oh don't worry, it's just a fake gun" as he makes his way to his chair across the desk. Without skipping a beat, Will sits in his chair, leans back, relaxed, with his fingers interlaced behind his head. He speaks in a matter-of-fact tone as he sways back and forth, using his thumb to refer to the 1 CRPG patrol map hanging on the wall behind him and states: "You know, they're basically social workers." He tells me that for him the Ranger Organization is a social assistance program meant to keep people in arctic communities so Canada can

maintain its sovereign claim. Waving his hand across the map on the wall behind him, he states, "This isn't the army. These aren't soldiers. They're just an easy and relatively cheap way to maintain sovereignty." Laughing, he adds that it doesn't hurt that it also allows Canada to maintain the perception of positive Indigenous-state relations. As he explains it, using the Indigenous people who are already there as Rangers is a lot cheaper and a lot easier than actually posting "a bunch of green guys up there." Their lack of military training makes them illegitimate in his eyes, and by referring to Instructors as social workers, he implies that Rangers are people that need to be watched and controlled by the state. In our conversation, it became clear to me that Will was talking exclusively about Indigenous Rangers in the high arctic who he sees as being incapable of taking care of themselves, rendering to an infantilized state where Instructors can provide social and economic assistance. As our conversation shows, the Indigenous part of the organization only becomes valuable in the ways the state can benefit.

Rangers from across 1 CRPG on parade
Photo courtesy of J.J.

Throughout this dissertation, I examine how the admiration and veneration of Indigenous people and culture can function to mask the colonial undertones of an organization such as 1 CRPG. Through a lack of cultural awareness and training, colonialism is rendered as something

of the past, and the organization is placed within a discourse of reconciliation. In "Whither Settler Colonialism" Audra Simpson (2016) examines how explicit temporality is employed in former Prime Minister Stephen Harper's apology for the federal residential schools system in 2008 implying a moral position that places his government outside the actions of the past. Elizabeth Paquette describes this political ploy as "Distancing the oppression from any oppressor" (2020: 152). Placing my research within the historical and current context of colonialism and imperialism, my project demonstrates the real-time enactments of colonialism on the lives of members of 1 CPRG.

High Arctic Sovereignty Missions and the Future

The majority of this dissertation examined the interpersonal relationship between Rangers and Instructors as a way to understand how white, colonial ideology functions with 1 CRPG. My dissertations focused on the lived experiences of Rangers and Instructors as they interacted on the land, and through the administration of recruitment, paperwork, and money. It was only toward the end of my fieldwork that I was able to examine how these organizations fit into the larger military infrastructure. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I was never able to participate in the N-Series exercise until the end of my fieldwork. Operation Nunakput 2022 was


Helicopter landing at Observation Post during Op Nankuput
Photo taken by researcher

located in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, and brought almost two hundred southern reservists to the north for a two-week-long observation exercise in August of 2022. The operation was manned by the 4th Canadian Division Arctic Response Company Group (ARCG)[57] led by the Grey and Simcoe Foresters from southern Ontario. Their job is to monitor the region, increase the military's presence and reinforce security in the region in defense of Canadian national interest above the 60th parallel.

As these military operations continue to grow in size and scope, this project aimed to examine the benefits and consequences of this development on the military and local communities as they adapt to an increased military presence in these isolated and austere environments. In doing this, I wanted to examine how the military negotiates with First Nations government, territorial governments, and local Hamlet offices while planning and conducting large-scale military operations in the region. As I demonstrate through this dissertation, the military continues to use Indigenous knowledge and skills, but they do so in ways that continuously delegitimize these traditional skills. Rangers are consulted to act as guides but their knowledge seems to be considered secondary to military expertise. During Operation Nunakput, the operation's commanding officer gave me permission to travel by helicopter to visit the three operation posts the military had set up for the operation. Arriving at one, I find myself sitting with the patrol sergeant and I ask him what he thinks of the location. Jayden looks around the windy, rock-covered terrain and shrugs, "I've never been here before." Surprised, I ask why? Waving his in front of him, Jayden laughs and simply says, "Cause there's nothin' here. Windy. We don't come here. Nothing to hunt, nothing to fish." Looking at a map of the region later that night, I realize the location was placed on a rock-covered island off the coast. As Jayden

[57] ARCG is a volunteer group of approximately 150 military reservists who are called upon to serve in national operations in the Canadian Arctic. There are four ARCG groups in Canada, one for each division of the CAF. Each year an ARCG from a different division is called up to lead the N-Series operation.

continued to explain to me, no animals or vegetation grew on the island and there was no reason for anyone in the community to travel there. Self-conscious that I'm about to ask a stupid question, I look over my shoulder to make sure no one is listening, and I ask Jayden, "So, why are we here?" Jayden is quiet for a moment, rolling a few tiny stones he'd picked up in his hand, and as he tosses the stones in the direction of the water, shrugs again and simply says, "Good looking spot I guess."

In an interview with the commanding officer, he assured me that Rangers, and local expertise, is always consulted when conducting operations. And while it was true that Rangers were responsible for ensuring the troops could safely navigate to the region, their expertise is only valued when it aligns with the military's desires. The fact that the locations chosen for the operation were inhospitality, barren, and rarely traveled came second to the fact that it was an ideal viewpoint to observe the Northwest Passage. Not only does this play into the fallacy that Indigenous people should simply know everything about the region, but it also has the potential to delegitimize Indigenous knowledge when they don't. If the future of arctic military infrastructure is training for, and conducting these large-scale operations, we can see through tracing all the ethnographic moments, the impact settler colonial ideology is having on how Indigenous traditional knowledge, people, and culture are valued by the state.

In doing this project, I wanted to study how the continued, sustained, and growing presence of a conventional military influence would shape how Ranger patrols are managed, administered, and valued. Concluding my research with the organization's place within the larger context of Canadian arctic sovereignty demonstrates how Canadian Rangers become literal and symbolic vehicles through which colonialism, in the name of Canadian sovereignty, is enacted. Masked behind ideas of reconciliation, social development, and economic prosperity, I examine

the colonial ideology of the organization, and the military at large, as the core apparatus through which Rangers exist. Ethnographic research about how non-Indigenous 1 CRPG personnel think and talk about Indigenous traditional knowledge, culture and skills co-op everyday acts of hunting, fishing, and traveling on the land into military practice.

Appendix A
List of 1 CRPG Ranger Patrols

The Aklavik Patrol	The Fort Smith Patrol	The Qikiqtarjuaq Patrol
The Arctic Bay Patrol	The Gameti Patrol	The Rankin Inlet Patrol
The Arviat Patrol	The Gjoa Haven Patrol	The Resolute Bay Patrol
The Atlin Patrol	The Grise Fiord Patrol	The Ross River Patrol
The Baker Lake Patrol	The Haines Junction Patrol	The Sachs Harbour Patrol
The Beaver Creek Patrol	The Hay River Patrol	The Sambaa K'e Patrol
The Behchokǫ̀ Patrol	The Igloolik Patrol	The Sanikiluaq Patrol
The Cambridge Bay Patrol	The Inuvik Patrol	The Sanirajak (Hall Beach) Patrol
The Carcross Patrol	The Iqaluit Patrol	The Taloyoak Patrol
The Carmacks Patrol	The Kimmirut Patrol	The Tsiigehtchic Patrol
The Chesterfield Inlet Patrol	The Kinngait (Cape Dorset) Patrol	The Tuktoyaktuk Patrol
The Clyde River Patrol	The Kugaaruk Patrol	The Tulita Patrol
The Coral Harbour Patrol	The Kugluktuk Patrol	The Ulukhaktok Patrol
The Dawson City Patrol	The Lutsel K'e Patrol	The Watson Lake Patrol
The Deline Patrol	The Mayo Patrol	The Wekweti Patrol
The Faro Patrol	The Naujaat (Repulse Bay) Patrol	The Wha tì Patrol
The Fort Good Hope Patrol	The Old Crow Patrol	The Whale Cove Patrol
The Fort McPherson Patrol	The Pangnirtung Patrol	The Whitehorse Patrol
The Fort Providence Patrol	The Paulatuk Patrol	The Wiiliideh Patrol
The Fort Resolution Patrol	The Pelly Crossing Patrol	
The Fort Simpson Patrol	The Pond Inlet Patrol	

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