

ACTIVITY REPORT



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Reflections from the Inuit Studies Conference

Dr. Mathieu Landriault
NAADSN Postdoctoral Fellow

The workshop that I co-organized at the Inuit Studies Conference focused on how Inuit security assessments and perceptions were relayed in Canadian society, media and governments. It also focused on how Inuit perceptions about the evolving Arctic security environment were considered or not by Canadian decision-makers.

As such, the workshop focused on analyzing the partnership between Inuit people and the Canadian government in the Arctic, hence the challenge 4 of the network (defence of the Arctic). The objective was to evaluate if Inuit security assessments were relayed and shared by Canadian society and governments, and the type of threats that these Northern stakeholders perceived as relevant.

The workshop generated many key observations. First, it was noted that the last four years saw a greater inclusion of Inuit voices in key political institutions (elected representatives, parliamentary committees). Jean-François Savard and Emmanuel Saël noted that parliamentary committees had a more refined and complex understanding of the Arctic security environment than before 2015. Mathieu Landriault also found that elected representatives, including many working on defence-related files, engaged more meaningfully with Inuit people and organizations than before the 2015 federal election. Both communications agreed that Inuit voices were more likely to list responses to environmental disasters and search-and-rescue missions as immediate challenges in the Canadian North.

For her part, Magali Vullierme presented field work results that highlighted that Rangers patrols were able to change the perception of Canadian Forces personnel on Inuit people and issues. Inter-personal relationships were credited for better engagement and more meaningful collaboration with Northern stakeholders.

Willow Scobie, Michael Delaunay and Julien Hocine all presented their findings on Inuit use of social media and the reactions Inuit people encountered on online platforms. They all agreed that social media can be a useful tool to disseminate Inuit perceptions of the Arctic security environment but that

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there were serious limitations to this type of initiative. Willow Scobie, for example, pointed out that Inuit women were intimidated online as part of is called “gendertrolling”.

The workshop allowed for emerging scholars, including 3 doctoral candidates (Michael Delaunay, Julien Hocine, and Emmanuel Saël) and 1 post-doctoral researcher (Magali Vullierme), alongside more senior scholars (Willow Scobie and Jean-François Savard).

Communications presented at the workshop will be part of a special issue in the peer-reviewed journal *The Northern Review*. The Northern review is an open-access publication so these findings will be available to the public and decision-makers alike.