

**Anishinaabeg Kinship Diplomacy and Animal Nations:  
A Critical Review of Political Leadership**

By

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## Abstract

In this thesis I argue that engagement with animal nations to remake the world is an embedded practice of Anishinaabeg stories. From the perspective of my survey of the Anishinaabeg resurgence literature I conclude that these sources point towards Anishinaabeg leaders renewing their engagement with animal nations as a potential route for re-establishing an Anishinaabeg-led grounded normativity across Anishinaabewaki. Within this analysis I foreground the role of the council form as the venue for interspecies communication and collaboration in both Anishinaabeg stories and the historical record. I relate Anishinaabeg stories to Anishinaabeg scholar's engagement with ethnohistorical literature on the clan system and the Midewiwin to situate the practice of council within the multipolar nature of the Anishinaabeg social formation. Lastly, I contextualize these practices within the embedded practices of a migratory kinship diplomacy.

**Keywords:** Anishinaabe, leadership, zagaswediwin, resurgence, governance, anthrozoology, Indigenous Diplomacy, ogimaawiwin, doodemag, clan system.

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*“Waynabozhoo managed to save himself by finding a large log floating in the vast expanse of water. In time, more and more animals joined him on the log. Floating aimlessly in the ocean of floodwater, Waynabozhoo decided that something must be done. He decided to dive down in the water and grab a handful of earth. Waynabozhoo dived down into the depths and was gone a very long time, returning without the earth. In turn, a number of animals – Loon, helldiver, turtle, otter, and mink – all tried and failed. Finally Zhaashkoonh (muskrat) tried. Zhaashkoonh was gone forever, and eventually floated to the surface, dead. Waynabozhoo picked the muskrat out of the water and found a handful of mud in Zhaashkoonh’s paw.*

*Mikinaag (turtle) volunteered to bear the weight of the earth on her back and Waynabozhoo placed the earth there. Waynabozhoo began to sing. The animals danced in a clockwise circular fashion and the winds blew, creating a huge and widening circle. Eventually, they created the huge island on which we live, North America.” – Edna Manitowabi<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> This version of the recreation story was found in Leanne Simpson’s *Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back* (2011, pp. 68-69)

# Introduction

When Elder Brother remade the world, he cooperated with the animals and the winds. It was a multispecies, or multi-national, project of collaboration. They remade life together through vision, song, and dance. Today there is a convergence of ecological imbalance with empire interrelating to put uncontrolled strain on the multiple life support systems of this world (Waziyatawin, 2012; Moore, 2015). It calls for remaking the world. Similarly, this convergence of imperialism and ecological crisis provides an opportunity to renew relationships. From my reading of treaties between the Anishinaabeg and the Crown as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, these documents provide the opportunity to exercise self-determination by rebuilding distinct political systems and would guide Zhaaganash to live as relatives/guests within these systems (Craft, 2014; Stark, 2010, 2012; Johnson, 2007; Borrows, 2010a, 2016; Williams, 1999; Hall, 1984; Miller, 2009).<sup>2</sup> These times have been foretold in the eighth fire prophecy.<sup>3</sup> If as Benton-Banai (1988) and Simpson (2008, 2011) argue at this moment we are living the transition from the Seventh to Eighth fire, the recreation story could hold a potential framework for Anishinaabeg resurgence and settlers' involvement in decolonization.

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<sup>2</sup> Zhaaganash means white person, but has roots in specifically referring to the British empire. It relates to speaking English. In this thesis it will mean Anglo-Canadian.

<sup>3</sup> The Eighth Fire Prophecy tells of how the Anishinaabeg left the eastern seas when they found out the settlers were coming. It tells of the coming crises and the eventual possibility of finding harmony and ecological balance by the settlers learning from Anishinaabeg peoples about how to relate to nature. The prophecy is embedded within the Midewiwin migration stories and structure Anishinaabeg identity (Benton-Banai, 1988; Simpson, 2008, 2011; Sinclair, 2013; Deleary, 1990).

Animals played such an important role in the recreation story, it gave me pause, and a big question came to mind. I asked myself, “what do contemporary Anishinaabeg authors have to say on how Anishinaabeg leaders could position animals, and all other-than-human nations, in the resurgence of Anishinaabeg governance and ultimately once again collaborate with them in the recreation of the world?” This question led to my central argument. I contend that according to Anishinaabeg stories, animals were once integral political kin and allies of the Anishinaabeg. Due to the imposition of the state form by the Canadian settler state this relationship has been disrupted. This thesis will explore how Anishinaabeg resurgence writers are calling for Animals to once again be integral parts of kinship diplomacy to achieve *mino-bimaadiziwin* in a post-colonial context focused on ecological balance.

I came to this conclusion by reading Anishinaabeg stories and their analysis by contemporary Anishinaabeg authors (Simpson, 2011, 2017; Stark, 2010, 2012; Sinclair, 2013; Doerfler, 2015; Borrows, 2002, 2010a, 2010b, 2016;), through a lens of grounded normativity provided by radical resurgence authors (Simpson, 2017; Coulthard, 2014; Alfred, 1999, 2005). These authors are pointing towards a process where Anishinaabeg leaders should consult with animals through ceremony, dreams, and observation to guide Anishinaabeg resurgence through redeveloping Anishinaabe governance grounded in Anishinaabewin.<sup>4</sup> This radical resurgence requires the Anishinaabeg to shapeshift, or

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<sup>4</sup> Anishinaabewin is a Anishinaabe specific form of grounded normativity defined by Leanne Simpson (2017), as Nishnaabewin, in relationship to her reading of Glen Coulthard’s (2014) book titled *Red Skin, White Masks* who coins the term grounded normativity. I will dive deeper into these terms in my theoretical framework. Grounded normativity is place-specific practice and relationships. Anishinaabewin is the intelligence required to exist in relationship to a specific place.

realign, to accommodate mino-bimaadiziwin for animal nations,<sup>5</sup> and all other-than-human nations, to continually remake life. It requires Anishinaabeg communities to leave behind the state form imposed by settlers and make political space for communication with animals.

In Chapter One, I define and bound my theoretical framework by arguing the role of shapeshifting in Anishinaabewin is an alternative to the state form that reflects a wider Indigenous paradigm of agency and flux. I outline how Anishinaabeg authors are centering story in their theoretical frameworks. I define grounded normativity within the context of radical resurgence theory as place-based engagement with creation, including animals. I demonstrate that Simpson's (2011, 2017) concepts of resurgence and Nishnaabewin are reflective of the wider literature on Anishinaabeg resurgence which focuses on other-than-human agency. Lastly, I ground these conceptualizations within the wider field of Indigenous spatial or place-thought which provide alternatives to the logic of the state.

In Chapter Two, I contend that Anishinaabeg stories show animals are essential allies and kin for the Anishinaabeg. I compare and analyze eleven published Anishinaabeg stories and link the themes and patterns that emerge from those stories to build a picture of how the Anishinaabeg conceptualize their relationship politically with animals within their tradition. In this chapter, I foreground that these Anishinaabeg stories, read with a resurgence lens, consistently involve animals in the creation and recreation of the Anishinaabeg world. For both animal nations and the Anishinaabeg they use councils; and

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<sup>5</sup> Mino-bimaadizwin means the good life or living life well. Simpson (2017) frames it as creative of more life through relationships.



these councils embody treaties. I argue that within the Anishinaabeg stories I analyzed animals are essential kin and allies in recreating the world.

In Chapters Three and Four, I argue the council form provides the model for kinship diplomacy with animals. I demonstrate that the literature does not clearly or explicitly identify which leaders make alliances with animals or in what institutions these alliances take place. But they do provide a human-to-human model to transpose onto human-to-animal politics. I demonstrate that aligning ethnohistory with Anishinaabeg stories requires moving outside the colonial lens of politics excluding nature. In Chapter Three, I argue that the ethnohistorical literature needs to broaden its understanding of who is a political leader in Anishinaabeg systems to accommodate Anishinaabeg alliances with animal nations contained in stories. To demonstrate this, I provide a literature review of Anishinaabeg scholars' engagement with ethnohistorical data on Anishinaabeg leadership roles. The literature portrays Anishinaabeg leadership as non-coercive and multipolar in nature. I define the leadership positions of Ogimaag, Gichi-Anishinaabeg, Gaagiigidowininni, and Mayosewininiwag. In this chapter I also outline the leadership selection processes that exists within the literature before the Indian Act. My literature review also provides clarity on the role of clans and families in defining leaders.

In Chapter Four, I contend that kinship diplomacy is institutionalized through the clan system and council form. My survey of the literature on the clan system clarified that councils, *zagaswediwin*,<sup>6</sup> were the institutional setting for the practices of *ogimaawiwin*<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> I use this word based on Basil Johnston's (1982) chapter "Zuguswediwin." Nichols and Nyholm (1995) also have related terms of *zagaswe'iwe* which they define as to give a council or ceremony. *Zagaswe'* by itself means to share a smoke with someone especially in a pipe ceremony (pp. 121). In the context of this thesis, *zagaswediwin* means the relational practice of council as treaty defined by my reading of Anishinaabeg sources (Stark, 2010; Craft, 2014; Witgen, 2012; Innes, 2013; Doerfler, 2015; Simpson, 2011; Johnston, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> *Ogimaawiwin* is translated as the noun for leadership.

and were central to the *odoodemag*, clan system. Throughout the chapter I analyze the literature through the lens of Anishinaabeg stories. My argument is that the council form existed to allow constant renewal and realignment with the flux of creation. This response to flux was best reflected in its role in negotiating resources allotment and territorial use. I then demonstrate how the Anishinaabeg literature understands treaties as processes of council. I again argue there is a gap in ethnohistorical literature on Anishinaabe leaderships and the clan system on how animals are political in Anishinaabewin.

In Chapter Five, I argue the shake tent allows consensual communication with animals and therefore needs to be brought into discussions of politics. To make this contention, I survey literature on Anishinaabe religion and spirituality with the aim of demonstrating how the Midewiwin and Shake Tent ceremonies can be understood as practices of treaty with non-human nations, when viewed through the lens of resurgence thought and Anishinaabeg stories. This bridges the gap between stories and ethnohistory. I synthesize the literature on Anishinaabeg conceptions of power and its relationship to *mino-bimaadiziwin*. I amplify how the literature documents that the shake tent allows communications with animal *Manidoog*. I also argue that the Midewiwin institutionalizes the Anishinaabeg engagement with many plants nations and their *Manidoog* keepers to illustrate how this model can be used beyond human-to-animal relationships. I contend in this chapter that when applying a resurgence lens, to the literature, both the shake tent and Midewiwin can be understood as political from within an Anishinaabeg worldview because they are ceremonies and institutions of internationalism, or international relations.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> I am using international relations here to mean relationships between nations in the same fashion as Simpson (2017) who uses this term to mean relationships with human nations, but also all other nations, such as plants, animals, and other *Manidoog*.

Ultimately, this chapter locates a way to accomplish collective communication with animals in councils through the shake tent ceremony.

Lastly, I conclude by arguing that the literature shows that one route the Anishinaabeg and allied settlers could take to re-establish mino-bimaadiziwin and fulfill the eighth fire prophecy is to let animal nations once again guide political development. Through multispecies practices of zagaswediwin, the relationships between the Anishinaabeg and the settlers could be transformed to find continual balance with animal nations. Ultimately, the council and its associated multispecies practices are an alternative to the state form and western science. They could provide a model to wider communication with Manidoog.

This is a significant question not only for Indigenous studies but also represents an emerging question amongst Zhaaganash and Gichi-Mookomaanag scholars as well who are grappling with how to relate Western culture to nature in the context of the ecological crises of biodiversity loss and climate change (Foster, Clark, and York, 2011; Moore, 2015, 2016).<sup>9</sup> Many of these scholars are asking how to bring animals into politics (Haraway, 2016; Latour, 2004; Kymlicka and Donaldson, 2016). I infer from a review of the literature that the Anishinaabeg already have one of the answers through pre-existing practices of Anishinaabewin and international relations. This thesis points towards replacing the state form with the council form as a way to get closer to the eighth fire by returning to practices of consensual communication with animals.

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<sup>9</sup> Gichi-Mookomaanag is the name for Americans. In Anishinaabmowin it refers to the big knives (swords) that the cavalry used to carry.

## Positionality and Methodology

Before we go much further it is important for me to introduce myself, so you know the writer and where I come from. Alexander Douglas Paterson nindizhinikaaz, Waawaate indigo. Gaawiin nindayaawaasii nindoodem. Nindoonji oodena Toronto, Ontario. I have always lived in Anishinaabewaki. I have lived in Toronto, Orangeville, and Sudbury. Today I live in Winnipeg, which is in Treaty One. I was adopted by Zhaaganashag and don't know my blood-family history, except for some distant links to settlers from the UK. My adopted father's line comes from Glasgow Scotland and settled in Toronto. Nishomis comes from the McLaren or wild boar clan of the Scottish Highlands, between Edinburgh and Glasgow, but we don't live those obligations anymore. My adoptive mother's Wemitigoozhiwag family invaded and settled in St Boniface in Treaty One, while her Ukrainian side settled North Battleford in Treaty Six. Those maternal grandparents married and moved to the north shore of *Gichigamiig* in Toronto by motorcycle in the dirty 30s looking for work as poor farm kids.<sup>10</sup> When I was a growing up, every spring, my family used to travel to a sugar bush for march break near Napanee in the lands shared by the Tyendinaga Mohawk and Michi Saagiig Nishinaabeg that was owned by a French and Wolastoqiyik family. It was not until I completed this research that I realized how meaningful that was as my small taste of a kinship-based seasonal cycle.

I have for the last seventeen years been a social justice activist, with the last eleven years spent directly interacting with Anishinaabeg communities and Indigenous-led movements through primarily environmental and climate activism but also other advocacy. My name was given to me by my friend Lionel Houston whose family comes from Sakgeeng

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<sup>10</sup> Margaret Noodin in her book *Bawaajimo* (2014, pp. 1) reveals that Anishinaabeg Elders she worked with called the entirety of the great lakes *Chigaming*, rather than naming individual lakes.

First Nation and is of the Turtle Clan. We met while I volunteered at Ka Ni Kanichihk in the Circle of Courage program, he was the project leader. I volunteered as a helper for his small sundance for two years and his sweat lodge over the course of seven years. Our relationship was based around the rebuilding of kinship relationships for at risk youth. Lionel was taught by Elder Stella Blackbird. For the last 4 years I was involved in building an environmental justice organization called Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition. Through that work I worked alongside Indigenous organizers in Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, 350.org, Indigenous Climate Action, Honour the Earth, the Indigenous Environmental Network, and the Tar Sands Treaty Alliance who opposed fossil fuel expansion. A lot of our work was amplifying Indigenous cosmology as a solution to ecological crisis. It is from these social movement and ceremonial relationships that I have a very small grounding in how Anishinaabeg ideas found in books play out in community. I am just learning. It is also to these relationships I am accountable for amplifying Indigenous cosmology as an alternative to capitalism and the clan system as an alternative to the state on Turtle Island.

My academic background is in anarchist and Marxist critical theories, this informed my research question and the way I understood the literature and colours my conception of the state. As an adopted child I am very interested in questions of belonging and adoption. This played into the appeal of studying kinship diplomacy and Anishinaabeg kinship. It informs my hope that we can all be family on turtle island. I have worked alongside Indigenous communities as an employee in non-profits focused on environmentalism and this commitment to searching for ecological balance shows up in my work.

I ask humbly for you to *pebekaaninitaawishin*.<sup>11</sup> As Haraway (1988) argues situated knowledges are where we can find accountable objectivities. She argues we need to be humble about the limitations of our vision. When doing research as a Zhaaganash that supports an Indigenist perspective, it is paramount to prioritize engagement with Indigenous voices, since they have access to situated knowledge that I do not. Wilson (2008) argues that relational accountability is central to Indigenous research. I did not receive any research scholarships to complete my thesis. Therefore, my supervisor advised me not to do in community research and I agreed I did not have the required relationships to do ethical in-community research. Nor did I have the money to be able to travel to communities to do my research. I therefore chose to conduct a literature review using Anishinaabeg theory as my frame. These methods are not ideal for Indigenous research. Nonetheless, I do think rigorous study of written Anishinaabeg sources, framed by Anishinaabeg theory, has important contributions to make to the resurgence of Anishinaabeg politics and the decolonization of Turtle Island. I centre my work on the Anishinaabeg peoples' epistemology (Kovach, 2009). I hope that this thesis serves to demonstrate this. What feminist standpoint theory asks of us is to have the intellectual humility to acknowledge these are at best partial truths based on translation between situated perspectives. I also have the humility to be corrected by community validation, Indigenous knowledge holders, and Anishinaabeg authors in the future.

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<sup>11</sup> I was taught this word by Anishinaabeg Treaty 3 Elder Tobasonakwut Kinew-ban, in class, as something you say when speaking to a room of peoples to ask them for kindness and show them you are speaking with good intentions. Anything you say that is harmful is out of ignorance rather than malice. I use it here to express humility in my academic work.

This study is limited in its conclusions because none of the research findings were tested against unwritten oral history or traditional knowledge that may exist within Anishinaabeg communities concerning my research question. Moreover, no qualitative research or ethnographic observation was conducted to collect data on the extent to which traditional practices of Anishinaabewin are practiced in communities by leaders. Similarly, as there has been no in-community research, Anishinaabeg community members were not involved in creating my research questions. I hope the reader will understand my findings simply as hypotheses based on a review of the literature. They should be tested in future community research and through validation by Anishinaabe knowledge holders and with communities themselves if there is interest.

To be able to conduct this study without consulting elders, I decided I needed to understand who did the communicating with animals, where this communication took place, and how they did it. These answers required a dialogue between Anishinaabeg stories and ethnohistory. Neither set of written sources alone were able to answer my research question.

As a settler, who is coded as a white man, conducting work on Indigenous worldviews, the charge of appropriation is relevant to my work. It is true that many Indigenous peoples may have come to these conclusions or that elders have been pointing the way for a long time. However, I did not know this until I completed my research. This thesis represents an earnest expression of my intellectual journey. I am aware of the danger of my being positioned as an expert on Anishinaabeg politics and will actively make sure I reject this positioning by ensuring I make space for Anishinaabeg people to speak for themselves in my future research and advocacy. On the other hand, I am committed to

using what I have learned in this work to push forward an agenda of decolonization and anti-racism in settler spaces.

I identify authors who belong to a specific Indigenous nation to locate them in community. Whereas, I identify settlers simply as settlers . I place them in settler society. I do this so that the reader can be aware the positionality of the authors making claims about Anishinaabeg traditional practices or identity. I want to make it easy to identify the Anishinaabeg authors speaking about their own communities. I also want to make it clear when an author is speaking as an outsider. What is consequential is point to authors who are claiming Indigenous identity and those who are not. It is not meant the make settler a pedagogical pejorative.

## **1. Aadizookaanag, Biskaabiiyang, zhigo Anishinaabewin**

In this chapter, I argue shapeshifting is an embedded practice of Anishinaabewin and it is an alternative to the state form that reflects a wider Indigenous paradigm of responding to a world filled with agency and in constant flux. My argument and research will be framed within three main contentions based on my reading of the literature. Firstly, I agree with the contention of Anishinaabeg resurgence scholars that Anishinaabeg studies going forward encourages scholars to work with *aadizookaanag* as a conceptual framework to analyze Anishinaabeg practices and worldviews. Secondly, that according to Simpson (2008, 2011, 2017), Coulthard (2014), and Alfred (2005) resurgence is a process of self-recognition and decolonization based in re-establishing place-based knowledge systems and political practices with a focus on sustaining and making life for all animate



beings. Lastly, that according to Simpson (2017), Doerfler (2015), and Watts (2013) place-based systems and the practices of Anishinaabewin that flow from them are the basis of sovereignty for the Anishinaabeg.

This place-based engagement is what defines Indigenous approaches to inquiry and political development (Simpson, 2014, 2017; Watts, 2013; Ladner, 2001, 2003; Henderson, 2000a, 2000b; Coulthard, 2014; Coulthard and Simpson, 2016; Deloria, 2013). Ultimately my argument based on those three claims is that Anishinaabewin can be defined as engaging with all nations, human or otherwise, within a place to promote the renewal of *mino-bimaadiziwin*. This can only happen by transforming in response to flux. This is an alternative to the state form which attempts to stay static or promote perpetual and linear growth.

This practice of transformation to flux is embedded in story. With that in mind, I begin both my theoretical framework and literature reviews by engaging with Anishinaabeg stories. I then relate stories to other academic work on the Anishinaabeg. Over the last twenty years Indigenous studies has been transformed by the return of the Anishinaabeg voice producing theory grounded in Indigenous worldviews. Paradigms for engaging in Indigenist research have transformed the research landscape (Wilson, 2008). Ethical commitments in the discipline require a commitment to promoting peoplehood, centering stories, and producing research useful to communities (Holm, Pearson, and Chavis, 2003; Sinclair, Stark, Doerfler, 2013; Kovach, 2009; Pitawanakwat, 2009). With these developments in mind, I wanted to make sure I framed my work from within Anishinaabeg worldview as much as I can from my positionality as a Zhaaganash. Language, community connection, and experience limit my ability to reflect

Anishinaabewin. Thus, I have used Anishinaabeg scholars to bound my theoretical framework. I reference non-Anishinaabeg, but Indigenous, scholars when it serves to make comparisons or clarify themes that transcend Anishinaabeg thought and represent Indigenous-centred continental worldviews and practices. I reference non-Indigenous scholars to situate the Indigenous scholars in relationship to others. I also reference non-Indigenous scholars who provide complementary analysis to the Anishinaabeg scholars and their research fits within this Anishinaabeg framework.

## 1.1 Returning to the Aadizookaanag

“We create and recreate ourselves in the past, present, and future in story. The power of stories cannot be measured. The relationship between past, present, and future cannot be separated; it is unbreakable and calls to mind the ways in which familial relationships intertwine individuals together in enduring ways across time and space.” Jill Doerfler (2015, pp. ix) *Those Who Belong: Identity, Family, Blood, and Citizenship among the White Earth Anishinaabeg*.

In this section, I argue, in support of Anishinaabeg resurgence authors who contend, that story is central to understanding Indigenous worldviews. I use this argument as the basis for establishing the utility of my later claim that according to Anishinaabeg aadizookaanag animals are integral allies of Anishinaabeg. Establishing this as a suitable premise allows me to establish the resurgence of relationships with animals as a valid endeavour.

Anishinaabeg and Nehiyawak authors, and their allies, have been realigning story to be central to our academic understanding of their peoples’ shared conceptions of nationhood and kinship. Doerfler (2015), Sinclair (2013), Simpson (2011), Borrows (2010a; 2010b), Vizenor (1984), Innes (2013), and Bohaker (2006) all argue for the foundational role of story in analysis of Anishinaabeg being in the world and resurgence.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011), Nishnaabekwe of Michi Saagiig Nishinaabeg and Alderville First Nation in Ontario, argues that creation stories provide the theoretical framework for developing strategies of resurgence (pp. 32-33). Anishinaabekwe from White Earth Jill Doerfler (2015) and John Borrows, an Anishinaabeg Lawyer from Cape Croker First Nation, argues that creation stories are the medium for the preservation of sacred law within Indigenous legal traditions (2010b, pp 24-25). To Borrows, within an Anishinaabeg context all other forms of law are processes of engagement with the sacred law embedded in stories, dreams, and songs.

Likewise, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair (2013), an Anishinaabeg from St Peters Parish, argues that narrative is central to Anishinaabeg identity and social formation. Sinclair's analysis is firmly rooted in his interpretation of the creation story where all of creation comes from sound and thought, the vision of Gichi-Manidoo. Sinclair writes, "Speaking back to some of the anthropocentric and monotheistic trends that have purported to represent Indigenous words and expressions, many posit that breath, speech, and words form the basis for an animate, multi-communicative and community-centred universe." According to Sinclair (2013), Anishinaabeg model their cultural behaviour on the lessons embodied in the aadizookaanag, the grandfathers or sacred legends. In the creation story Gichi-Manidoo beholds a vision and creates the world. This model serves as the basis for all the ways the aadizookaanag embody a template for Anishinaabeg behaviour and political culture. Visions matter, and I will attempt to show throughout this thesis that multispecies councils matter because they come from the aadizookaanag of the Anishinaabeg and their cousins.

The work of Robert Alexander Innes, a Cree member of Cowessess First Nation, is an excellent bridge into the use of aadizookaanag in Anishinaabeg and Nehiyawak studies for analyzing political and social relationships within communities. Innes (2013) identifies that one should look at the narrative histories of the Anishinaabeg, Nehiyawak, Nakoda, and Métis to understand their material and cultural practices. In his book *Elder Brother and the Law of the People*, Innes (2013) argues that contemporary kinship on Cowessess First Nation, a mixed Anishinaabeg, Nehiyawak, Nakota, and Métis Indian Act band in Saskatchewan, is based on the origin stories and other sacred narratives of the peoples who make up the community.

Innes (2013) theorizes these sacred narratives have always regulated kinship throughout recorded history and are the basis for the development of multiethnic bands on the plains who composed the Iron Alliance. Innes (2013) identifies the Iron alliance as an early 1800s plains military alliance formed primarily between the Nehiyawak and the Nakoda, that also included Anishinaabeg and Metis bands (pp. 60). Innes posits that the tribe, as an anthropological category of analysis, leads to a false perception of the homogeneity of the ethnic and cultural character of Cowessess and other plains bands, both historically and in the contemporary setting. Innes (2013) writes:

A review of the literature dealing with the emergence of the Cree, Assiniboine, Saulteaux, and Métis peoples reveals assumptions, established patterns of interpretation, and competing explanations that serve the scholars' purpose, but do not accurately represent the lived experience of the people being examined. Specifically, the view of these groups as being distinctly bounded may facilitate the mapping of territories and movements, but it oversimplifies the interethnic relationships and essentializes the cultural groups. (pp. 58)

Instead, Innes argues that plains society was dynamic, complex, and fluid. Kinship at the band level played a foundational role in determining the political geography of the plains. Elder Brother stories and the cultural notion of transformation, or shapeshifting, played

central roles in the kinship politics of the Iron Alliance. Innes posits, “Aboriginal groups were multicultural because their customary laws allowed them the flexibility to include other people into their groups (pp. 70).” These laws came from the sacred narratives of Elder Brother. In the case of the Anishinaabeg the Elder Brother was Nanaboozhoo<sup>12</sup>.

Innes’ (2013) analysis aligns with the work of Michael Witgen (2012), a member of the Red Cliff Ojibwe, who argues shapeshifting was a central political value or theme of Anishinaabewaki in his study of 17<sup>th</sup> century Anishinaabeg politics. According to Witgen, the ability to transform relationships or political structures in response to circumstance was embodied in the figure of Nanaboozhoo (pp. 19). Metamorphosis was imbedded within the stories of Nanaboozhoo and contributed to shapeshifting being a central value of the Anishinaabeg and a constant political cycle.

Innes (2013) contends that scholars must study plains kinship within the context of sacred narrative such as Elder Brother stories (pp. 42). Only through understanding concepts such as shapeshifting can we understand the apparent fluidity of the Anishinaabeg. This is an argument is reflected by White Earth Anishinaabeg Gerald Vizenor (1984) when he teaches that:

Traditional tribal people imagine their social patterns and places on earth, whereas anthropologists and historians invent tribal cultures and end mythic time. The differences between tribal imagination and social scientific invention are determined in world views: imagination is a state of being, a measure of personal courage; the invention of cultures is a material achievement through objective methodologies. To imagine the world is to be in the world; to invent the world with academic predications is to separate human experiences from the world, a secular transcendence and denial of chance and mortalities. ... The Anishinaabeg have been invented by ethnocentric methodologists who wear the cloaks of missionaries, ethnologists, anthropologists, and historians. From Henry Rowe Schoolcraft to Edmund Jefferson Danziger the Anishinaabeg have been invented, separated from their imaginative recollections, which has allowed a material and linguistic colonization of tribal families. (pp. 27)

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<sup>12</sup> Nanaboozhoo is also referenced in the literature by many other names such as Nanabush, Waynabozhoo, and Wiiskechaak. In all these cases he represents the Elder Brother figure. They are all the same Manidoo or aadizookaanag.

I interpret Vizenor to be arguing that because western observers have detached their empirical or material studies from how the Anishinaabeg imagine the world, they create discrete and static objects of social analysis that do not reflect the social or cultural world these reified objects originate from. Moreover, Vizenor is suggesting that approaching who the Anishinaabeg are through linear time misses the core of who they are through story, an aspect of their culture which could be considered timeless, and certainly is by many active participants in Anishinaabeg community and ceremonial life. This mirrors Basil Johnston's critique of how most studies of the Anishinaabeg stick to material culture rather than dive deeply into the imaginative realm which would get to the heart of who a people are. Johnston (2013) argues to understand a people you must understand their stories (pp. 5).

I read Vizenor (1984) as pointing readers towards understanding that Anishinaabeg studies must start with story. If Anishinaabeg life is determined by story – and relating to dreams and songs - then to properly understand Anishinaabeg agency throughout history one should understand the stories, especially the aadizookaanag. To understand Anishinaabeg people one should dive deeply into how their stories imagined kinship as having very few boundaries that could not transform any being into a relative, whether it be an animal, human, or other person.

Innes' (2013) work on Elder Brother stories demonstrates how careful analysis of Anishinaabeg stories can open up different understandings of plains history, and he proves Vizenor's point that through missing Elder Brother stories, anthropologists invented the notions of tribes where instead there was a multiethnic and multilingual band-based social formation governed by a political system based on kinship and the sacred teaching of transformation, or shape-shifting. Both Witgen (2012) and Borrows (2016) place

transformation at the centre of Anishinaabeg embodied philosophy. In this reading the Anishinaabeg were doodemag who shared specific stories of relationship and kinship. This was fluid over time. Europeans missed the role of clans and kinship in most facets of Anishinaabeg life, especially story and politics. Consequently, they missed the heart of Anishinaabeg imagination and conceptions of nationhood (Stark, 2012). Due to European scholars missing the central role story played in Anishinaabeg culture and law they missed how story structured kinship patterns and therefore they missed how kinship structured Anishinaabewin and the practices of leadership that are involved in this way of life. It would be like missing how labour and wage relations structure capitalism or representation structured liberal democracy in a study of contemporary Canada.

Put differently, Innes (2013) argues much like Borrows (2010b), Sinclair (2013), and Simpson (2011) that Anishinaabeg identity and politics is socially constructed primarily through applying sacred narrative to the physical world. In the case of Innes (2013) he is even arguing that sometimes band members are applying sacred law, even if they don't know it. While culture does change to fit new contexts, the stories which form the nucleus of Anishinaabeg identity, the aadizookaanag, are still central to Anishinaabeg kinship, and therefore central to Anishinaabeg politics because kinship determined their distinct political system. Innes' (2013) study demonstrates how habits of kinship formed over centuries, even millennia, continue to structure familial and community life, but also political life. Centering stories of kinship relations and doodemag systems may offer the way out of subjugation and towards Anishinaabewin.

The stories peoples tell about our identities and our relationships to creation serve as important markers for understanding our identities. From an Anishinaabeg resurgence

perspective, the stories Anishinaabeg tell about their kinship with animals serves as an important frame from which to understand their empirical activity in relationship to animals and other peoples. Stories give meaning to relationships. I argue kinship and its stories framed the way international relations took place throughout Anishinaabewaki both with human nations and other than human nations. It is with this framework in mind that I will begin my later analysis with Anishinaabeg stories and apply them to reviews of ethnohistory produced by Anishinaabeg authors. It is from the stories that I will attempt to make explicit themes and values at play in Anishinaabeg international geopolitics. Once these are established I will apply them to ethnohistorical and ethnographic work on the Anishinaabeg in chapters Three through Five.

## **1.2 Resurgence and Grounded Normativity**

In this section, I argue radical resurgence is focused on developing culturally embedded place-based engagement with other-than-human person as a replacement for the settler-colonial system and its institutions. I contend that place-based engagement is embodied by the practice of Anishinaabeg shapeshifting. Shapeshifting is the alternative I provide to the state form. I contend radical resurgence should be the lens adopted for understanding how to renew relationships with animal nations.

For this thesis I will bound my use of resurgence as framed by Taiaiake Alfred (1999, 2005), Glen Coulthard (2014), and Leanne Simpson (2011, 2017). Alfred, a Kahnawá:ke Mohawk of the Rotinoshonni, in his work *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (2005), pushes readers to understand resurgence as a practice of freedom and creative rebuilding of Indigenous nationhood. His focus in *Wasáse* was on decolonizing the



thought patterns and toxic ways of interrelating that come from the colonial experience, especially the cognitive imperialism of residential schools, child welfare system, and Christianity. For Alfred, the psychological weight of colonialism was the linchpin in the social crises in Indigenous communities. Inherent in this process was a return to traditional ways of engaging with the world to rebuild nationhood and transform Indigenous nations' relationships with the Canadian state. For Alfred this process of resurgence was meant to involve a non-violent social movement to create spaces of freedom and a return to embodied traditional values. He asks us to understand his ideas as Anarcho-Indigenism as a conceptual starting point (pp. 45-46).

Alfred in his work contrasted the process of resurgence from the project of leaders engaged in *aboriginalism*. Alfred (2005) understands aboriginalism as:

The ideology and identity of assimilation, in which Onkwehonwe are manipulated by colonial myths into a submissive position and are told that by emulating white people they can gain acceptance and possibly even fulfilment within mainstream society. Many Onkwehonwe today embrace the label of "aboriginal", but this identity is a legal and social construction of the state, and it is disciplined by racialized violence and economic oppression to serve an agenda of silent surrender. The acceptance of being aboriginal is as powerful an assault on Onkwehonwe existences as any force of arms brought upon us by settler society. The integrationist and unchallenging aboriginal vision is designed to lead us to oblivion, as individual success in assimilating to the mainstream are celebrated, and our survival is defined strictly in terms of capitalist dogma and practical-minded individualist consumerism and complacency. (pp. 23)

As an outsider coming from a settler background, I'm not in an appropriate position to arbitrate which Indigenous people are or are not a proponent of aboriginalism. I will however amplify what radical resurgence authors write. Alfred (1999) in his critique of Native political elites focuses on Ovide Mercredi as an example of leaders involved with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) who act as agents of the settler state through processes of cooptation and cognitive imperialism. Applying Alfred to my argument at hand, I interpret his work to be arguing that solutions and pathways that integrate Indigenous nations into the Canadian state and capitalist economy do not allow space for a meaningful

revitalization of Anishinaabeg practices of governance or kinship, especially in terms of engagement with animal nations. Alfred's argument against aboriginalism draws from a history of native studies critique of capitalism and the overall excesses of western civilization (Adams, 1989, 1999; Forbes, 2008; Mohawk, 1995; Deloria, 2003; Little Bear, 2000). Mohawk (1995) and Deloria (2003) point towards a conflict between Indigenous worldviews and the contemporary western worldviews which have detached from their original instructions and focus on temporal progress rather than deep cyclical engagement with space and the patterns of creation.

In addition, Alfred's work makes the same argument as Fanon's (2005) and Adams (1989) specific critique of the mentalities of nationalist leadership from Third World Marxist critiques of imperialism that originates in national liberation struggles in the 1960s and 1970s of which the American Indian Movement was embedded. A decade later these themes of resurgence popularized by Alfred (1999, 2005) and Alfred and Corntassel (2005) as rebuilding nationhood and the rejection of aboriginalism as a rejection of capitalism are still key components of resurgence thought. Yellowknives Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2014) and Nishnaabekwe Leanne Simpson (2017) best embody the expression of these lineages of Indigenous anti-capitalism grounded in Indigenous cosmologies.

This connection ultimately leads to Glen Coulthard's (2014) larger engagement with Fanon's (2005, 2008) conceptions of recognition for the radical resurgent school. Coulthard's (2014) overall argument is that Indigenous peoples interested in resurgence must work towards self-recognizing their freedom and nationhood as expressions of local and nation-specific *grounded normativity* rather than build their political practice with the

goal of seeking recognition from the settler-colonial state. Coulthard elucidates his concept by stating:

Stated bluntly, the theory and practice of Indigenous anticolonialism, including Indigenous anticapitalism, is best understood as a struggle primarily inspired by and oriented around *the question of land* - a struggle not only *for* land in the material sense, but also deeply *informed* by what the land as *a system of reciprocal relations and obligations* can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in nondominating and nonexploitative terms-and less around our emergence as “rightless proletarians.” I call this place-based foundation of Indigenous decolonial thought and practice *grounded normativity*, by which I mean the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time. (2014, pp. 13)

I understand Coulthard to be arguing that place-based inquiry and relationships should determine Indigenous institutions and relationships rather than the goal of seeking integration with the liberal democratic and capitalist state or copying their institutional arrangements. This argument is of a direct lineage from the work of Alfred (1999, 2005) and Adams (1989) as a critique of Indigenous leadership within a colonial circumstance.

Coulthard (2014) argues that Indigenous resurgence theorists should reorient their analysis to the colonial relation instead of the capital relation, the relationship of exploitation between waged worker and capitalist. Broadly speaking, he argues that dispossession rather than wage exploitation characterizes the relationship between Indigenous nations and the Canadian state. Coulthard’s argument points in a similar direction to that of John Holloway (2002), who argues that critical theory has too often focused on the struggle of the already proletarianized worker as the revolutionary subject rather than understanding the fight is against being commodified and alienated in the first place. In other words, the object of critical theory is to resist being turned into the working class in the first place (pp. 140-147). When an Indigenous nation loses control of its land base and is forced to change its mode of life due to the policy of the Canadian state, that is dispossession and primitive accumulation. The process Coulthard (2014) outlines is

analogous to Kulchyski's (1992, 2005) marginalization as one of the inherent processes of totalization. What Coulthard adds that is unique is a critical theory grounding in Indigenous cosmology from a Dene perspective. He provides the bridge back into Indigenous thought.

Coulthard (2014) defines dispossession as the way the colonial state strips non-capitalist producers from their means of production and subsistence. Land that was once held under a different land tenure system is violent taken (pp. 7). Consequently, the original peoples often lose their traditional relationship to animals and plants in those territories. Coulthard, like Marx before him, argues it is primitive accumulation that lays the groundwork for the dominance of capitalist relations. This is because before being stripped of your land you have the means of autonomous subsistence. Primitive accumulation is the process of violently creating a class who needs to work for wages for subsistence because they are alienated from the land and their species being. It is also a process of creating new capital (Marx, 1967; 1988). This is the process, I argue, that disrupts the Anishinaabeg relationship to animal nations.

Coulthard (2014) further argues primitive accumulation is ongoing because Indigenous peoples still have landbases and participate in subsistence activity as well as maintain relationships with non-humans. Coulthard's strength is in his argument that in pursuit of recognition by the state, Indigenous nations are adopting practices and processes that will ultimately lead to the continued hegemony of the capitalist mode of life on their territories, rather than freedom and place-based knowledge systems or grounded normativities. This argument also builds on Fanon's (2005, 2008) work on the colonized person and the psycho-affective disorders created by power relations in colonial contexts. I agree and would further contend that as long as Indigenous peoples are forced by the

settler-state, or choose, to model themselves after the state form they will not be able to fully re-establish their political alliances with animals. Thus, settlers and Anishinaabeg will not be able to light the eighth fire. This is not meant to be taken as flippant or a judgement of Indigenous peoples. This is not meant to minimize the extent of state violence. If anything this is meant to locate the overwhelming force of policy in the state form. This will require both settlers and Indigenous peoples to organize against the ingrained patterns of settler society and overcomes the overwhelming oppressive policies of a state hell bent on erasure of Indigeneity. I just do not see away around it if resurgence is to be accomplished from a radical resurgence frame.

There are real pressures to make these constrained decisions. The Canadian state has used several types of land claim policies and processes that provide rights and autonomy to communities but still maintain federal sovereignty and Indigenous connection to the capitalist economy, thus Coulthard's (2014) critique of recognition politics. These processes include comprehensive land claims, specific land claims, and treaty land entitlement. Comprehensive claims generally lead to the most autonomy. Alcantara (2013) theorizes, through four case studies, using the lens of rational choice institutional framework, that the comprehensive claims processes have been successful when Indigenous actors convince the Canadian state that settlement is in their interest (pp. 5-8). Often this has required the establishment of certainty in the legal regime and extinguish future Aboriginal rights claims. In Alcantara's work he explicitly acknowledges the dominance of the Canadian state as a condition of the outcomes in his case studies. One could read from this that comprehensive land claims agreements are successful when the community doesn't push for sovereignty or try to reclaim land. Put differently, when they

decide, given the threat of even more loss of rights or lands that comes with the reality of Canadian imperialism (Kulchyski, 1999, 2005; Gordon, 2010; Klassen and Albo, 2013), the only way out of poverty and oppression is to be absorbed into the Canadian state and economy land claims are successful. Pasternak, Collis, and Dafnos (2013) argue that when land claim processes fail to secure the supremacy of the Canadian state and property regime or when they are resisted, the Canadian state uses force to crush resistance. They also argue the specific claims process has been engineered to not return land (pp. 71, 81). In short, the politics of recognition leads to dispossession. The goal is the end of the mode of life that is based on grounded normativity.

Coulthard's (2014) argument can be contrasted with settler commentators from the left and right who view Indigenous integration with the global capitalist economy and employment programs as the solution to the problems of what ails Indigenous communities and individuals (Flanagan, Alcantara, and Le Dressay, 2010; Loxley, 2010; Slowey, 2008; MacKinnon, 2015). They all see adopting a mode of life as close to the one associated with Canadian capitalism as essential to alleviating poverty for Indigenous communities, often by the provision of employment in industry or construction. What Coulthard's (2014) argument implies is that by focusing on employment and poverty these scholars miss the colonial relationship that caused poverty in the first place. They miss dispossession of land. Coulthard is arguing for a focus on land and relationships to place. Scholars focused on employment, while treating a symptom of dispossession, are arguing for the same thing as residential schools: proletarianization and adsorption. They do not attempt to transform settler society or eliminate it. They take the state form as a given. They miss the central role of shapeshifting in Anishinaabewin.

In the context of resurgence theory, the politics of recognition is today's aboriginalism. In the period of nativist revitalization movements, they would be known as accommodationists (Dowd, 1993). Resurgence is the rebuilding of nation-specific grounded normativities. It is not integration with the liberal-democratic capitalist state, or the creation of Indigenous states. Grounded normativity is the process of inquiry and engagement that will lead to Indigenous political structures specific to Indigenous homelands and the other peoples that live there. It could mean a contemporary clan system or something yet envisioned. It is not a specifically determined structure. It requires engagement with other-than-human nations to be envisioned. According to Coulthard, this is the solution to dispossession and assimilation, not integration. This rejection of integration or adoption into capitalism and the settler state or the modelling of nationhood in their image is what differentiates radical resurgence theory in Indigenous studies from other approaches to Indigenous nationhood and self-government. I agree with Coulthard.

### **Biskaabiiyang: The Resurgence of Anishinaabewin**

I argue that shapeshifting is the Anishinaabeg process that encapsulates the lessons of the radical resurgence perspective within Anishinaabewin. Shapeshifting also serves as an alternative to the permanent state. resurgence theory is being contextualized specifically within Anishinaabe values and worldviews. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson places emphasis on seeking resurgence in existing Anishinaabeg communities and in their processes of identity reclamation. Simpson (2011) deploys the concepts of *aanji maajitaawin*, or starting over, and *biskaabiiyang*, or new emergence, to understand the purpose of Anishinaabeg specific resurgences. Simpson contrasts these collective practices

of decolonization with *zhaaganashiiyaadizi*, “the process and description of living as a colonized or assimilated person” (pp. 52). In a contemporary context to be Zhaaganash is to be a mainstream Canadian and embody all the values that go along with that mode of life.

Simpson in her most recent work, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (2017), recounts the stories behind her previous books and articles to contextualize her work as radical resurgence. Simpson builds on Coulthard (2014)’s development of the concept of grounded normativity, and Audra Simpson’s (2014) concept of refusal, by arguing that grounded normativity is embedded within Anishinaabe-gikendaasowin and refuses recognition from the settler state. Simpson (2017) using her explicitly Kwe-based methodology goes as far as to argue that many Nanaboozhoo stories outline the dangers of having a capitalist appetite or adopting an extractivist mindset towards animals. She writes, “To me Nanabush embodies anticapitalism because the system of grounded normativity within which he exists demands nothing less. Capitalism cannot exist within grounded normativity (pp. 79).” She relates her earlier work on Biskaabiiyang to Coulthard’s work on grounded normativity.

She writes:

Biiskabiyang – the process of returning to ourselves, a reengagement with the things we have left behind, a reemergence, an unfolding from the inside out – is a concept, an individual and collective process of decolonization and resurgence. To me, it is the embodied processes as freedom. It is flight out of the structure of settler colonialism and into the processes and relationships of freedom and self-determination encoded and practiced within Nishnaabewin or grounded normativity. (Simpson, 2017, pp. 17)

From my understanding, Simpson is arguing that to obtain mino-bimaadiziwin, Anishinaabe communities can look within to their fleshy, culturally rooted, and lived processes of inquiry and relationship to the rest of creation rather than solely fixate on centering their relationship with settler society and subscribing to their epistemology.



Freedom is not going to come from outside constructs, but instead from the practices of self-determination that have always grounded Anishinaabe life within their landbases. Simpson (2017) contends that Nishnaabewin, or Anishinaabewin is, “all of the associated practices, knowledge, and ethics that make us Nishnaabeg and construct the Nishnaabeg world – is the closest thing to Coulthard’s grounded normativity. I use the term interchangeably with Nishinaabeg intelligence, like Coulthard, as a strategic intervention into how the colonial world and the academy position, construct, contain, and shrink Indigenous knowledge systems (pp. 23).” From my understanding, Anishinaabewin is a culturally embedded term that translates the Anishinaabeg literary use of transmotion, shapeshifting, sovereignty, or survivance into Anishinaabe political resurgence. It brings it into the flesh. It is the mentality that allows an alternative to the state form.

Anishinaabeg authors note similar concepts. For instance, Doerfler (2015) argues that sovereignty if it is to be used as all should be understood through the lens of motion applied by Vizenor. Doerfler writes,

While some have argued that Natives somehow become less authentic or real by changing, Vizenor indicates that, in fact, engaging in motion and transmotion is sovereignty. Motion inherently implies action, and thus the motion of sovereignty can be related as a series of actions. Sovereignty is something created through various endeavours, deeds, and acts - through motion. He further asserts, “Sovereignty is in the visions of transformation.” (2015, pp. xxx)

What Doerfler and Vizenor are getting at is that motion, change, and transformation are the practices of freedom. Within Anishinaabeg thought they are embedded values and processes inherent in the stories of Nanaboozhoo. These stories embed a lineage of shapeshifting as the expression of freedom within Anishinaabeg psychology.

Borrows’ (2016) concept of physical philosophy and mobility I interpret to be expressing the same role for sovereignty or shapeshifting as Doerfler (2015) and Simpson (2017) within Anishinaabewin. Borrows’ (2016) project is to develop a legal and political

philosophy that is eclectic and flexible. His main purpose is to create the political and legal context to allow the Anishinaabeg to exercise freedom once again in their relationships with other beings. He points to dead ends in the legal framework of the Canadian state that constrain Anishinaabeg freedom. His goal is to show how a grounded Indigenous *physical philosophy* can provide the framework for all peoples who become members of Anishinaabeg political communities. Grounding Borrows' development of physical philosophy and his perspective on tradition is the idea of transformation, mobility, or shape-shifting (2016, pp. 6-7). Borrows (2016) and Witgen (2012) both see the Anishinaabeg conception of transformation as coming from the stories of Nanaboozhoo, who constantly shape-shifts. Think of the story of the ducks when he turns himself into the white porcupine (Webkamigad, 2015). The ability to transform themselves to fit new circumstances, framed by the changing needs of their relationships to all animate beings, is central to Anishinaabeg thought and the entry point into engagement with the resurgence school's *self-conscious traditionalism* advocated by Alfred (1999). In the context of Canadian politics, Borrows (2016) argues the Anishinaabeg are often forced to show their timelessness or lack of change to gain recognition. The idea of shapeshifting is not supported by Canadian law or culture in its stereotypes of the noble savage or the dangerous savage. Indigenous peoples are stuck arguing over what is traditional mediated through Canadian law, rather than looking inside to find freedom.

Engaging further with the idea of shapeshifting, Borrows (2016) argues that traditions that are observed as timeless, or without change, and do not promote human freedom should be discarded for culturally grounded forms of action that do promote freedom, and for the Anishinaabeg: *mino-bimaadiziwin*, the good life. Borrows defines the

Anishinaabeg conception of the good life as having healthy interdependencies with human and non-human beings including, but not limited to: the stars, plants, animals, and insects. Freedom is embodied and practiced rather than being simply an abstract intellectual pursuit. For Borrows, this conception is found in the idea of *dibenindizowin*, “a person possesses liberty within themselves and their relationships” (2016, pp. 6). In other words, the person has control over the form, content, and spirit of their relationships with all beings, human and non-human. They have self-determination to shapeshift in response to the needs of their relationships.

Within the context of Anishinaabeg resurgence, shapeshifting is the practice of freedom. It is the freedom to change, the freedom to not be tied down or unchanging. To not be stuck or static. It is to not be forced to be timeless by another nation or a settler state. These are the components of Anishinaabewin that Anishinaabeg resurgence theorists are looking inward towards once again to put into practice. It is the way the settler state confines and prevents the Anishinaabeg’ ownership over their shapeshifting process that is central to their critique of colonialism. The state prevents self-determined motion. Resurgence is a return to inward self-determination. Aboriginalism or zhaaganashiiyaadizi is the political process of giving up self-determination and shapeshifting in exchange for recognition by the settler state. It forces the Anishinaabeg to adopt the state and capitalism as their final transformation on a developmentalist curve. As neoliberals might say it brings them to the end of history. It is allowing the Zhaaganash to dominate the web of life and set the terms for all relationships the Anishinaabeg hold dear.

Within the context of this thesis, I am attempting to amplify the signposts left by Anishinaabeg writers on how the process for the reemergence of a more balanced

governance system could look if the animal, and other non-human, nations were able to compel realignment and shapeshifting to the extent that the Zhaaganash do. I am attempting to reflect-back, after listening, what I have heard as the route towards the eighth fire. It is a form of academic listening to the teachings that the Settlers must learn to do their part by taking the noose off Anishinaabeg necks and beginning to listen and respond to flux in the transition to the Eighth fire.

### **1.3 Anishinaabewin: Shapeshifting with Flux**

I argue the idea of grounded normativity, and therefore Anishinaabewin, is reflective of a wider Indigenous paradigm found in the literature. This paradigm is not conducive to a permanent state. Coulthard (2014) and Simpson (2017) are not the only Indigenous authors who are pointing Indigenous nations, and settlers, towards place-based engagement with creation. The same embedded concepts of place and inquiry, as well as motion and flux, exist within the work of Kiera Ladner (2001, 2003) and many Elder scholars in Indigenous studies (Atleo, 2004, 2011; Battiste and Henderson, 2000; Cajete, 2000; Cordova, 2007; Deloria, 2003, 2006; Henderson 2000a, 2000b; Little Bear, 2000, 2012). Leroy Little Bear (2012) from the Blood Indian Reserve contends that Indigenous, “knowledge is about participation in and with the natural world.” Vine Deloria, Jr. of the Standing Rock Sioux in his work *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* (2003) argues that, “Indian tribal religions could be said to consider creation as an ecosystem present in a definable place (pp. 77).” Indigenous inquiry is about understanding relationships in these specific and bounded spaces (Cordova, 2007). Atleo’s (2004) practice of *oosumich* to explore *Tsawalk* is the Nuu-chah-nulth example of grounded normativity

specific to his land. I also understand this to be what Vanessa Watts (2013) calls *place-thought* in her work on ontology and epistemology. Thus, from this reading I understand that Anishinaabewin will be different in specific ecologies throughout Anishinaabewaki to the extent that different circumstances and doodemag require different alignment to their relatives, animal, human, or otherwise.

Grounded Normativity is best paralleled in the work of scholar Kiera Ladner (2001, 2003) who studies the Blackfoot through the lens of James Sakej Youngblood Henderson's paradigm of ecological contexts (2000a; 2000b). Henderson is a Chickasaw legal scholar who has spent a considerable amount of effort working alongside the Mi'kmaq. Henderson builds his analysis on the work of Brazilian social theorist Roberto Unger by deploying his concepts of artificial context and natural context to the relationship between Aboriginal and western worldviews. Henderson (2000a) argues that when the goal of inquiry is to rely on Aboriginal thought the processes used requires an orientation to learn from a specific ecosystem. Knowledge is specific to an ecosystem (pp. 253-257). According to Henderson the goal of the ecological contexts as a knowledge system is to guide realignment of one's relationships in response to the flux that happens between different realms or lodges of existence. Indigenous peoples attempt to regenerate stability through consensual relationships with the entities that make up a local ecology (2000a, pp. 258-261).

Ladner (2001, 2003) applies Henderson's (2000a) notion of ecological contexts of inquiry to the study of Indigenous political systems. For Ladner (2001) ecological context is the entire knowledge and experience created by millennia of observations and interaction of a people in a specific territory and its ecology. Her central example is to study the buffalo as a method to understand the *Siiksikaawa* (Blackfoot) governance system. Ladner (2003)

contends an ecological context of inquiry is how Indigenous peoples go about constructing right relations within a given territory with all beings. My argument is that Coulthard (2014) and Simpson (2017) are arguing that resurgence asks Indigenous peoples to do the same thing. What makes them different from Ladner is their explicit analysis that engagement with capitalism is an impediment to the ongoing perseverance of practices of grounded normativity. Ladner didn't use ecological context to study current political questions. Instead she used it to study the Blackfoot political system detached from the context of empire. To be fair Ladner was writing her work before the release of Alfred's (2005) *Wasáse* and the upswing in academic engagement with resurgence. But there is a definite difference in approach from Coulthard and Simpson, even if it comes from the same Indigenous paradigm.

On the other hand, Henderson (2000a), writing before Alfred (2005), argues that the state as a political form and kinship orders as political forms are from two different worldviews or paradigms. The state is an abstraction that is taken out of context and imposed on Indigenous peoples. Whereas kinship orders emerge from life within an ecological order (Henderson, 2000a, pp. 271). In the case of the 'politics of recognition,' Indigenous nations gain recognition from the settler state based on how well they model themselves on the reified abstraction of the state rather than on how well they remake life and renew their relationship with animal nations. This is because the state can be understood as a specific way of bundling or braiding relationships with non-human nations based on coercion and domestication (Parenti, 2014; 2016). Therefore, Coulthard (2014) bases his analysis in discussing *modes of life* in the context of relationship to land.

Henderson (2000b) argues that the abstraction of the state, used in Western liberalism, is based upon the context of the “state of nature,” imagined by Thomas Hobbes. According to Henderson, Hobbes argues a state is necessary to govern people because life without a state is “nasty, brutish, and short.” Henderson argues this is the prime assumption of modernity. Lumbee Nation legal scholar Robert A. Williams (2012) argues that the conceptions of the savage as opposed to the state and lawless goes back to the dawn of the west in the Greek civilization. This western story continues to frame western perceptions of Indigenous peoples. French Anthropologist Pierre Clastres (1987) argues that the western observer has always viewed Indigenous peoples as lacking a state and therefore politics. The assumption that Clastres criticized was that coercion was necessary for progress (pp. 189-197). Likewise, Kulchyski (1992) (2005) argues that the state, through the processes of totalization, attempts to absorb and marginalize all forms of human reality and place them under the domain of capitalist society through reproducing the state form. Central to this is eliminating other forms of politics, especially Indigenous traditions without coercion. In Kulchyski’s (2005) work the community council form was highlighted as different form from the state form.

Similarly, Ladner (2003) contends that the ecological context of inquiry is a practice of non-state Indigenous political traditions (pp. 130). I therefore argue that Simpson (2011, 2017) and Coulthard (2014) are providing the reader with examples of beginning to frame resurgence using the ecological context of inquiry from their specific nations: the Nishinaabeg and Yellowknives Dene, respectively. In other words, the practice of grounded normativity includes the ecological context of inquiry as a component of ethical engagement with nation-specific places. Put in Anishinaabeg terms, Anishinaabewin is

based on the ecological context of inquiry. Coulthard and Simpson go further with their analysis than Ladner by attempting to answer the question, “What must be done?” They answer it clearly that going forward resurgence means non-state and non-capitalist forms of Anishinaabeg engagement with the land. This engagement also applies to the nations who live alongside the Anishinaabeg as kin according to treaty. It is about shared engagement in Anishinaabewin in Anishinaabewaki.

### **Shapeshifting: Animacy, Agency, and the Flux of Creation**

I argue understanding the Indigenous conception of agency is essential to the resurgence of Anishinaabeg alliances with animal nations. Without an Anishinaabeg conception of agency the Anishinaabeg and settlers cannot renew alliances with animal nations. I argue that shapeshifting, is an alternative to the state, which embodies a treaty relationship to animal nations. Escaping the confines of the state form will allow shapeshifting as Anishinaabeg political praxis.

Embedded within grounded normativity and the ecological context of inquiry that makes up Anishinaabewin is an understanding of animacy and therefore agency that extends the concept of personhood beyond the human sphere. It collapses the nature/society binary. Henderson argued that the state of nature imagined by Hobbes created an artificial construct in opposition to nature: the state (2000b). In the paradigm of the state, only humans have personhood and political agency. Whereas in Henderson’s (2000a) and Ladner’s (2001; 2003) conception of Indigenous worldviews, who has agency or is considered a person can apply not only to animals, but potentially also plants, winds, mountains, and stars, etc. This concept of animacy is very different than the nature/society binary that structures capitalism. Capitalism is based on limiting the amount of living



beings able to have agency in society and puts them in nature, so they can be dispossessed of their work/ energies (Moore, 2003, 2011, 2015, 2016). I argue that Henderson's conception of agency is reflected in the work of Simpson (2017) and is the backbone of the concept of grounded normativity or Anishinaabewin.

In contrast, Anishinaabekwe Vanessa Watts (2013) in her work on *place-thought* posits that from an Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee perspective animals have societies and contribute to human society with their agency. Watts writes,

So, all elements of nature possess agency, and this agency is not limited to innate action or causal relationships. Thus, habitats and ecosystems are better understood as societies from an Indigenous point of view; meaning that they have ethical structures, inter-species treaties and agreements, and further their ability to interpret, understand and implement. Non-human beings are active members of society. Not only are they active, they also directly influence how humans organize themselves into that society. The very existence of clan systems evidences these many historical agreements between humans and non-humans. Clan systems vary from community to community and are largely dependent on the surrounding landscape. For example, whale clans are not present amongst Indigenous nations where there is no access to seawater. (2013, pp. 23)

Watts is pointing towards the link between political organization and agency that is central to Anishinaabewin, and grounded normativity in general. Relationships with animal nations precipitate shapeshifting for the Anishinaabeg. Watts argument combines threads present in the work anthropologist Hallowell (1942, 2010) who documents the concept of animacy on the ground in Berens River.<sup>13</sup>

When Coulthard (2014) discusses his concept of dispossession of land, it is not only material, but also the way the settler state dispossesses Indigenous peoples of their psychological or cultural recognition of other animals as beings who possess agency that is important to read in his work. Agency of non-humans is fundamental to grounded normativities. Shapeshifting within this paradigm is based on engagement with other

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<sup>13</sup> I will return to this in later chapters on Anishinaabeg religion and spirituality.

animate beings enacted their own agency. Shapeshifting comes from the requirements of treaty.

Borrows, in his work *Drawing Out Law: A Spirit's Guide* (2010b), provides a strong example of a work that centres the role of agency in specific places in Indigenous politics. His argument is that the reclamation of agency from the confines of the Indian Act, and its pursuit of termination, is central to the future of Indigenous politics. Within the surrounding story he tells, he creates an animate context on his home reserve for his intellectual work. For instance, the black dog Nag'anál'mot is a major character in the story who exercises agency throughout Cape Croker. Similarly, Mishomis ponders the agency of rocks in his home territory. He gazes at the rocks of the embankment that protect his community's ancestors, as well as his family's sacred teaching lodge and understands that as a treaty between shared animate peoples with agency. Ultimately, respecting agency of other peoples is the foundation of Borrows' intellectual intervention. This concept of agency and non-interference is at the heart of his argument for a physical philosophy of freedom and mobility (Borrows, 2016). It is an essential component of Anishinaabewin. Non-interference, or *anjigone*, is central to Simpson (2011) perspective on resurgence and is a bedrock of why she wants to focus within on self-recognition and nation-building. Borrows (2010a; 2010b; 2016) on the other hand is trying to transform Canadian settler colonial law to provide the space for Anishinaabeg shapeshifting.

Vine Deloria, Jr., in *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* (2003), situates agency and animacy spatially in his commentary on spaces of revelation. For Deloria (2003) Indigenous practices of revelation, which I understand as grounded normativity, place-thought, or the ecological context of inquiry, have special relationships to specific places of

revelation where relationships to other animate beings with agency (spirits) are renewed through communication. The goal of communication is adjustment and realignment (pp. 65-66). In the case of the Nishinaabeg fish clans, Simpson (2011) teaches that this happened twice per year at Mnjikanming. This was a space for communication and treaty renewal between the clans and fish nations (pp. 109).

These are embedded and inherent theories of renewal and realignment (Simpson, 2011). All this commentary is to say that from an Anishinaabeg paradigm we live in a local-place full of interrelated peoples, of many species or Manidoog, who have treaties with each other. This interrelationship and interdependence of all on another is known as *enawendiwin* (Geniusz. 2009, pp. 57). Niigaanwewidam Sinclair (2013), by relating the meaning of “all my relations,” locates *enawendiwin* as a core principle of Anishinaabewin:

Nindinawemaganidog is not the vague romantic chant of “we are all related” found in new age books but is a binding, critical philosophy. It is, for most Anishinaabeg, a law devised through interactions between two Anishinaabeg philosophical principles: *enawendiwin*, the spiritual and material connections Anishinaabeg share with entities throughout Creation and *waawiyeyaag*, a law of circularity that gives shape, meaning, and purpose to the universe. These principles may be seen as part of the bundle given to the Little Boy from the Seven Grandfathers and constitute a method the second humanity has used to ensure their survival and continuation. These terms also articulate a basis in which Anishinaabeg understand how the universe moves and is tied together in a great network of nindinawemaganidog. To continue the metaphor of tree rings, *enawendiwin* would be the veins and fibres that connect and hold the tree together and *waawiyeyaag* would be the organic and rounded shape that is created. Together, these are the ideological and physical methods that constitute an Anishinaabeg universe. (pp. 105)

The need to realign through shapeshifting is embedded in this conception of an animate universe. Shapeshifting is the process of self-determined transformation in response to other nations’ own shapeshifting. It is a cyclical process or transformation and realignment. It requires constant communication and engagement (Sinclair, 2013, pp. 106) With the goal of producing more life, it is a process deeply embodied in the creative dimension (Simpson, 2017, pp. 24). For Jicarilla/Apache philosopher Viola Cordova our role, as humans, in collaborating to remake life is based on our need to survive and this is our

simple/profound purpose in this life (2007, pp. 184). In their work on Aboriginal worldviews, Little Bear (2012) Cajete (2000) and Henderson (2000b) deploy the concept of flux to signify the way animate power pulls and pushes the web of life throughout the different lodges of creation. Within the Indigenous paradigm this idea of flux provides the framework for understanding interrelationship of all beings. Gregory Cajete, Tewa philosopher of science, writes that,

Chaos is both movement and evolution. It is the process through which everything in the universe becomes manifest and then returns to the chaos field. The flux, or ebb and flow, of chaos appear in everything and envelop us at all times and in all places. From the evolving universe to the mountain to the human brain, chaos is the field from which all things come into being. No wonder Native Science envisions the spirit of the natural world alive with disorder becoming order and all the mystery of mirrored relationships. (2000, pp. 16; cited in Little Bear 2012)

Flux is the pull and push of the entire universe. Given the moon can pull water across the earth it is not out of the realm of possibility that larger entities like galaxies in rotation or black holes exert pulls, pushes, or shakes on our homes in these places. Grounded normativity is engaging with this reality in a specific place. Anishinaabewin is engaging in this practice in Anishinaabewaki.

From my understanding of the literature, any specific place is a spider web of relationships. This spider web is the totality of interrelationships or treaties between nations, human or otherwise. Flux is the vibration or tug created by another entity in the web, or an entity like the sun which connects to all places on this earth. Similarly, the winds can shake a spider web. The more powerful the entity the larger the potential tug and consequently the larger potential for shapeshifting required. Shapeshifting is required to maintain a nation's covenants or treaties, its reciprocal obligations to another animate people with their own set of interrelationships. Shapeshifting to realign is to maintain the relationships that produce more life. As any nation shapeshifts their relatives must

transform as well. When I read Anishinaabeg resurgence authors from this lens of flux, this is what I understand as the framework for original instructions from Gichi Manidoo. Out of this reality is what structures Cajete's (2000) *natural democracies* or Watts' (2013) conception of societies.

### **The Role of the Settler-Colonial State**

In this section, I argue that the integral role of animals found in the stories has been disrupted by the Canadian settler-colonial state, and the expansion of the capitalist world-ecology. It is because of this disruption by the imposition of the state form and the capitalist economy that resurgence is necessary from within the radical resurgence tradition. To understand this disruption, I briefly review literature on state-sponsored policies to destroy Indigenous nationhood. For this argument, I define the state relationally through a synthesis of Indigenous and critical theory.

From the Marxist critical theory tradition, I draw on the idea that the state is a governing committee, that oversees an ideological and security apparatus, with the implicit goal of serving the interests of the capitalist class through maintaining investor confidence (Barrow, 2016). States exercise this jurisdiction within a sovereign claim to territory (Wallerstein, 2011). From world-ecology framework, I overlay an ecological dimension onto the Marxian definition of the state. Within world-ecology, the state serves capitalist interests by bundling humanity's relationships with other-than-human nature in such ways as to maximize the appropriation of work/energy (Moore, 2015). In effect the state creates *regimes of nature* best suited to capital accumulation and primitive accumulation through domestication. Regimes of nature, otherwise known as historical natures, are historically

specific configurations of socioecological relationships (Moore, 2015, 2016; Parenti, 2014,2016). Christian Parenti (2016) argues:

Before capital can harness energy, as labor power, or as preexisting “rents” of nonhuman nature, the state must control terrain, portions of the surface of the earth where these utilities exist. The state must seize parts of the surface of the earth. The state must measure it, understand it, represent it, contain it, and control it militarily, legally, and scientifically. In other words, for capital to use the biosphere, the state must control it. We can call this subset of biopower, *geopower*. (pp. 170)

In other words, the state is a material and ideological apparatus set up to control territory for the explicit purpose of facilitating capital accumulation by the various capitalist classes. The state does this by allowing the domestication of work/energy from humans, and other than human persons. As an example, there were Indigenous regimes of nature before the fur trade where there were relations of consent with all clan animals. The fur trade disrupted relationships with the beaver nations (Daschuk, 2013).

I argue there is a perpetual tension between the state and the Anishinaabeg insofar as some Anishinaabeg are concerned with maintaining their traditional mode of life rather than assimilate. I make this assertion based on Kulchyski (1999, 2005) who argues that the state is geared towards totalization; the total absorption of other modes of production into a social formation dominated by the capitalist mode of production. He argues this is accomplished through the state. In his analysis, the Canadian state has tried to assert its own serial logic on Indigenous peoples through processes of absorption and marginalization. This is often accomplished through the imposition of state specific forms of writing and representation most clearly embodied in legal system, codification, and treaties in contrast to Indigenous forms of writing like body art, aids for oral history, or the Indigenous creation of sacred spaces on the land (2005, pp. 17).

Secondly, I base this on the Indigenous paradigm reviewed previously. Ladner (2000, 2003), Alfred (1999, 2005) and Henderson (2000a, 2000b) all argue that the idea of the permanent state is in some way inherently different than Indigenous conceptions of power or relationship to the flux of creation. I argue flux requires shapeshifting, not permanence or linear growth. Tom Holm (2006) argues that Indigenous peoples have used states as tools in times of crisis, but after the crisis states dissolve and kinship ties once again are the main tie that binds (pp. 50-51).

Lastly, I base my argument on the contention made by Coulthard (2014) who argues that as long as Indigenous peoples try to gain recognition from the state their modes of life and relationship to the land will be under threat because recognition comes from modelling oneself off the state form. This requires regimes of nature which destroy treaty relationships with clan animals.

I am arguing that because of the very nature of the state it will continue to threaten Indigenous modes of life until the threat is eliminated. The state exists to dominate nature for the non-consensual extraction of work/energy (Moore, 2015, 2016). You cannot live obligations to clan animals in a system of domestication. Anishinaabeg animal-human stories explicitly reject domestication and enslavement (Johnston, 1982). Synthesizing these premises, I argue resurgence takes place within a context where the state form is the main threat to Anishinaabeg clan commitments. The state is a threat both as an actor and as a possible solution.

I base this theoretical argument on the state's record of intervention. Daschuk (2013), Paul (2006), Milloy (1999), Pettipas (1994), Lutz (2008), Neu and Therrien (2003), Tester and Kulchyski (1994, 2007), and Walls (2010) all provide concrete evidence of state

intervention to disrupt Indigenous modes of life and political systems in Canada. Milloy (1999) demonstrates how residential schools were used to assimilate Indigenous peoples through stealing their children and educating them in mainstream values. Pettipas (1994) demonstrates how ceremonies were criminalized and this intervened in disrupting the socioecological relations that knitted people together. Tester and Kulchyski (1994) posit that forced relocation and settlement of the Inuit in communities modelled after white, urban, southern communities drastically upturned Inuit life. Overall, these sources demonstrate the disruption of Indigenous modes of life and their replacement by the state with modes of life modelled on capitalist economies and state governance. It amounted to a wholesale replacement of the Indigenous modes of life. All of these state interventions in some way also happened to the Anishinaabeg. They were confined on reservations and their leadership selection process was replaced with the Indian Act. Their citizens were sent to residential schools and settled into European lodgings. They have been forced to inhabit a governance system created by the Canadian state.

I argue that based on the framework for understanding of the state provided by Coulthard (2014), Alfred (1999, 2005) Kulchyski (1999, 2005), Parenti (2016), Wallerstein (2001 and Moore (2003, 2015, 2016) the state enacted these policies and interventions to replace the Anishinaabeg mode of life and their attachment to land by re-bundling their relationships with animals, and other nature, to be suited towards resource extraction rather than consensual communication with animal nations. To do this they had to refashion people. This involved complete reshaping of Indigenous peoples through both the physical intervention in their material life and the imposition of colonial mentalities. Due to this reality of the state, resurgence requires a new bundling of relationships with



nature not based on capitalism or the state. The Anishinaabeg have a potential alternative model in their clan system. This model is based on shapeshifting, not totalization.

In this chapter I outlined the role of shapeshifting and agency in resurgence theory. I related it to the idea of an animate world in flux as the foundation of non-state Indigenous philosophy on Turtle Island. It is this larger paradigm of an animate world in flux that frames the rest of my analysis. My understanding is that resurgence is about refusing settler-colonial state's grip on Anishinaabeg shapeshifting. The role of shape shifting is embedded in Anishinaabeg stories. Put together, I understand that the goal is to understand how the Anishinaabeg can remake life according to their pre-existing practices of Anishinaabewin. This regime of nature is in opposition to the goals of the Canadian state. With this framework in place we are ready to read the aadizookaanag. For the rest of this work I will apply this lens to human and animal relationships.

## **2. Locating Political Animals in Aadizookaanag**

In this chapter, I argue embedded within Anishinaabeg stories are the framing of political relationships with animals and the politics of form practiced by the Anishinaabeg. Animals are framed as allies and helpers with their own agency and nations. I previously supported the contention that stories should be understood as a valid frame for Anishinaabeg politics within Anishinaabeg studies. Therefore, I argue these stories should set the baseline for resurgence goals.

In Anishinaabeg stories we encounter multispecies collaboration, treaties, and ceremonies. In this chapter, I analyze 10 published Anishinaabeg stories found within the work of Anishinaabeg scholars. These stories were chosen because they best illustrate the themes of animal political agency and zagaswediwin form as a method of engagement used in international engagement. In my literature review I did not find stories that directly contradict the themes or patterns that I bring forward. I chose stories that were being cited by Anishinaabeg scholars already for their relevance. These were the stories that helped me understand the paradigm of Anishinaabewin. Coming from a non-Anishinaabeg background as a scholar who did not do oral history research with Anishinaabeg Elders and did not grow up with the Anishinaabeg language I needed to be careful which stories I chose. Understanding this analysis is done without Elders' validation, I understand these stories are a broadly representative sample of publicly available stories in written form. Despite my positional limitations, and given the call to centre story in Anishinaabeg studies by Anishinaabeg scholars, I wanted to centre story in my literature review.

## **2.1 Recreation Stories**

I opened this thesis with a brief recounting of "Nanaboozhoo and the Flood" as told by Midewiwin Elder Edna Manitowabi found in Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-creation, Resurgence and New Emergence* (2011). This story was where the idea of multispecies collaboration first hit home in my analysis. Three Fires Midewiwin leader Edward Benton-Banai also tells this story in *The Mishomis Book: The Voices of the Ojibway* (1988) in his chapter "Waynaboozhoo and the

Flood". There are also versions recorded by non-Indigenous academics (Berens and Hallowell, 2009; Vecsey, 1983).

In Simpson's (2011) and Benton-Banai's (1988) versions of the story what was clear was that Nanaboozhoo and the animals collaborated to remake the world using their inherent gifts. They exercise their agency. Remaking the world involves sacrifice by both animals and Nanaboozhoo. It involves a ceremony, with Nanaboozhoo singing, where all the animals dance to expand the world and recreate life. Communication between Nanaboozhoo and animals play an important role within the story. Nanaboozhoo could not remake the world without Muskrat getting the dirt or Turtle offering her back. In the recreation story animals are essential to remaking life. In some version this recreation is based on Nanaboozhoo carrying out a vision from Gichi Manidoog (Sinclair, 2013, pp. 134). This vision places the story within the framework of the Anishinaabe creation story (Simpson, 2011). While the cooperation of animals with Nanaboozhoo is essential, it is not sufficient. The ceremonial cooperation of animals and Nanaboozhoo is used to engage the wind in rebuilding the world. The winds as Manidoog must be engaged to remake life as well. What comes from this story is that cooperation with animals and celestial forces is necessary to remake life. When Niigaanwewidam Sinclair (2013) analyzes this story as represented in a Daphne Odjig painting, he notes that all the animals of the doodemag are present and participating (pp. 131). This is no coincidence, the doodemag system is supposed to bring balance and recreate life.

Vanessa Watts (2013) and Basil Johnston (1976) both provide earlier re-creation stories of the animals preparing a new world for Sky Woman that have similar themes to that of the Nanaboozhoo story told by Manitowabi and Benton-Banai. In the case of Berens

and Hallowell (2009) the story of “Wisakedjak and the Water Lions” provides more context to the necessity for remaking the world. In this story Berens tells of the flood being caused by a dispute between Elder Brother and the great underwater lynx. This dispute causes the flooding of the world in the first place. In some versions of the story, Nanaboozhoo is in dispute with the water beings because he and his nephew have been overhunting (Sinclair, 2013, pp. 134; Vecsey, 1983, pp. 90). In these versions of the story recreation becomes necessary because of imbalance caused by Nanaboozhoo’s exploitation of the animals. The underwater creatures cause the flood to seek revenge on Nanaboozhoo for disrupting their role in creation. The water beings have a responsibility to protect animal nations.

Melissa K. Nelson (2013), Anishinaabekwe from the Turtle Mountain Band, considers the application of these stories to our present ecological reality of climate change. She asks us to consider whether Mizhibizhiw is going to be a victim of climate change or is the cause of climate change. In her case for Mizhibizhiw being the cause of climate change, she is referring to this earlier story of Nanaboozhoo and the flood. From my analysis of these stories, Anishinaabeg hydro-mythology is deeply connected to the idea of Aanji-Maajitaawin deployed by Simpson (2011). Destruction comes from worlds out of balance and interfering in another nation or being’s role in creation. When Nanaboozhoo attacks the water beings he is disrupting their role in creation. The world is regenerated by proper collaboration and cooperation between Manidoog and animal nations performing their original instructions. If our world is out of balance and flooding, as climate science, traditional knowledge, and community experience would suggest, the framework offered by the recreation stories is one of collaboration with animal nations to respond properly through ceremony and the material rebuilding the world. From the within the lens of

Anishinaabewin authors, I understand this to requires full recognition of the agency of the animal nations. I argue the recreation story especially through the role of Turtle and Muskrat shows the role of animal agency in recreating the world.

## 2.2 Zagaswediwin Stories

Just like the recreation story offers a framework for understanding the relationship of animals and humans, stories provide guidance on political institutions. I argue the council, *zagaswediwin*, as a political form plays a prominent role within Anishinaabeg stories. It is this council form that is an alternative to the state form. Both aadizookaanag and dibaajimowin provide abundant evidence for the use of councils. In the context of the aadizookaanag both Geniusz's (2009) telling of the origins of the cedar tree and Johnston's (1976) Borrows' (2010b) story of the dog provide excellent examples of the use of councils for deliberation and problem solving. The council form is embedded within Anishinaabeg story, and further, I infer is the assumed method for discussion in the recreation stories above.

In Geniusz 's (2009) retelling of the story of *Nookomis Giizhik*,<sup>14</sup> the Anishinaabeg are struggling and the animals hold a council to figure out how to help the them. The animals in favour of supporting the Anishinaabeg make long speeches and appeal to their original instructions given by Gichi Manidoo. They also relate the present situation to their role as clan animals (pp. 127-136). I understand the animals to be discussing how they can continue to embody the processes and values of *enawendiwin*. The story is about how the

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<sup>14</sup> Grandmother Cedar

Bear and the Otter respectfully petitioned Gichi-Manidoo for a tree they could use to dig a tunnel. Its purpose is to be able to allow communication between the different worlds or lodges, the below and the above. Cedar remains important for facilitating communication between worlds (pp. 136).

This story, through the words and actions of the animals, demonstrates how Anishinaabeg people imagine and practice *Naakgonige*, to carefully deliberate and decide when faced with change or decisions. According to Simpson (2011) *Naakgonige* means to deliberate and consider the impacts of your decisions on all aspects of life and your relationships. It includes the land, clans, children, and future generations (pp. 56-57). Simpson also refers to it as *Naanaagede'enmowin*, the art of thinking to come to a decision that is guided by the heart. I understand this to be the same concept as what Borrows (2010a) refers to as deliberative law.<sup>15</sup> In this story the animals consider their original instructions in the context of this present situation and the value of *enawendiwin*. The Bear and Otter Manidoog work to facilitate ongoing communication and *mino-bimaadiziwin*.

Just as animals hold council to deliberate in the cedar story, they also hold council in Johnston's (1976) and Borrows' (2010a) story of the dog. In Johnston's *Ojibway Heritage* (1976) the story of the dog is told within the context of discussing humanity's dependence on animals and the imbalances of domestication or coercion. In Borrows (2010b) the story is used to discuss servility and dependence within the context of the Indian Act. Johnston (1976) tells of the animals being commanded and ordered to do peoples' bidding in the time after the recreation of the world by Sky Woman. Eventually as the animals come to realize they cannot endure continually serving humans they call a great council to discuss

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<sup>15</sup> I will dive further into this point later in the thesis when discussing treaties.

the matter. They discuss how to end their oppression. The animals want their agency back rather than to continue serving humans (pp. 50). In Borrows' (2010b) story, the dog chooses to inform humans of the ongoing debate and is caught divulging information by the wolf. As a penalty the dog is cast out of council and condemned to serve humans forever. They are to live like the most oppressed humans (pp. 213).

I read this story as an expression of how Anishinaabe conceptions of agency apply to questions of domestication of clan animals. In these aadizookaanag, the animals had been domesticated and choose to be freed from this condition. Part of the treaty relationship with humans is to not domesticate certain animals again. Their agency must be respected. The dog for double-crossing the other animals remains domesticated. In terms of the practice of zagaswediwin, the animals collectively decide to act together through deliberation. They do not coerce each other; they discuss the future and the likely consequences of different courses of action.

Aadizookaanag also provide examples of humans and animals communicating in council. Holding council with animals to renew treaties is present in Johnston's (1976), Simpson's (2013), and Borrows' (2002) retelling of the Anishinaabeg's Treaty with the Hoof Nation story as well as Borrows' (2002) retelling of the Rose story, which also happens to provide examples of plants being involved in council communications to discuss imbalances between nations. In Simpson's book of short stories, *The Gift is in Making: Anishinaabeg Stories* (2013), the Hoof Nation Treaty story is told as over time the different hoofed nations disappeared from the land and the people started to starve. After time the Anishinaabeg learned the hoofed nations were living under the watch of the Crow nation. The Anishinaabeg sent a delegation to talk with the Hoofed and Crow nations in

council. The Anishinaabeg listened to their stories and teachings. They spend multiple days listening, acknowledging, discussing, and negotiating. They come to a new agreement. Ceremonies were created to honour hooped nation members taken for food by the Anishinaabeg (pp. 9-12). In Johnston's (1976) version of the story, the Anishinaabeg go to war with the crow nations before the council takes place. In Borrows (2002) the story, called the Crow case, also involved the Anishinaabeg agreeing to preserve specific types of lands or local ecologies for the benefit of the Deer nation (pp. 19). In Borrows (2002) and Johnston (1976) the Crow nation are also involved in the council with the Hooped Nations and the Anishinaabeg.

In the multiple versions of this story the theme of using councils to solve multispecies disputes is clear. The Anishinaabeg engage in truth and reconciliation through the practices of zagawediwin where naakgonige is embodied and practiced. In the council the relationship between the Hooped nations and the Anishinaabeg is renewed. In council the relationship between the Crow nation and the Anishinaabeg is made harmonious through peace. This practice of council is how treaties are made.

Borrows' (2002) and Simpson's (2013) story of the rose also embodies similar principles but brings plants into communication with human and animal nations. The story tells of a time when the roses disappeared and the consequences this had for the local ecology. The story of the rose shows how through council reciprocal obligation is created and renewed between the plant nations and the animal nations, humans included (Simpson, 2013, pp. 19-22; Borrows, 2002, pp. 49). In Borrows work, he is using these stories as expressions of law. Anishinaabewin involves a conception of agency and animacy that does not distinguish between humans, animals, or plants as peoples. Thus, humans



have treaty relationships and ceremonies with plants from within this framework. This manifests in their participation within councils in the aadizookaanag. In Borrows (2002) the council in the story of the rose is used, in a time of crisis, to understand why the rose is disappearing. The council hears of trespasses against the roses and seeks to restore balance. In Simpson (2013), the Anishinaabeg care for the dying rose and nurse it back to health to remake the plant nations. Holding council with animals or plants was an important part of dealing with community crisis. Councils sought to understand what was causing sickness and imbalance in the local ecology.

Councils were also used to discuss matters between humans. Borrows (2010b) also notes how councils are used when he relates the story of a community dealing with a human turned windigo (pp. 224-227).<sup>16</sup> In this story the community holds a council to decide on a course of action to deal with the destructive behaviour of the windigo. Borrows notes councils are important method to collectivize decision-making. Basil Johnston, in *Ojibway Ceremonies* (1982), tells a council story to illustrate how the council itself was a ceremony that involved story and prayer with the pipe to frame the following discussion (pp. 157-175). He provides a narrative about how the Manidoog are invited into council through invocation of prayer. Even when they are not physically present to our five senses they are understood to be there in council through invitation of their spiritual being and the presence of the pipe, which according to Johnston (1976) embodied elements from the 4 orders of life in its physical make up and adornment (pp. 58).

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<sup>16</sup> Windigoog are cannibalistic monsters who consume human flesh. Windigo are important beings in some Anishinaabeg stories and are often referred to as a foil for understanding what it means to be a human-being. One can shapeshift into a Windigo if you consume the flesh of your kin.

From my understanding of the stories surveyed, the council is the assumed form of collective discussion and deliberation among humans, animals, and plant nations. I infer it is the assumed form of discussion taking place in the recreation story when Nanaboozhoo and the animals recreate the world. Within practices of council for humans the animals are invited to join through prayer and their embodiment in sacred objects. I understand the stories to point towards councils with all nations being the way to remake the world. Collaboration begins with *naakgonige* through *zagaswediwin*. There were not any council stories that I surveyed that involved a hierarchy where someone decided for others with coercion, except in the case of the dog which was banished from council for betrayal. In this case I assume this banishment reflected the will of the rest of the animals/people in council just as was required in the story of the council about a windigo. Based on these stories, I argue councils are the political institution that should be the focus of political resurgence.

### **2.3 Doodemag: Animal Kinship Stories**

I contend Anishinaabeg *aadizookaanag* also form the framework for understanding relationships with animals through the context of kinship. Kinship with animals also informs human-to-human kinship diplomacy. As previously mentioned, Innes (2013) posits that Elder Brother stories provide the framing for kinship practices between Nehiyawak, Anishinaabeg, Nakoda, and Métis on the plains in the form of historic multiethnic bands and today's kinship practices on reserve. Innes (2013), Berens and Hallowell (2009), and Vecsey (1983) all recount of Elder Brother's adoption into a family of wolves that precedes his battle with the water beings and the flooding of the world. In this story when Nanaboozhoo leaves the wolf family he adopts one of the young wolves as his nephew and

they continue to live together. This nephew is killed by the water beings because of his and Nanaboozhoo's overhunting. According to Innes (2013), this story is one that centres the role of adoption and kinship in Anishinaabeg life. This story teaches obligations between relatives. By rescuing the young wolf Nanaboozhoo fulfills his obligations as a relative (pp. 39-40).

Using analysis of story found in the journal of French explorer and trader Perrot, settler ethnohistorian Heidi Bohaker (2006) relates the role of the original Beaver in Nanaboozhoo's recreation of the world. The Beaver people were the children of original beaver's dead flesh and were associated with the Beaver River and other areas east of Georgian Bay (pp. 72). Nanaboozhoo created the people out of the death of their ancestor (pp. 60). The Anishinaabeg Beaver clan comes from the same origin as the Beaver nation in animal form. They have the same spiritual origins and are thus connected. This story gives content to the connection between animal nations and Anishinaabeg doodemag.

In her work on diplomacy, kinship, and treaties Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark relates two important stories for grounding the practices of treaties within the context of kinship. Stark (2010) tells the story of the woman who married a beaver to illustrate the reciprocity inherent in the treaty relationship. In the story the beaver family offers itself to the Anishinaabeg in return for gifts of tobacco and other valuables. When the woman returns to live with the Anishinaabeg she teaches them further obligations to maintain their relationship with the beavers. For Stark this story frames the relationship between beavers and humans as one of cooperation rather than domination. For Stark this story serves as a representation of the real treaty between beavers and humans. These obligations are learned through kinship practices and story.

In their work on Anishinaabeg transnationalism, Stark and Bauerkemper (2012) analyze the story of *Maudjee-kawiss* told by Johnston (2001). In this story Maudjee-kawiss is patrolling the borders of the Anishinaabeg and heads north for the first time and discovers the bear nation and its political practices. The bears hold large councils much like the earlier stories, but he notices a unique sash that they wear and refer to throughout their orations. Maudjee-kawiss steals the sash and runs away. In his attempted escape he kills the bears' lead warrior. Once caught the bears offer to adopt him and ask that he take up a role as ogimaa and warrior for their nation. This story explains the origins of the wampum belt and birchbark scrolls for the Anishinaabeg. It also details the role of adoption to bring peace between warring peoples. Stark and Bauerkemper state, that "in essence, the adoption of Maudjee-kawiss into the Bear Nation and their gift of sashes as recording devices to the Anishinaabeg was a treaty. This treaty would entail moral, social, and political obligations and responsibilities to one another (pp. 3)." They understand this process as one of transnational *kinship diplomacy*. It is important to note that in this story it is not stated whether it is a human form Bear nation or the animal form Bear nation that is being interacted with. Given the lack of specificity, from an Anishinaabeg lens this ambiguity is important. It means that this story would unfold the same way and convey the same values whether the Bears are in human form or animal form. I argue treaties and kinship obligations apply in both cases.

I contend that in the previously discussed stories the Anishinaabeg conception of animacy or agency is not bounded to humans and reinforces the reality that kinship is an appropriate relationship with animals and their nations. Kinship in Anishinaabeg society is

structured through the obligations and responsibilities of family and treaties. Councils are inherent political processes of engagement and interspecies communication that embody the practice of treaty. Therefore, from the aadizookaanag I surveyed, I conclude the Anishinaabeg perspectives contained therein understand that animals and plants engage in politics because they have agency. The council is the embodied practice of agency and communication. I would go as far as to infer that the Anishinaabeg learn this practice from the stories of animal engagement in treaty councils. These stories show that crises of imbalance can be solved, and the world restored, through interspecies collaboration and communication in council. This coming to council is embedded in kinship stories of international relations and diplomacy. It is my argument that these stories provide a potential path forward for Anishinaabeg leaders to redevelop frameworks for resurgence of Anishinaabewin. It could be that this is already underway in community, and I am not aware of it from my standpoint as a Zhaaganash outsider.

### **3. Ogimaawiwini Roles**

In this chapter, I argue the ethnohistorical sources on leadership do not provide clarity on how animals engage in Anishinaabeg politics. However, we can conclude that leadership was embedded within the clan system and councils. To make this conclusion, I conduct a literature survey on Anishinaabeg political leadership.<sup>17</sup> My argument is that

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<sup>17</sup> In this chapter I do not engage with the question of gender and leadership. Given the male bias and contradictory nature of the ethnohistorical sources, it would have required speaking with oral historians and knowledge holders which was outside the scope of this thesis. What I think matters at this point is that Anishinaabekwe are leaders in communities now.

while there is little role for Anishinaabeg leaders in the ethnographic and ethnohistorical literature for international relations with animal nations, the literature does provide a good picture of how leaders are embedded and chosen within families and clans. I conclude there is a gap in the literature on leadership when it comes to properly reflecting Anishinaabeg conceptions of agency and international relations with animals. I hope to begin to fill this gap. Thus, to have a conception of leadership that properly reflects Anishinaabeg agency more work needs to be done to bring animals into studies of Anishinaabeg leadership. This is necessary to properly engage with questions of resurgence and a new emergence of Anishinaabewin. To do this I argue in the following chapters we must reject European binaries and colonially imposed categories of analysis.

The place that makes sense to start is to define the roles of political leadership within Anishinaabeg governance. The literature on Anishinaabeg leadership is perpetually challenged by the politics of translation because the sources ethnohistory is based on are in European languages while Anishinaabeg leadership is best understood in Anishinaabemowin. Thus, European categories and paradigms of agency and peoplehood dominate the analysis. Moreover, the leadership that Europeans would have initially encountered would not necessarily have been the leadership that existed internally within a community when outsiders were not present. To add an additional challenge, Europeans interpreted Anishinaabeg governance through the lens of their political culture at the time. As Williams (2012) and Henderson (2000a; 2000b) noted this was the perception of savagery and the state of nature. This caused the Europeans to prejudge the Anishinaabeg through preconceived cultural frames. Throughout this chapter, I will refer to

ethnohistorical work by non-Anishinaabeg authors, I privilege the work of Anishinaabeg authors relying both on the oral tradition and those who undertake ethnohistory.

Lastly, it is important to note that periodization plays a part in these sources. Due to the Anishinaabeg practice of shapeshifting and the reality of empire, different contexts created different manifestations of governance. Minnesota Anishinaabe scholar Giniwgiizhig Henry Flocken (2013) argues that Anishinaabeg political leadership developed differently within distinct periods of time. The four periods identified by Flocken are the Indigenous, colonial, American, and current Indian Reorganization Act eras. Flocken sees shapeshifting in Anishinaabeg governance between these eras based upon their relationship with different empires (pp. 13). It is very difficult in the primary literature to discern the political practices that correspond with a periodization of Anishinaabeg leadership outside the colonial and American eras. Documents understandable to ethnohistory do not exist for the Indigenous era; moreover, most studies do not have any ethnographic fieldwork taking place by trained scholars. Instead, the fieldwork was done by people with purposes other than the systematic observation and exploration of Anishinaabeg Ojimaawiwini.

### **3.1 Locating the Ojimaag**

Ethnohistory has focused on the role of the political chief due to colonial bias. Due to this focus it has failed to notice other just as crucial leadership positions in the Anishinaabeg community. Much of the current literature on Anishinaabeg leadership in some way centres on the role of the *Ojimaag*. Unfortunately, the literature is confusing on who an Ojimaag is and what they do. This confusion appears to be because of the

overlapping and non-centralized sociopolitical organization of the Anishinaabeg before the Indian Act of 1876 and the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. For instance, the French labelled many different Anishinaabeg leaders chiefs or captains, positions of leadership from French political culture (Schenck, 1997; Witgen, 2012). *Ogimaa* was not translated within the values or political system of the Anishinaabeg. The majority of ethnohistorical studies I found did not use stories to understand leadership practices. Therefore, they were challenged to adequately capture the processes of leadership from within the culture because the starting point was always European framing.

Flocken (2013) is the first author I came across who clearly provided a schematic of the different levels of Anishinaabeg councils and their relationship to positions of leadership in Anishinaabe society. He conducted a critical review of the ethnohistorical literature and interviewed currently recognized Anishinaabeg hereditary leaders from Buffalo Point First Nation, Lac La Croix First Nation, Red Lake Reservation, and Mille Lac Reservation. On the other hand, he did not conduct an analysis of Anishinaabeg *aadizookaanag* in his published dissertation. Based on this, he posits that the ethnohistorical literature on the Anishinaabeg delineates four levels of councils. These levels were 1) the hunting group; 2) the common council (or village council), 3) the general council which is a council of villages in a fluidly defined bounded area; and 4) the grand council or the Three Fires council which brought together the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples and was closely linked with the seasonal Midewiwin gatherings (pp. 49). Problems quickly arise in the literature because there is no consensus on what terms to use for the leaders at each of these levels of council. Flocken (2013) proposes that the leaders of hunting bands be understood as headmen or fathers and that the local or village



level chief be understood as a *Gaagiigidowininni*, a speaker man. It was only when chiefs of multiple villages in an area got together to deal with issues that an *Ogimaa* was selected for a meeting. When multiple areas were brought together for a council a *Gichi-Ogimaa* was selected from among the family heads and Gichi-Anishinaabeg. When the entire Three Fires was together they were led by a *Nitam* (pp. 166).

While Flocken's (2013) analysis is compelling and provides more systematization than any other, the weight of the literature on Anishinaabe leadership defines the position of *Ogimaa* as the leader of a single village. Anishinaabeg scholars Miller (2010), Johnston (1976) (1982), McIvor (2011), Chute (1998), Kugel (1998), and settler academics White (1991), Smith (1973), Hansen (1987), and Dowd (1993) all define the *Ogimaa* as the leader of a singular village council. Flocken's (2013) is not the only minority position in the literature. Anishinaabeg Treuer (2015), Schenck (1997), and settler academics McDonnell (2015), and Rushforth (2012) define the *Ogimaag* as doodemag leaders primarily. They are not explicit in how this role relates to the village. Part of the reason may be that the term *anike-ogimaa* has been deployed to denote the leaders or head people of clan groups at village councils. *Anike* means, "connected to, linked to" (Ningewance, 2009). *Aanike-ogimaa* has also been translated as, "next in succession to the leader (Nichols and Nyholm, 1995)." Chute (1998) defines the *anike-ogimaa* as a step below chief. Still others such as Skinner (1914) understand an *Ogimaa* as the leader of a single-family hunting band.

Given the weight of the literature, for the purposes of this thesis *Ogimaa* will be used to mean the selected leader who leads a village or multi-village area council. McDonnell (2015), Treuer (2011, 2015), Kugel (1998), and McNally (2009) argue an *Ogimaa* is also for the most part a Gichi-Anishinaabeg and leader of a doodemag. Treuer (2011), Johnston

(1976), Schenck (1997), Chute (1998), White (1991), Warren (1970), and Smith (1973) contend that when present the Ogimaa role is taken by the Crane or Loon doodemag. They further claim that in villages or areas where there are no Crane or Loon doodemag, Ogimaa lineages were selected initially by election and thereafter by default to the elected hereditary lineage (Treuer, 2015). All of this was contingent upon recognized merit and suitability by the family or doodemag lines a leader would be representing.

Flocken (2013), Miller (2010), Witgen (2012), Fontaine (2009), Schenck (1997), White (1991), and Meyer (1994) contend that the role of the Ogimaa was primarily based in their ability to facilitate and mediate communication within the kinship alliance-based politics of the Anishinaabeg. As the stories I reviewed earlier make clear, communication is central, and it makes sense this trait was valued in leaders. Anishinaabeg Ogimaawiwin was understood to be a non-coercive and consensus-building process embedded within a system of kinship. Anishinaabeg leaders were valued for their ability to persuade others and for their prowess as providers of gifts to their followers and community.

The ability of a family to leave and join a new band or hold membership in multiple bands was deeply tied to the leadership selection processes found in the literature concerning the Anishinaabeg. It also reflected the story of Nanaboozhoo and the wolves. Leadership selection is one process that can be analyzed to understand how a people understands relationships of accountability and how they understand identity and ultimately citizenship. Relationships of identity and accountability form crucial aspects of a people's conceptions of agency and power.

With a fluid and multipolar social formation came a leadership selection process which also embodied this fluidity. The clear majority of both Anishinaabeg and non-

Indigenous scholarship agrees that Anishinaabeg doodemag leadership was hereditary. There is some debate as to who made the choice of who would take on the hereditary position. Given that Anishinaabeg politics were kinship-based with clans being large extended families, hereditary claims could in some ways be claimed by the whole family. Flocken (2013), Treuer (2015), Miller (2010), Fontaine (2009), Howard (1965), Meyer (1994), and Vennum (1988) agree that a successor was chosen by the former chief or clan head from among his family followers. By default, it normally went to his eldest son. McIvor (2011), and Lajamodièrè (2011) provide complexity to this analysis by claiming specifically that grandmothers were the ones to choose hereditary leaders while Johnston (1976), Schenck (1997), Chute (1998), Smith (1973), Miller (2010), Howard (1965), and Vennum (1988) note that merit was the determining factor. Thus, another son or a nephew could be chosen instead of the first son if they showed considerable more access to Manidoog and other leadership traits. Fontaine (2009) contends that those without hereditary claim could become great chiefs by showing their oratorical skills and other merits; crucially these merits had to receive the recognition of the community. Similarly, Flocken (2013), Miller (2010), Schenck (1997), and McNally (2009), note that while a chief may have been able to appoint a successor, it was up to the family to recognize this new leader and their abilities. If they did not agree with the choice they could fission.

At the level of Ogimaa, hereditary claim was based on clan identity. Treuer (2011), Johnston (1976), Schenck (1997), Chute (1998), White (1991), Warren (1970), Smith (1973), and Flocken (2013) all posit that the Crane clan were the preeminent clan with claim to chieftainship in the clans-in-council. The Loon clan often also held leadership positions, though much of the literature notes the Cranes as possessing the stronger claim.

Watts (2006) argues that both Crane and Loon clan had claim to leadership and the balance between two leadership clans provided accountability. Flocken (2013), Treuer (2015), and Schenck (1997) all note that if families didn't like a new Ogimaa they would often start a new village. In cases in which new villages were started, either by fissioning from poor leadership or from territorial expansion, that lacked families from the Crane or Loon clan, they often held an election to determine their first chief. After this election, that clan would hold the hereditary claim for Ogimaa in that village (Treuer, 2011). This was how the villages of Red Lake determined their leadership during their founding as they conquered territory from the Dakota (Treuer, 2015). What is clear from the literature is that the Anishinaabeg over time had to make their leadership selection process fluid to fit the changing nature of their relationship to the wider world. As they expanded their territorial holdings west they had to adjust the doodemag system to the absence of the Cranes and Loons.

### **3.2 Gichi-Anishinaabeg: The Doodemag Elders**

I argue that the role of elders is the most instructive for understanding kinship diplomacy. There is significantly less literature on the specific role or position of Elders within Anishinaabeg politics. I would suggest that much of this is due to the conceptual confusion surrounding the definition of an Ogimaa and the conceptual blending that has occurred with the translation of that term to be a chief. The role of an Elder has been obscured by the lack of accuracy and clarity, especially in the anthropological and ethnohistorical literature, on the role of kinship, clans, and families in Anishinaabeg politics. Ethnohistorians like Hickerson (1962; 1963; 1974; 1988) have significantly

obscured the relationship between clans and families within politics. I would also argue that the European construction of the binary public vs. private sphere has also served to create confusion by separating families from political structures in analysis. Whereas, my analysis of the stories and ethnohistorical literature concludes clan/families and political structures were embedded and co-constitutional. They were the same. Balance was achieved by their combination, not their separation. The same argument could be made for economics and family/clan.

According to Miller (2010), McNally (2009), and Kugel (1998), Elders were considered Gichi-Anishinaabeg because of their access to power and their proven ability to live the good life, *mino-bimaadiziwin*. The village council was made up of the Gichi-Anishinaabeg from each doodemag of the village. Each family-hunting band would send their Elder to attend the council to represent their family. Together these families, organized by clan affiliation, were the *clans-in-council* (Flocken, 2013; Fontaine, 2009; Johnston, 1976; Watts, 2006). Villages were composed of many bands, which were extended family groups. Combined, these family groups constituted doodemag (Witgen, 2012; Meyer, 1994). These family bands would join their even more extended families of the clans, from outside the village, to discuss matters of common interest in larger councils. The clan would be led in council by a recognized Gichi-Anishinaabeg of the entire clan/family. I understand these to be the leaders called Anike-Ogimaa in the literature (Fontaine, 2009; White, 1991). In much of the literature, these leaders have been defined as headmen and the Elders referenced as separate from band headmen. However, my argument is that it is an error to separate family, clan, and political structure in the case of the Anishinaabeg. Elders were for the most part political headmen attending council.

Imagine it this way: in your hunting band, your grandfather is the leader; when your grandfather and his siblings get together, their father's generation are the Elders and therefore are the leaders. It was an integrated sociopolitical structure with no private vs public sphere. Familial space was always political space. Family leaders were political leaders. It was the Gichi-Anishinaabeg and their eldest offspring who led their own hunting bands who attended village councils and selected an Ogimaa to facilitate the clans-in-council.

### **3.3 Gaagiigidowininni: Speaking for Ogimaag**

There is some disagreement in the Anishinaabeg literature on the role of the speaker, the *Gaagiigidowininni*. According to Miller (2010) the speaker was employed by an Ogimaa and specific set of Gichi-Anishinaabeg to convey the decisions they had arrived at to the village or to act as a diplomat for Ogimaa with foreigners. Miller (2010) posits that speakers were employed when Ogimaa needed someone with more oratorical skill than their own to convey messages in important moments. For Flocken (2013) the *Gaagiigidowininni* was the selected leader of a given village council who facilitated the council and conveyed its will to the people. Chute (1998), in her biography of Shingwaukonse, utilizes the definition of speaker that Miller uses as she narrates that Shingwaukonse was a speaker for chiefs much earlier in his life before he became a recognized Ogimaa. If this were the case, it would not fit with Flocken's (2013) position that the local council's speaker was chosen from among the Gichi-Anishinaabeg representing the various doodemag at council. The idea of a speaker being separate from the Elders might fit with the story of council and Maudjee-kawiss. The bear speaker

wearing the sash in this story does not attend the council of Elders to discuss Maudjee-Kawiss' appearance.

What is clear from the literature is that the leadership positions within the Anishinaabeg political system flowed directly from their kinship system. There was no public versus private sphere. Elders represented their clans and families. Families were important political and economic actors; the Anishinaabeg system was made to work with this political culture rather than against it. Leaders did not exercise coercion over their families; they facilitated communication and mediated disputes. Each family was given voice at council. Power was shared. Authority came from the families; it was not wielded over them. On these points, there appears to be consensus. It also reflects the paradigm established by the analysis of stories which demonstrated collaboration rather than coercion.

### **3.4 Mayosewiniwag: War Chiefs**

The literature on war chiefs really starts to arise when ethnohistorians are studying the Anishinaabeg's relationship to entrenched colonial empires on Turtle Island. They are identified in the literature as at odds with Ogimaa and Elders. The individuals commonly identified in the literature with nativism were represented by ethnohistorians as war chiefs (Dowd, 1993; White, 1991). Kugel (1998) argues that the main factionalism in Minnesota Ojibwe communities was between war chiefs and civil chiefs over the question of assimilation and the dispossession of land. Accommodationist civil chiefs chose agriculture and a syncretic relationship to Christianity. This relationship also took place with the Canadian state, such as with Shingwaukonse (Chute, 1998, pp. 237). Accommodationist chiefs

thought rebellion had failed as a pathway to the good life. They were opposed by young men and their leaders identified as war chiefs by ethnohistorians. The war chiefs thought the Manidoog of the Ogimaa and Gichi-Anishinaabeg allied with empire had failed. The war chiefs were fighting to preserve the Anishinaabeg relationship to the land. This makes sense in the context of the story of the dog, where domestication of animals was against the treaty relationship with clan animals.

Within the literature, war chiefs have been identified as having temporary roles for specific missions, rather than permanent places in a hierarchy of leadership (Miller, 2010). Much of the literature describes them as young, coercive, and hotheaded (Schenck, 1997; Kugel, 1998; Meyer, 1994; White, 1991). Miller (2010) however, does not describe them as such. Her work on the *Mayosewininiwag* theorizes that much like other leaders – Ogimaa, Gichi-Anishinaabe, Midewijig – the military leaders also relied on persuasion and the charismatic pull of their access to Manidoog power as their main source of authority. Miller goes further and argues that the distinction adopted by Kugel (1998) between war and civil chiefs was derived from Charles Cleland, who conceptualized inside and outside chiefs, and this analysis doesn't necessarily hold up to scrutiny.

Treuer (2011) also argued that the distinctions articulated by Kugel and Cleland were overstated, especially during the era he was studying where many leaders such as Bagone-Giizhig II and Flat Mouth combined civil and military roles. Treuer (2015) notes that for many of the communities who expanded into the west fighting Dakota for land, they lacked Crane or Loon clan representation and would likely have elected a chieftainship line from the warrior clans, such as the Bear, Marten, or Wolf doodemag. It may be the case that those identified as “war chiefs” were specifically leaders from the warrior clans on the



Western edge of Anishinaabewaki. The Bear clan for instance was the holder of the war pipe. The division may have been between clans more likely to get into conflict and those more likely to integrate and practice kinship alliances. These differences could have been embodied in the different responsibilities associated with the Bear and Crane clans' roles in society.

Within the literature, there is occasional reference to the reality that in times of crisis a war chief may be given control over a village or multiple villages with the consent of those communities to govern it until the end of the crisis (Fontaine, 2009; Johnston, 1976). It is possible that Bagone-Giizhig II exercising the traditional role of a war leader to take power in a time of massive land loss and the eradication of the hunting way of life could be an example of the innovations in leadership noted by Treuer (2011). Or it could be that the support that war chiefs gained within the community, based around opposing the leadership of clan Elders and headmen who proposed ceding land and becoming farmers, had a traditional basis within the clan system and reflected their understanding of the aadizookaanag. The warrior doodemag had a responsibility to protect the people and their way of life from enslavement (domestication) and the end of mino-bimaadiziwin. I infer that the central feature of all the nativist movements was a claim that an Ogimaa could not dispossess people of their lands. I think the evidence suggests this was a theme that also held true within the Anishinaabeg case. A specific Ogimaa could not sell land because attachment cannot be bought or sold. The literature I surveyed had little to no engagement with Anishinaabeg aadizookaanag in relation to war chiefs.

I conclude that the relationship between humans and animals does not define political leadership positions within ethnohistory at first blush. When defining the Ogimaa, Gichi-Anishinaabeg, Mayosewininiwag, and Gaagiigidowininni they are not understood primarily in relationship to animals. The literature notes their access to power, but it does not understand leadership through a lens of international relations that includes animals. As I noted in chapter two the literature has a gap on how political leadership is connected to animals.

#### **4. Zagaswediwin: Clan Structure and Decision-Making**

I argue that given that Anishinaabeg stories involve animals in council we should look at the documentary record to develop our understanding of councils. I contend that councils were the form of politics used by the Anishinaabeg to mediate relationships between clans and nations. To make this case, I conduct a literature review of the clan system and councils. In this chapter, I survey the literature on the Anishinaabeg clan system and its relationship to the political leadership. I conclude that the council form is central to the literature on political leadership and its exercise in Anishinaabeg communities before confinement on reserves and the intervention of the Indian Act by the Canadian state. In this chapter, I centre focus on the *clans-in-council* as the scalable way deliberation was organized in Anishinaabeg communities. I relate the council form to the way Anishinaabeg communities were understood to relate to land. I also review the literature on community fissioning to reveal the non-coercive values at play. I argue for the significance of the way clans structured political decision-making and the way this process

was set up to respond to a world that was shapeshifting through constant flux. I conclude there is still a gap in the literature on how animal nations are directly communicating in councils through the clan system.

As aforementioned, Coulthard (2014) and Alfred (1999; 2005) argue that the “politics of recognition” has Indigenous peoples adopting the state form of governance, while both Ladner (2003) and Henderson (2000a; 2000b) argued that the state was in opposition to non-coercive kinship orders. The Anishinaabeg stories and ethnohistory show that the Anishinaabeg had a system of governance adapted to their local ecological order. It was not a state. Indeed, the state attempted to disrupt it. To understand the Anishinaabeg clan system and council forms it is crucial to understand its governance processes before the imposition of the state form by the settler.

In addition to the stories referenced in the last chapter, there are abundant references within the ethnohistorical literature to the use of councils by the Anishinaabeg as a form of decision-making and governance. Councils were the formal and ceremonial forum for decision-making and opportunity for the ceremonial rearticulating of relationship, story, and alliance. Flocken (2013) argues that the ethnohistorical literature provides four related levels of councils: the local council, the area council, the greater area council, and the nation level of council. Fontaine (2009), on the other hand, contends that the highest level of council was that of the grand council of the Three Fires Confederacy. Miller (2010) asserts at the village, or local level, there were 3 constituency councils: the Gichi-Anishinaabeg, the Women, and the young men or warriors. Anishinaabeg academics have also identified treaty councils (Craft, 2014; Stark, 2010). Rather than a focus on the number or hierarchal typology of councils, a focus on the politics of form and relationships

between participants is most instructive to the politics of zagaswediwin. Trying to create a taxonomy of all the types of existing councils throughout the different eras of Anishinaabeg existence, while interesting, obscures the point. The council was the political form employed by the Anishinaabeg to come to decisions. By studying the way other-than-human nations manifest in the council we can better understand the role of animals at play within Anishinaabeg politics that we found in Anishinaabeg stories.

#### **4.1 Doodemag Origins**

I argue the clan system is foundational to Anishinaabeg identities and political systems. Reflecting the centering of story in Anishinaabeg worldview, Witgen (2012) argues the ideological history of the clans can be found in the aadizookaanag. As Witgen writes,

The capacity to shape-shift, that is the ability of animate beings to take the shape of other animate beings, also explains the relationship between human communities and *niinwidoodemag*, the animal totems that represent a distant ancestor from time when human beings first began to live on earth. These animals were understood as blood relatives who were progenitors of extended families of human beings. (2012, pp. 80)

According to Witgen (2012) and Bohaker (2006), the clans both share and have different lineages. They have overlapping connections, but they are also distinct. They are not one blood related family. There is no singular nation. It is a web, a network with multiple poles. This network of families broke beyond the boundaries of single species.

Both Witgen (2012) and Bohaker (2006) argue that kinship was the centre of the way the Anishinaabeg ordered their world. Bohaker (2006) claims that kinship within the oral tradition of the Anishinaabeg was not bound by the division between human and animals. According to the creation story the Anishinaabeg *doodemag* were understood as descendants of separate other-than-human ancestors, rather than descendent of the same

single human ancestor (pp. 59). In other words, Bohaker argues “given the complex spiritual world in which the Anishinaabe peoples lived, and their origin stories lack western notions of a human-animal divide, the concept of *nindoodem* transcends physical realms. The Great Lakes region is a political space that accommodated and still accommodates a more inclusive category of personhood” (pp. 65). In the story she relates human form beaver and rodent form beaver people both come from the actual flesh of Gichi-Amik. Bohaker’s interpretation of the Anishinaabeg world is one of landscape where kinship is based on shared spirit rather than common blood. A landscape where the Anishinaabe cannot be separated from the spiritual dimensions of the land (pp. 66). Building on Bohaker’s analysis, I argue it structured their relationship with animals and their approach to engaging with Europeans. I would argue this is reflected in the stories and the theories of Anishinaabewin we have reviewed so far.

Within the writing of other Anishinaabeg community members we can find more answers about how *ogimaawiwin* was manifest in the clan system. Within these stories we can begin to further understand the role of kinship diplomacy in Anishinaabeg life. What emerges from the literature was that story, specifically the story of kinship replaces the state as a way of binding a social formation together. According to Warren (1970) the principal division of the Anishinaabeg was the *doodem*, which was an ancient division of kin and blood. Each *doodem* has a symbol, and descended the male line. Intermarriage was forbidden between *doodem* kin, even if they belonged to distinct tribes (pp. 34-35). A secondary division is that of bands based on geographical location and cohabitation. Warren posits that the *Mide* priests recognize only five original clans that came from the saltwater. The *Monsoni* according to Warren are one of those original clans (pp. 44).

Whereas, modern Mide leader Benton-Banai (1988) contends there are originally seven clans.

At the time of his writing, Warren (1970) had identified 21 existing doodem divisions of the Ojibway. Warren argues that his informants told him they are all subdivisions of the five great families (pp. 44-45). Warren does not clearly specify the relationship between the Ojibway identity and the Anishinaabeg identity historically within the context of the clan system. He inadequately assesses the geographical distribution of clan identities within the context of all the peoples who identify as Anishinaabeg. Thus, his work is framed through what appears to be an exclusively Ojibway lens, which makes invisible other Anishinaabeg identities and hides the continuity of clan identity outside tribal identities constructed by engagement with Europeans. According to Warren (1970) the Crane clan claims chieftainship over the tribe and during councils of different tribes was often the speaker given the responsibility to represent the will of the tribe. Eagle clan is recognized as a subdivision of the Crane clan (pp. 48). Schenck argues that Warren's history of the Anishinaabeg clans prioritizes the specific lens of the Crane clan due to his kinship ties to the Cranes (1997, pp. 61).

According to Benton-Banai (1988) the clan system was given to the Anishinaabeg by the creator to avoid suffering and disorder. There were seven clans and seven gifts. The Crane and Loon clans shared chieftainship, with disputes being mediated by the fish clan. This was a built-in way to resolve disputes and provide balance (pp. 74). Roseau River Midewiwin (1990) assert that the Three Fires was a spiritual confederacy of practitioners of the Midewiwin, which has 16 levels and seven sacred teachings, that each have seven

levels of understanding. The clan system was how the lodge was ordered and gave structure and roles to the different peoples.

What is common in these descriptions is a spiritual and political system ordered by clan affiliation that defines a person's role in society and together the clans compose a whole. That whole that Warren describes is best summarized by Sinclair (2013) who writes:

This definition of "An-ish-in-aub-ag" is one that describes the "spontaneous people" as a people full of value, possibility, and continuous re-creation. They are a people with a dynamic history and culture who are constantly changing and becoming. They are also a community constituted by open-ended values of ambiguity and irony but also in firm and defined relationships with entities throughout Creation. The Anishinaabeg are an eternally un-finished people, constantly growing. Highly contextualized, this definition challenges the very basis for how a people, a community, and a nation can be defined. (pp. 39)

These stories create the shared identity and attachment that bind families into clans, and clans into nations.

Ethnohistory has finally started to consider more than the European gaze. Witgen (2012), Bohaker (2006), and Greenberg and Morrison (1982) argue that the French misunderstood the complexity and the breadth of Anishinaabeg identity by not recognizing the foundational place of the doodemag and their multiple situated identities within Anishinaabewaki. Thus, the ethnohistorians who have relied on French writings as their main sources have consistently failed to comprehend the durability and central importance of clan identity. Bishop (1974) identified this problem as something still being reckoned with by ethnohistorians. Bishop argued the paucity of sources made it difficult to conclude whether the named totem groups were the nations the French referred to, in the end he concluded they were (pp. 341-344). Bohaker argues that only by comparative analysis of the documentary record with oral tradition and linguistic analysis can any level of certainty be found for ethnohistorians.

Witgen (2012) and Bohaker (2006) both note the overlapping and layered identities that existed within Anishinaabewaki. According to Bohaker (2006) one of the central challenges for ethnohistorians has been the complex and layered systems of identity among the Anishinaabeg. Not only do the clans call themselves by their totem, but they also have metaphors from which they identify their clan. Crane clan being echo-makers, and beaver clan being known as carriers. In addition, in many bands none of the women of a group, except for unmarried girls, would have shared the doodemag of the related males because of marriage practices. Moreover, there were also geographic identities attached to many segments of people in Anishinaabewaki, such as *Kitchisipirini*, great water people, or *Outagami*, people from the other side of the water (pp.63-64).

Bohaker (2006) points out that people may have had secondary identities related to their location or occupations during the regular seasonal cycles of migration between parts of their territories. Nonetheless, Bohaker expresses certainty when she argues that what the French understood as nations were really the doodemag, the clans (pp. 64). The seasonal cycle and its inherent mobility was a key feature of the Anishinaabeg and it also served to complicate French understanding of Anishinaabeg identities. Bohaker (2006) writes:

It is this mobility that complicates the mapping of political geography and the writing of political history. For not even one half of the year would it have been accurate to locate the Nipissing near the lake that now bears their name. And even during their time of residence, parties of Nipissing were engaged in long-distance trade missions. People participated in widespread but seasonally expected, politically negotiated movements. (pp. 67)

These seasonal cycles challenged the analysis of ethnohistorical data sets, thus one needs to read the work of early ethnohistorians critically both on an ideological level, but also on a factual level of their sourcing.



Instead, Bohaker (2006) begins her argument by analyzing the signatures of chiefs on *the Treaty of Montreal (1701)* to show that rather than identifying themselves or the Anishinaabeg in general, the chiefs signed using the doodemag symbols of their villages, thus marking their representation of specific enduring doodemag. Bohaker argues there are correspondence and continuity between these clan symbols used in 1701 with marks left by chiefs on other documents both before and after (pp. 51-53). I argue, considering the creation and recreation stories, these images endure throughout time. Bohaker (2010) notes that clan “identity was so important that it was communicated frequently, especially in formal councils and while traveling, through a range of visual clues that included face and body paint, hair style, and material culture” (pp. 13). Kinship clearly ordered both the symbolic and daily life of the Anishinaabeg, from styling one’s hair to who they were politically.

McDonnell (2015) and Bohaker (2006) posit that on a practical level clan identity shaped marriage and alliance patterns, as well as facilitating long-distance travel, along with access to community resources. Bohaker is clear in her analysis that she interprets clan identity to be the most important sphere of collective identity for the Anishinaabeg peoples (pp. 57) For instance Bohaker (2010) claims:

Members of the same nindoodem would, by custom and practice, regard each other as siblings upon meeting even if they came from separate communities and had never before met. Expectations of hospitality and alliance between members having the same identity (and therefore being part of the same extended family) shaped regional politics through to the nineteenth century. (pp. 13)

Not only did the identity shape regional politics, but the dynamic of relative vs. stranger was the central fault line of the Anishinaabeg world view throughout their territories and border regions. We can conclude that according to the available literature doodemag identity structured familial and political engagement.

## 4.2 Zagaswediwin: Clans-in-Council

I argue that the scalable political model of the Anishinaabeg, which serves as an alternative to the state, was the clans-in-council. Given the enduring images and identity of the doodemag both in the aadizookaanag and the historical record, it appears as if clan identity structured Anishinaabeg life, including politics. When looked at from a structural perspective the Anishinaabeg literature is in broad agreement that a council structure was generally a meeting of the various clans in attendance. When reflecting on the stories reviewed earlier, generally the doodem animals are the characters in the story attending council (Sinclair, 2013). There seems to be alignment in this regard between story and historical record.

Often the ethnohistorical literature mentions band or family heads, as well as Elders, as attending council. Understanding that bands and families were component parts of clans makes Flocken's analysis clearer. Flocken (2013) has termed this structure *the clans-in-council*. Fontaine (2009), Johnston (1976), and Flocken (2013) understand that the clans meet in council at the village level. Basil Johnston (1976) suggests that like the birds, the doodemag gathered twice yearly for council and the exercise of chieftainship by the Crane doodem. He speculates that the leaders of each clan-in-council were the Elders. Thus, family heads and Elders are the same position. Fontaine (2009) argues that this was the structure at the level of the Three Fires Confederacy. When the clans-in-council met, everyone attending went to sit with their clans rather than some other way of being situated. The clans-in-council form according to Flocken (2013) was used at the four levels

of councils he identified as used by the Anishinaabeg. Clan identity structured political engagement according to his analysis.

Miller (2010) theorizes that the village council was most important because of the role played by the value of village sovereignty within Anishinaabeg politics. According to Miller (2010) village sovereignty was a key feature of Anishinaabeg politics. This view is shared on a continental level by settler historian Richard White (1991), who argues that village sovereignty was a political organizing principle for the entire *Pays d'en Haut* during the Anishinaabeg-French Fur Trade era. White understands the political geography throughout the *Pays d'en Haut* as a non-state network of villages. White argues that the basic unit of analysis in the *Pays d'en Haut* should be the village - that even what historians and anthropologists know as tribes or confederacies were networks of villages. From my reading of the Anishinaabeg literature sovereignty cannot be said to rest in one level. Individuals, families, bands, clans, and villages held the ability and responsibility to shapeshift. Communication and deliberation was used to collaborate and create life together. The village level does seem to be an important social space in the seasonal cycle. Locating sovereignty as centralized in one specific level seems to me to be searching for a location to transpose a state.

Miller (2010) argues that each family appointed a member to village council, through which clans were represented. Both Miller (2010) and Witgen (2012) posit that “village” was understood socially as those you choose to reside together with, rather than a physical location. It endured as social space rather than physical location. When accounting for the seasonal cycle of the Anishinaabeg, it would make sense that different councils at different times of the year would be different in scale, scope, and size. Yet what endured

was the council form of the clans-in-council led by the Gichi-Anishinaabeg and their selected facilitator-diplomat the Ogimaa. Thus, from my standpoint it appears the literature concludes that the politics of form is central to understanding Anishinaabeg Ogimaawiwin. The council form was what defined the international politics within the *Pays d'en Haut*, or Anishinaabewaki.

For the Anishinaabeg constructing the necessary social space to renew relationships was central to the council form. The doodemag system provided the scalable sociopolitical system to be able to do this. This held true even in the case of composite villages made up of groups who were identified by Europeans as from different tribes. Innes (2013), Witgen (2012), McDonnell (2015), Meyer (1994), and White (1991) all describe the multiethnic nature of summer villages within Anishinaabewaki during the very earliest contact between the French and the Anishinaabeg. McDonnell (2015) and Witgen (2012) both reject the refugee community premise of White's (1991) concepts of the middle ground paradigm.

Witgen (2012) contends that, instead of refugee communities, these large summer villages were pre-existing centres of trade and ceremony that predated the invasion of Anishinaabewaki by French interlopers, whether trader, soldier, or missionary. Witgen (2012) specifically details the role of Shagwaamikong as a regional trade hub at the west end of Gichigamiig, first visited by Jesuit Priest Claude Allouz in 1665. La Pointe/Chequamegon/Shagwaamikong contained more than the Ojibwe proper: it included Cree, Mushkego, all Three Fires Confederacy Nations, and Illinois slave traders. Witgen (2012) analyzes the records left by Allouz in the Jesuit Relations and concludes Shagwaamikong was made up of 2000 or more people with multiple surrounding satellite

villages (pp. 64-68). The village was set at the intersection of waterways to the Great Lakes, Mississippi watershed, the Great Plains, as well as the Northern Boreal forest and quickly became a hub of the fur trade. My argument is that I infer from the sources all the peoples who lived at Shagwaamikong were part of the political structure. If Witgen's (2012) and Flocken's (2013) analysis holds true, there would be clan seats for the "Cree" in councils of the village of Shagwaamikong, if the matter affected them of course. The fluidity of the council form and the kinship diplomacy of the Anishinaabeg worldview allowed this to be so. What we can conclude from this survey is that the *clans-in-council* is the form of Anishinaabeg deliberation present in the literature. It is where conversation of shapeshifting took place.

### **4.3 Council Process and Consultation**

According to the literature I surveyed, Anishinaabeg councils were very different from the liberal democratic institutions, or the state form, which now govern Turtle Island. Community consensus-building and consultation were hallmarks of Anishinaabeg politics. According to Anishinaabe scholars Treuer (2011), Fontaine (2009), Schenck (1997), and Watts (2006), councils brought together all the leading spiritual, political, and military leaders, alongside the family heads, and decisions were arrived at by consensus. This demonstrates that they didn't divide leadership in European categories. Treuer (2011) also notes that Anishinaabeg consensus could not impose decisions on minority factions, nor could the majority speak for the minority.

Instead of coercion, representative debate and the will of the majority, Johnston (1982) describes the council process as one of collaborative decision-making. Deliberation

in Anishinaabeg councils was not the debate we see on CBC, CPAC, or CSPAN. Johnston (1982) explains, “for three days the chiefs sat in council, considering the question from different angles. There was no debate. Instead, the speakers sought illumination through mutual inquiry” (pp. 171). The Anishinaabeg clans-in-council sought to try on different ideas, plans, and scenarios from dissimilar vantage points to arrive at a plan that they could agree on. Anyone who didn’t agree could leave and the decision taken would not be binding on their family or followers. They were not coerced.

Indeed, the focus of the Anishinaabeg on building community consensus of the clans through deliberation has been pathologized in the ethnographic literature by Smith (1973), who argues that their focus on consensual democracy has inhibited progress. This argument has been the basis of the British and Canadian government’s Indian policy throughout history. The Canadian government has imposed new political systems on the Anishinaabeg and others because of their perception of Indigenous savagery. In this context savagery is the lack of “proper authority” or what I understand as the ability to coerce minority factions (Walls, 2010; Smith, 1973; Williams, 2012). This amounts to different conceptions of agency for human beings. Anishinaabeg governance respected the agency of dissenters.

For instance, Walls (2010) argues that when Sir John A. MacDonald was responsible for Indian policy he developed programs and policies to fundamentally alter the way Indigenous communities made decisions by implementing systems that taught Indigenous peoples to exercise authority and power like Europeans. They were taught to *govern* others. The Canadian government’s goal of Federal Indian policy was to replace tribal organization with municipal institutions. The government’s intention to destroy tribal

political systems can be read in reports from the era, as well as in the parliamentary record (Walls, 2010, pp. 62). The thoughts of William Sprague, Deputy Superintendent of the Indian Branch, are illustrative of the ideology behind governance reform. Policy responded to the perception of Indigenous governance as “chaotic” and “anathema to assimilation.” Sprague said that the “Indian mind is slow to accept improvements until much time is consumed in discussion and reflection” (Walls, 2010, pp. 65).

While it can be dangerous to take stereotypes as true, it appears colonial stereotypes can give us some window into Anishinaabeg Zagaswediwin and its associated decision-making processes when aligned with Anishinaabeg framing. Colonial officials perceived too much time went to discussion and reflection. It appears that the Federal government specifically made the band system to curtail discussion and reflection. In addition, unlike the representatives elected in liberal democracy who had the protection of the private vs the public sphere divide, a family head or Gichi-Anishinaabeg lived with -and depended on - the assistance of their followers and family on a day-to-day basis. They could not hide from them. They lived in the same wigwams and camp circles. Indeed, it was this proximity and coupling of kinship and politics that was central to the process of the council and the inherent accountability and transparency in Anishinaabeg governance. Behind the formal councils were a significant amount of informal politics and familial consultation.

Informal politics was crucial to the council form. Miller (2010), theorizes that council processes involved considerable caucusing, discussions, and negotiation among families before and after the formal councils each day. Discussion around campfires was central to consultation process undertaken by family heads and Gichi-Anishinaabeg.

Overall, Miller outlines the process as follows 1) informal discussion days before 2) Pipe

ceremony 3) recite history 4) recite lineages or dreams 5) discuss formally the issue or matter that required council. This process might be repeated multiple times over multiple days with informal consultation at the campfire providing the Gichi-Anishinaabeg with advice from their families constantly informing daily deliberation. This was the process of Zagaswediwin, the Anishinaabe council form. It was more than the actual council meeting itself. While this outline of the council process provides depth to the way the clans consulted with their constituent families, it still leaves a gap in terms of how different bands could have consulted with their animal nation kin to determine the impact of community decisions on them.

#### **4.4 Ogimaawiwin, Council, and Territoriality**

In this section, I argue the council form has a corresponding territoriality that is an alternative to state based territoriality. Relationship to land was structured by flux, not linear progress or a static logic constructive of the state form. Understanding this territoriality, or production of space, and its connection to kinship is necessary to understand kinship diplomacy with animal nations.

The council played an important role in mediating the use of territory between clans and families. Territorial mediation was a central practice of Anishinaabeg internationalism. During the development of the *Treaty of Westphalia (1648)* between European states territory was imagined as the private property of the sovereign. In Canada, this has come to be understood as crown land. Within the territory of the Canadian state, the functionaries of this apparatus have historically claimed exclusive authority to regulate both humans and nature within their borders. Within this structure the state granted the right to individual



persons to have an exclusive claim to a portion of that territory in exchange for taxation.

This was private property. In Canada, this is fee-simple land ownership. It does not include mineral rights.

The literature suggests Anishinaabeg concepts of land and land rights were different because they were not organized into a state, nor for most of their history is there evidence for private ownership of land by individuals, agencies, or corporations. Anishinaabeg relationships to land and other-than-human persons was conceptualized as multipolar, not hierarchal. It had more to do with relationship to the Manidoog mediating resources than to land as reified object. Grounded normativity better describes this than European conceptions of property. Simpson (2017) describes it in relationship to the dispossession of land and female bodies:

Aki is not capital. It is not commodity. Kwe is not capital. Kwe is not commodity. Throughout my life, the land-based people I have come in contact with categorically refuse this expansive dispossession. In some ways, this refusal is acute in my homeland because we have so little Nishnaabeg space left. My people are out on the land, even if we are criminalized, even if we have to ask settlers for false permission, even though the land is not pristine, even though, even though. This is in part because within Nishnaabeg thought, the opposite of dispossession is not possession, it is deep, reciprocal, consensual *attachment*. Indigenous bodies don't relate to land by possessing or owning it or having control over it. We relate to land through connection - generative, affirmative, complex, overlapping, and nonlinear *relationship*. The reverse process of dispossession within Indigenous thought then is Nishnaabeg intelligence, Nishnaabewin. The opposite of dispossession is grounded normativity. This is our power. (pp. 43)

What I understand Simpson to be arguing is that the idea of owning something other than your own relationships does not fit with Anishinaabewin. Attachment denotes love and it implies sacrifice. It implies a treaty relationship. This is how I understand the role of land and water protectors. Its not about owning land like Europeans want to, but instead an expression for a love of land and the treaties with other than human peoples that implies. That said, this does not imply that settlers can keep invading and taking with unquenchable appetites like cannibalistic monsters. From my positionality I understand this to imply that

from within Anishinaabeg resurgence thought there is space for peoples to embody attachment and engage in treaty on the same land.

On the other hand, Deloria (2013) and Simpson (2011) both make clear that specific people have special attachments to specific spaces of revelation. Simpson illustrates Deloria's point with her reference to the annual gathering of the fish clans and nations at Mnjikanming. In Bohaker's (2006) analysis Perrot's recording of the origins of clans from the original animals there is a concept of attachment to territory based on where the flesh of the original animals was scattered and where the Beaver people emerged. Similarly, Johnston's (2001) Stark and Bauerkemper's (2012) story of Maudjee-kawiss there is a notion of boundaries and territory, but the borders are different from state borders.

What seems to signify the boundaries of the Anishinaabeg world is the presence of kin vs. strangers. According to Witgen (2012), there were only two essential categories of persons within Anishinaabewaki: *inawemaagan* and *meyaagizid*. Those one was related to and those people who were dangerous outsiders because of the possibility of enmity. Kin had rights, enemies did not. Settler philosopher Pratt (2002), in his work on the Indigenous origins of American pragmatism as a philosophy, argues that in the Eastern Woodlands diplomatic culture, the place of outsiders was imagined through the lens of the stories of Windigoog nations, cannibalistic outsiders (pp. 90-93). The main themes of these stories are through demonstrating kindness and hospitality you can shapeshift dangerous strangers into kin. The categories of *inawemaagan* and *meyaagizid* can change (Witgen, 2012). Just like Nanaboozhoo joining the wolf family, strangers can become kin.

Anishinaabe scholars who have taken on the question of land tenure and territorialism tend to use a lens of fluidity. Miller (2010), Flocken (2013), Witgen (2012),

Fontaine (2009), and Simpson (2008b) all argue that resource use was constantly negotiated based on the needs of a given band or clan within a village or larger area. Treuer (2015), Fontaine (2009), Doherty (2007), and McDonnell (2015) understand resources as communally owned and allotted based on the needs of families, bands, and clans on a yearly basis. One of the main roles for a council was the yearly allotment of resources rights to families. Allotments changed with the flux of the local ecology and the needs of one's relatives and followers. Within this framework, one of the main roles of the Gichi-Anishinaabeg and the Ogimaag was the negotiation of boundaries and allotment of resources to their clans and component families. One of the core features of the clans-in-council system was the structuring of decision-making to promote sharing and generosity with related doodemag and those sharing a local ecology. For instance, you might know that if you claimed too many resources your sister or daughter and her children in another band might starve.

Clans-in-council yearly apportioned the rice stands, sugar bushes, and hunting territories for the various clans and their subcomponent families and bands. Within these allotments there was a notion of trespass and exclusivity of harvesting rights. One of the main reasons the allotment of resources was constantly negotiated was the reality of Anishinaabe life involved a constant fluidity of band and village membership. It also required attention to the way the world embodied flux. Static alignment or boundaries were not assumed. Change was assumed. I conclude, councils regulated resource use and territorial shapeshifting. Fissioning resulted in population fluctuation, thus precipitating constant negotiation. Therefore, councils happened on a yearly cycle. Throughout the year

the leaders ensured their followers maintained resource use commitments of their family bands and clans negotiated within council.

Treuer (2011) argues that until well into the treaty-making era with the Americans, Anishinaabe Ogimaa and Gichi-Anishinaabeg represented groups of people rather than territory. This underscores that councils negotiated resource use. Land ownership was not an assumption under discussion. Witgen (2012) argues Anishinaabewaki needs to be understood as a social space produced by the constantly transforming alliance politics of the Anishinaabeg. The Anishinaabeg land base expanded drastically as did the peoples in alliance with them. What did not change until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the multipolar organization of the clan system, nor the deliberative nature of the council form. From my standpoint, this is crucial to understanding Anishinaabeg governance. I understand the Anishinaabe constantly used processes of consensual negotiation to renew their relationships and adjust to the flux of a constantly changing world. They did this with people and with other-than-human persons.

Clan relationships structuring access to territory can also be seen in trade patterns. Fontaine (2009) and McDonnell (2015) both posit that trade routes should be understood as more than simply physical routes. Instead, they were networks of kinship relationships. Fur traders had to become family members to use the trade routes and benefit from the support and commercial relationship of Anishinaabeg clanmates along the route. They had to marry into, or be adopted into, specific gift-exchange relationships and networks. The social routes shifted across the landscape west as many Anishinaabeg migrated west claiming expanding the territory they knew as home and their network of kin. While

territory fluctuated, social networks and clan relationships were renewed and constantly expanded.

Eventually, through engagement with the realities of invasion and colonization by Europeans, and later the Canadian and American settler states, Anishinaabeg articulations of their conceptions of land began to shift. Treuer (2011) contends that Bagone-Gizhiig II was one of the first Ojibwa to intervene in the treaty process claiming to represent a territory rather than a specified group of people, and that this contributed significantly to the hostility many other Anishinaabeg had for him. In this vein, Dowd (1993) argues that the division between civil chiefs and war chiefs was a development of the civil chiefs for the first time claiming the right to sell land. Land, according to nativist leaders, was supposed to be held in common among all Native peoples. Dowd argues that accommodationist chiefs sold other community's land to gain gifts from the treaty process. The American or British empires committed to processes of dispossession were happy to oblige.

Previously, treaties had been understood as arrangements for land sharing within the Anishinaabeg council form (Simpson, 2008; Stark, 2010; Fontaine, 2009). Simpson (2008b) uses the "One Dish" treaty between the Anishinaabeg and the Haudenosaunee as an example of how peoples shared land but had sovereignty over their lives, clan, and relationships with other nations. Doherty (2007), in his study of the development of tribal state institutions, theorizes that the deployment of sovereignty to mean an exclusive claim to government over a territory is a reaction to colonialism. Sovereignty was not equated with the attachment to land of the Anishinaabeg before the invasion of American and Canadian states. From a resurgence perspective, the adoption of the rhetoric of sovereignty reflects the Anishinaabeg's pursuit of the politics of recognition. Sovereignty in the

European sense means monopoly of violence on a given territory and exclusive rights to that territory. In European political parlance to claim sovereignty is to claim statehood. This is markedly different from freedom of relationship or sharing and negotiating through council that exists both in story and in Anishinaabeg resurgence authors' articulation of nationhood.

I understand the logical conclusion of a resurgence-based argument to be that claiming to exercise sovereignty over land is the result of the politics of recognition. According to Coulthard (2014) argument, the Anishinaabeg are building institutions which must be recognized as legitimate by the settler state to gain self-determination. Due to the power of empire, these institutions are required to govern territory in a way intelligible to Euro-Americans and to obtain recognition from the settler states. Otherwise, when unable to govern effectively according to the settler state, like many states around the world they are understood as *failed states* and are taken over by the settler state bureaucracies, whether they be Indian Agent or third-party manager.<sup>18</sup>

I understand Simpson (2017) and Coulthard (2014) to be arguing that, to be recognized, Anishinaabe communities have adopted notions of sovereignty that are reactions to invasion. Unfortunately, they are in opposition to the notions of attachment, sharing, and constant negotiation of boundaries that once existed among allied villages sharing treaty and kinship through the clans-in-council. This type of territoriality does not respond to flux or get negotiated in council. My contention is that, following logically from

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<sup>18</sup> A third-party manager is a replacement for the Indian Agent of the early reserve era. The Indian Agent was charged with managing and overseeing reserve life and had power over chiefs. Indian Agents could determine who could enter and leave a reserve as well as who received government assistance. Third-party managers are privatized version of the Indian Agent employed by companies who profit from this business.

Simpson's (2017) and Coulthard's (2014) argument, that claiming exclusive sovereignty over land this way leads to the hegemony of zhaaganashiiyaadizi, not biskaabiiyang. It is the logic of states, not kinship diplomacy and councils.

#### **4.5 Treaty-Making and Kinship Diplomacy**

The Anishinaabeg conception of treaty must be understood within the paradigm provided by my earlier chapters and sections. In this section, I contend that to have a treaty with another nation is to commit to meet in council as kin. If we understand treaties as commitments to council, then to have treaties with animals is a commitment to meet animals in council as kin and allies.

The literature on treaty-making provides another entry point to understanding the role of councils in Anishinaabeg internationalism. Given that the Anishinaabeg literature frames relationships with animals as treaties this literature provides the context for better clarity. According to Innes (2013) relations with other groups was governed by kinship, and this was apparent in the treaty process. The treaty process was an extension of the council process, zagaswediwin (Stark, 2010). To have peace with outsiders they had to accept a kinship role and all the obligations and responsibilities that came with this relationship. Meyaagizid had to become Inawemaagan. Central to kinship roles in the diplomatic sense was the importance of reciprocity. This could be seen in the gift-giving before treaty. Participants were showing their intention and commitment to being relatives by sharing. In the Anishinaabeg world sharing is most often embodied in the form of a gift. Sinclair (2013) argues that:

Anyone who visits an Anishinaabeg community can view this practice today through the laying of tobacco, ceremonial give-aways, and the presentation of blankets, honoraria, and food by Anishinaabeg during feasts and social gatherings. Bagijiganan provide entryways to

Anishinaabeg communities, long-term or short-term, while the renewal of relationships are ensured by their ongoing and fair exchange. When accepted, *bagiijiganan* imply responsibilities between parties, a shared relationship, and are used most often to welcome newcomers into communities as relations. (pp. 18)

Sinclair is showing how gifts are central to Anishinaabeg community and the basic expression of kinship relationship. This is very different from contracts or surplus value.

Sharing and gifting as kinship practices can be seen in the political culture of treaty-making. According to Aimeé Craft (2013), kinship obligations were central Anishinaabeg notions informing the treaty process in the signing of Treaty One. Craft's work is an exploration of the Anishinaabeg treaty-making through the lens of the normative expectations set by Anishinaabeg *inaakonigewin* (law) and culture. Like Innes (2013) and Witgen (2012), in Craft's (2013) analysis, the Anishinaabeg understood treaty-making through the lens of sacred kinship obligations (pp. 13). Anishinaabeg treaty-making was a process of relationship building with all other animate beings because relationships are at the centre of Anishinaabeg *inaakonigewin* (pp. 16). Similarly, Williams (1999) argues that this cultural lens was shared with most of the Indigenous peoples throughout the Eastern Woodlands and defined Indigenous continental diplomacy. There was a subcontinental diplomatic culture shared throughout this political geography which was just as expansive as Europe and the state system. In other words, just as there was an international state-system of subcontinental relations in Europe created at Westphalia, there was a system of subcontinental politics based on kinship diplomacy throughout the Eastern Woodlands, and eventually the plains, of Turtle Island.

According to Craft (2013) and Simpson (2008b) Anishinaabeg treaties were often about sharing land and resources, and kinship was one's passport. Craft (2013) posits that the Anishinaabeg understanding of Treaty One was based upon the previous treaty culture



of sharing that was also part of Anishinaabeg inaakonigewin. Sharing treaties obligated the parties to act as relatives (pp. 60-65). This kinship diplomacy can be further understood throughout the wider literature on treaty-making. For example, Harold Johnson (2007), a Nehiyawak lawyer from Treaty Six, argues that the treaty process was an adoption of the settlers as cousins in Nehiyawak territory. He argues that the people who would become Canadians were adopted as cousins into the territory of Treaty Six forever and they have rights to share resources (pp27). What remains unclear in the literature was how European settlers were integrated or not into the clan systems and what role was imagined for them in Nehiyawak and Anishinaabeg councils at local levels.

Craft (2013) contends that the meaning of Treaty One, as with all diplomatic relationship, can be understood within the context of familial relationships. Treaty One was specifically constructed as a relationship between a mother and a child (pp. 93). The Crown was adopting the Anishinaabeg as their child. I would argue, key to understanding the relationship between a parent and their child is recognizing that children eventually grow up and become adults, no longer dependent on the parent. If the Anishinaabeg were agreeing to Crown paternalism, it was with the view to eventual political equality and sharing of the land. Craft (2014) argues that autonomy of children was respected based on stage of development. This is different from being adopted as cousins as they were in Treaty Six. Nonetheless adoption and kinship relations were clear in both treaties. Political models for this exist with the One Dish Treaty, or the Two Row Wampum.

Not only was a treaty a moment of adoption, it was also a continuing relationship. Adoption is only the beginning of a relationship. Stark (2010) argues that Anishinaabeg treaty-making was primarily process-oriented, focusing on the principles of respect,

responsibility, and renewal. For Stark respect, responsibility, and renewal are principles which embody the values necessary for durable relationships. Rather than a treaty being a document, it was a relationship embodied by the institutional practice of the council where diplomats, or doodemag leaders and Ogimaag, gathered to renew their sacred obligations and reinforce their kinship ties with each other. They gathered to retell the stories that structured their world. With this lens in mind, we can understand the clans-in-council was the constant renewal of the Anishinaabeg treaty relationship.

Stark's (2010) description of the council process as treaty demonstrates the role of sacred, natural, and deliberative law in kinship diplomacy. According to Borrows (2010a), deliberative law is the practice, or process, of negotiation, persuasion, deliberation, council, and discussion (pp. 35). Whereas, sacred law is the teachings, lessons, or sacred original instructions embodied in the creation stories and other Nanaboozhoo narratives, otherwise known as the aadizookaanag described earlier as the basis of kinship in Anishinaabeg inaakonigewin (pp. 24-25). Lastly, natural law is the understanding of how the ecology and other animate beings behave through observation and applying those lessons to human action (pp. 28-29). These forms of law make up the treaty. They also make up the content of the clans-in-council.

Borrows asserts (2010a) that in effect deliberative law is the process of conversation among people. In deliberative legal processes of the Anishinaabeg, sacred and natural law often form the substance of the legal deliberation being undertaken. In other words, the council is the institutional setting for a deliberative process of applying sacred and natural law to diplomacy. Stark's (2010) council process is an expression of Anishinaabe inaakonigewin. I interpret the literature to conclude that it is from this

institutional setting that Anishinaabeg Ogimaawiwinn emerges. Leaders facilitate deliberation between relatives. They create and renew kinship. This is how aadizookaanag as law is enacted. This was all happening in the context of a massive Midewiwin migration and eventual invasion of settlers.

Stark (2010) also argues that treaties were not static agreements from within an Anishinaabeg perspective. As they were process based they required renewal and the commitment of parties to meet their obligations and continual renegotiation for the present circumstances (pp. 155-156). This makes sense if you understand that because circumstances change there would need to be constant deliberation on the application of sacred and natural law to the present day-to-day life of the people. Therefore, as we saw in the preceding section, councils were held throughout the seasonal cycle on an annual schedule.

In addition to pointing us towards understanding treaty councils as the institutionalization of Anishinaabe kinship diplomacy, Stark (2010) argues that central to the story of 'the woman who married a beaver' is the experience of the woman being transformed into a beaver. Through this transformation the woman learns the lessons that are required to build a sustainable relationship with the beaver nation. Transformation is required to build relationships, this is a central premise of Anishinaabeg treaty-making (pp. 157). In other-words the role of shapeshifting in the development of relationships is acknowledged in Anishinaabeg stories about treaty. Thus, Stark and Witgen (2012) share an understanding of the role of shapeshifting in kinship diplomacy. Synthesizing Stark (2010), Simpson (2008, 2011), Dowd (1993), and Witgen (2012), I theorize that in the Eastern Woodlands continental system of diplomacy, relationships were extended, and

land was shared. Anishinaabewaki was an ever-changing constellation of relationships on a changing land base.

The role of leadership within kinship diplomacy was to create kin. In this vein Williams (1999) argues that treaty councils saw bands and clans send their best storytellers as their diplomats. Story played a central role in laying the terms for a principled relationship between peoples. Story played the role of binding groups together and showing all parties their connection to each other (pp. 84-85). The stories were the archives of sacred law. As Simpson (2008b) notes the teachings of *mino-bimaadiziwin* are oriented to maintaining good relationships in all spheres of life (pp. 32). This was the basis of kinship diplomacy, and this was the political culture that developed Anishinaabeg leaders. My inference from the literature is this was happening with animal nations too.

What we could conclude from the Anishinaabeg literature is that the Anishinaabeg clan system was fundamentally based on the *aadizookaanag*. These sacred laws formed the basis of deliberation for how kinship diplomacy took place. Central to sacred law was the principle of shapeshifting of people into kin. The clan system and the treaty process both functioned primarily as ways to build relationships between bands, and other groups of people. While these structures might not exist with the strength they once had in the past, the *aadizookaanag* still have influence over Anishinaabeg communities and their kin. If anything, there is a revitalization and re-emergence of the *aadizookaanag* as the basis of Anishinaabeg studies. In the political resurgence of the Anishinaabeg this kinship diplomacy forms the baseline for the understanding practices of Anishinaabeg leadership and its potential resurgence. These foundations of story and relationship-making form core

pillars of the re-emergence of decolonized Anishinaabeg leadership. I argue that they form the basis for reconstruction and resurgence of an Anishinaabewin.

While it is clear treaties were a commitment to continual council of renewal and realignment, in a word shapeshifting, it should logically flow then that treaties with animals involved councils. If this is the case, there is still a gap in the literature on how communication was possible to accomplish this commitment. The ethnohistorical literature on clans and treaties does clearly delineate a structure for clans-in-council and its relationship to family and leadership. However, it does not provide clarity on how collective communication with animal nations took place. Where the Anishinaabeg literature does note a relationship of agency between animals and clans, beyond symbolism, is within pedagogy. Both Sinclair (2013) and Johnston (1976) teach how clan animals embody values and qualities that Anishinaabeg aspired to reflect in their life and relationships. Similarly, Vecsey (1983) notes the role of animals in dreams on an individual basis. To understand how communications with animal nations manifest in council we need to bridge the gap between aadizookaanag and ethnohistorical sources. To accomplish this goal, we need to study the ethnohistory commonly associated with religious and spiritual questions. We need to bust open the political/religious binary of colonial thought.

## 5. Manidoog: Other-Than-Human Kinship Diplomacy

In this chapter, I argue that the shake tent ceremony is how the Anishinaabeg held council with animals on occasions that required collective communication. I contend that this is reflective of the literature on animacy and personhood. Moreover, it is paralleled in the relationship of the Midewiwin to plants. If the shake tent does allow collective communication with animals, it logically follows that the Anishinaabeg could renew their treaty relationship with animal nations to remake the world. With this in mind, I argue that both the Anishinaabeg and settler allies need to recognize leaders with access to these technologies as essential to lighting the eighth fire.

To fully understand Anishinaabeg leadership from an Anishinaabeg paradigm, Anishinaabeg conceptions of leadership, agency, and treaty must be extended to all peoples. Within the literature on Anishinaabeg leadership, especially ethnohistory, there is a tendency to only focus on the personhood of humans and therefore leave invisible the political relationships with animals that, I understand, to be central to Anishinaabewin from a resurgence perspective. Miller (2010) was one of the first authors to conceptually bring Mide leaders into the conversation on leadership in a way that contextualized their role in Anishinaabeg village politics. However, her work did not bring animals or plants fully into Anishinaabeg politics or councils. Obviously one author can only do so much, but she laid the groundwork for my approach. In this chapter, I start from the literature on Anishinaabeg conceptions of power and agency and apply it to the existing work on spiritual or religious leadership. I aim to demonstrate that the work of religious or spiritual

leaders was central to Anishinaabeg politics, especially in their mediation of relationships with animals. Animals were important actors in Anishinaabeg international relations.

To full appreciate the concept and practice of kinship diplomacy, we must dive into the Anishinaabeg definition of power within the cosmos. It is from applying the overall cosmology of the Anishinaabeg forging of relationships that their kinship politics fully takes shape. The Anishinaabeg politics involved kinship diplomacy with other-than-human beings, not just humans. It is within these cultural and political contexts that leadership is fully enacted.

### **5.1 Manidoo: Power and Mino-Bimaadiziwin**

In this section, I argue that the Anishinaabeg conception of personhood and agency found in stories is reflected in the ethnohistorical literature on Anishinaabeg religion. This literature informs studies of the shake tent. Central to understanding Anishinaabeg leadership practices and institutions is recognizing that the Anishinaabeg have a distinct definition and understanding of power and agency. This premise acts as the linchpin for understanding the Anishinaabeg approach to power and politics. As noted earlier the Anishinaabeg possess a distinct understanding of who is a person and what has agency. This is the premise that underwrites the Anishinaabeg concept of *mino-bimaadiziwin*. This is the paradigm I used in my discussion of stories and Indigenous frameworks to begin this thesis. In that analysis we understood that agency was not bounded to only include humans.

For the Anishinaabeg the idea that relationships are structured around the reciprocal exchange of gifts is embedded in their culture through their creation story. Cary

Miller (2002; 2010) argues that gifting is understood as central because the universe and life itself was bestowed by Gichi-Manidoo. Thus, as existence was breathed into each Manidoo they honour this gift by bestowing their gifts to needy or pitiful humans, while humans give aid to each other in similar fashion, while showing respect and honour to the Manidoog and humans who aid them. Key to understanding the reality is that every person, human or otherwise has free will and intentions. The sharing of gifts is not determined. Relationships had to be sought and consent cultivated (pp. 21). This is the overall framework the Animals deliberated on in the story of Grandmother Cedar. The result was not destined.

I understand Sinclair (2013) to interpret Miller (2010) to be revealing that gifts, known as *bagijiganan* are the cornerstone of Anishinaabeg relationships at every level of society and within every sphere. Sinclair (2013) writes,

In this way, Anishinaabe words are best thought of as a concept called *bagijiganan*. Translated often as an “offering,” “presentation,” or a “gift,” a *bagijiganan* is arguably the most important social, political, and ideological interaction in Anishinaabeg life. Referring to it as “giftgiving,” historian Cary Miller writes that this act is “the cornerstone” of Anishinaabeg kinship and community, functioning as a glue that creates relationships between people and other beings, forges agreements, and forms individual identities (*Ogimaag* 32). Anyone who visits an Anishinaabeg community can view this practice today through the laying of tobacco, ceremonial give-aways, and the presentation of blankets, honoraria, and food by Anishinaabeg during feasts and social gatherings. *Bagijiganan* provide entryways to Anishinaabeg communities, long-term or short-term, while the renewal of relationships are ensured by their ongoing and fair exchange. When accepted, *bagijiganan* imply responsibilities between parties, a shared relationship, and are used most often to welcome newcomers into communities as relations. They also form the basis in which historical treaties and arrangements were signed, maintained, and forged (*sic*). (2013, pp. 18)

Analyzing this, one could conclude that the kinship diplomacy was specifically structured within the cognitive framework of the Anishinaabeg to create stable and respectful relationships with peoples they encountered. One of the main goals was obtaining more power from the gifts they would exchange, just like the puberty fast was intended to be the



way young people solicited the gifts required to engage in the adult world and some power of their own to share for the benefit of the group (Vecsey, 1983).

These ideas of power were not unique, nor exclusive, to the Anishinaabeg. Just as kinship diplomacy was continental in scope among related Algonquian peoples, the Anishinaabeg conception of power was shared with many peoples from the Eastern Woodlands. Dowd (1993) defines the understanding of power that was common to Eastern Woodlands peoples as the centre of all concerns and pursuits. Their concepts of power came from their shared cultural stories and how they pursued life and relationships. Dowd (1993) writes:

Nothing was more important for life than power. Power meant the ability to live, to grow crops, to woo lovers, to slay animals, to defeat enemies. More esoterically, power meant the ability to heal the sick, to converse with animals, or to visit "God." But most fundamentally, power meant the ability of an individual to influence other people and other beings. Power meant successful interaction. (pp. 3)

According to Dowd (1993) these Eastern Woodlands Indigenous peoples understood power was not available equally between all people, nations, places, or beings. To obtain power they needed to perform rituals and ceremonies to acquire gifts from Manidoog. The 18<sup>th</sup> century nativist movements, who are the centre of Dowd's work, were deeply committed to this revitalization of ceremony and ritual to obtain the necessary power to defeat American expansion.

In Dowd's (1993) analysis, Indigenous men's role and pursuit of sacred power was oriented towards their occupations as life-sustaining killers, whereas women were cultivators and growers. Their spiritual orientation was towards creation. Indigenous men avoided women in preparation for war or the hunt, not because of a marginalization or oppression of women, but because they were in a spiritual transition to the required state

to act as killers; this spiritual state was in inherent opposition to women's role as the creators of life. Essentially, men were shapeshifting from one state of being to another. They were shapeshifting like Nanaboozhoo; from peace to war.

Dowd (2013) posits that in Eastern Woodlands Indigenous belief system, men were not born naturally in a state of war, the transition from peace to war required ritual preparation and sacrifice to gain the sacred power to survive and overcome the enemy (pp. 6-11). Similarly, the ritual and ceremony of adoption was not only an act of creating fictive kinship, but it was also a ritual removal of a captive from a state of war to a state of peace in their relations with village members. Ritual was essential for the crossing of boundaries (pp. 13). In other words, all aspects of Indigenous life for Eastern Woodlands cultures had rites of passage, no matter whether it was, birth, marriage, death, fighting, or adoption (pp. 16). All aspects of life involved shape-shifting. Elder Brother was always shapeshifting. As we have noted in resurgence theory and Anishinaabeg aadizookaanag shapeshifting was central to the exercise of both individual and collective agency. In the case of international relations, it was about creating kin from dangerous outsiders (Witgen, 2012; Pratt, 2002).

This concept of power articulated by Dowd (2013) for the entire Eastern Woodlands appears to be reflected in Miller's (2010) articulation of Anishinaabeg specific power. Miller posits that one's ability to lead in an Anishinaabeg community was judged by the extent one could access the power through the gifts of the Manidoog. The Anishinaabeg sought leaders who demonstrated through success their special relationships with Manidoog. Thus, understanding that the Anishinaabeg understood their leaders to have special access to the gifts of the Manidoog is crucial to understanding the roles undertaken by leaders. It is also crucial to understanding the operation of the leadership selection

process outlined earlier. Within the Anishinaabeg paradigm, leaders had to be connected to the other-than-human peoples that populated the local ecologies. They could not gain the gifts of power otherwise. Thus, it appears relationships with animal nations may have been central to leadership selection.

The Anishinaabeg understanding of personhood is reflected in the work of Hallowell (1942; 1992; 2010), an American anthropologist who spent years conducting field work with the Berens River Ojibwe. According to Hallowell (1942; 2010), the Anishinaabeg of Berens River believe in a world where humans form relationships with other-than-human persons who are explicitly with personality and intentions. Hallowell posits that each species of animal or plant has an owner, master, or chief who certain Anishinaabeg can communicate with both through dreams and through the Jiisakaan ceremony. Primary communication with other-than-human person is through dreaming. The right to be a leader or provide healing is sanctioned through dreams (1942, pp. 6-7). In other words, the Anishinaabeg according to Hallowell primarily experience their relationship to other-than-human peoples through their dreams. Gaining the favour and gifts of these Manidoog entities is the basis of power in Anishinaabeg culture and worldview (2010, pp. 375). This is what structures *mino-bimaadiziwin*. In other words, power was based in one's ability to forge a relationship with a Manidoog and obtain a gift.

Miller (2010), Dowd (1993), and Hallowell's (1942, 2010) research findings are also supported by Johnston (2001). Johnston defined Manidoog as:

Mystery is but one of the connotations of the word *manitou*. The word has other meanings as well: spiritual, mystical, supernatural, godlike or spiritlike, quiddity, essence. It is in these other senses that the term is often used and is understood, not just in the context of manitou beings.

Manitou refers to realities other than the physical ones of rock, fire, water, air, wood, and flesh – to the unseen realities of individual beings and places and events that are beyond human understanding but are still clearly real.

Kitchi Manitou created the manitou beings and forces and infused them, to various degrees, into beings and objects. (2001, pp. xxi-xxii)

In short Johnston is saying that Manidoog are not just little gods, but they are the core energies of all beings, things, places, and forces that exists beyond what someone can experience through just their senses in their waking realities. It is this beyond waking reality part that, I would argue, explains why dreams and visions are so important to the Anishinaabeg.

This understanding of Manidoog and the role of dreams is reflected in the work of Christopher Vecsey (1983) who studied Ojibway religion in Grass Narrows in Treaty 3. Vecsey argues that in the Ojibway understanding of human development every person needed to obtain a relationship with a Manidoog through seeking a vision and dreams. This personal relationship with Manidoo in many ways marked the boundary between childhood and adulthood (1983, pp. 121). Fundamentally, the acquisition of power through a gift from a Manidoog was necessary for survival in the pre-reserve Anishinaabeg social formations. Gifts from the Manidoog were usually acquired through dreams. To fully appreciate this belief, one should understand that there was no differentiation between the dream state and the waking world for the Anishinaabeg. Hallowell (2010) identified that the Anishinaabeg did not speak of either as being any less real than the other. The Anishinaabeg understood both dream experiences and waking experiences to be fully real. Hallowell observed that when Anishinaabeg told personal stories there was no differentiation between their exploits in dreams and those taking place in the waking state (pp. 340-342). Thus, a gift acquired in a dream had application in the waking reality. This

paradigm structured Anishinaabeg engagement with plants and animals. It structured their international relations of kinship diplomacy.

## **5.2 Jiisakaan: Zagaswediwin with Animal Nations**

These concepts of power and relationship were embodied in Anishinaabeg ceremony and institutions. Analyzing the Jiisakaan ceremony is essential to understanding the relationship between humans and animal nations. In this section, I argue that the shake tent ceremony is the ceremony that allows the Anishinaabeg to hold collective communication with animal nations and therefore renew treaties with those integral allies. I contend we must understand this ceremony as inherently political.

According to McIvor (2011), Sinclair (2013), Angel (2002), Hallowell (1942, 2010), and Vecsey (1983) the shaking tent ceremony, called *Jiisakaan*, is an essential part of the mode of life of the Anishinaabeg. It was also an important ceremony for the Cree (Bird, 2005; 2007; Brightman, 2002; Brightman and Brown, 1998; Preston, 2002). Vine Deloria (2006) frames the Jiisakaan as a ceremony to continue communication between spirits and people outside of dreams. The Jiisakaan involved calling in of Manidoog to the lodge to communicate with a family group, and sometimes a larger group. The Jiisakaan was led by specific individuals who had obtained this gift through their dreams (Angel, 2002). Hallowell (1942) argues that the Jiisakaan was called for on many occasions, but principally it was employed to retrieve information that was unavailable to a specific social group. Hallowell surmised that each family group had at least one member proficient in the Jiisakaan. A significant function of the shaking tent was to help regulate relations between the Anishinaabeg and the animals. The Anishinaabeg in their use of the ceremony

were especially concerned with identifying moral transgression which might be influencing the health of the family (pp. 54). Vecsey (1983) contends that the shaking tent was how various social groups of Anishinaabeg accessed the knowledge and personalities of Ojibway religion together (pp. 102-104). Sinclair (2013) describes the practitioner:

Jiisakiiwininiwag are spiritual leaders in a community, hand-picked and trained from their youth for their unique abilities to communicate with Manidoog. Partaking in extremely complex knowledge-gathering ceremonies, jiisakiiwininiwag are mentored by other practitioners and learn protocols and ancestral information, spend time with spiritual teachers, and fast and meditate about their work. The job of a jiisakaan practitioner therefore is vast, involving abilities to listen, interpret, and communicate with the complex world of Manidoog. (pp. 113)

Most of the occasions commonly associated with the shaking tent in the anthropological and religious studies literature, like that of Hallowell and Vecsey, are not commonly associated with the western notion of politics. Hallowell (1942) argues that the occasions for holding of the Jiisakaan ceremony were normally associated with health and wellness. He contends that normally the social function of the Jiisakaan is for the policing of moral transgression. If we side stream to analysis of the Northern Manitoba Cree usage of the Jiisakaan, there is analysis by Brightman (2002) of the Jiisakaan use for hunting and locating game by the Rock Cree. Omushkego storyteller Louis Bird (2007) posits that the Jiisakaan was used to gain confessions and repair relations for transgressions against the animals, so they would be available for hunting (pp. 76-77).

Most of these examples are not, on a surface level, political occasions for the use of the Jiisakaan. However, that is only the case if we separate society from nature and religion from politics. In an Anishinaabeg paradigm relationships with animals are part of the clan system and politics. They are what Simpson (2017) defines as international relations:

Internationalism takes place within grounded normativity. ... It is a series of radiating relationships with plant nations, animal nations, insects, bodies of water, air, soil, and spiritual beings in addition to the Indigenous nations with whom we share parts of our territory. Indigenous internationalism isn't just between peoples. It is created and maintained with all the living beings in Kina Gchi Nishnaabeg-ogamig. Nanabush didn't just visit the peoples of the world, they visited with every living being of the world. (pp. 58)

Simpson (2017) references the travels of Nanaboozhoo as he explored creation to illustrate how Anishinaabeg pedagogy is connected to this unique conception of politics.

Animals have nations and have agency. The Jiisakaan would not exist without this paradigm. If we merge social and ecological relationships we can understand the Jiisakaan as both policing moral transgressions among its members and providing council between animal nations and their treaties. The moral transgressions are transgressions against the treaties with animal nations that exist in the aadizookaanag. It allows communication just like the first Cedar pole did for bear and otter in the origin story of Grandmother Cedar. White cedar was part of traditional tobacco and there was a cedar pole to the shaking tent lodge. Tobasonakwut-ban taught us that when you fast you look for Paagonekiizhik, which he related to Giizhikaatig. These are examples of cedar's involvement in connecting the lodges for communication (Geniusz, 2009; Kinew, 2008-2009).

I interpret the shaking tent was fundamental to political decision-making. The only detailed example I have been able to locate in the primary or secondary literature of a Jiisakaan being used in political behaviour, in the western normative definition of political, was cited by multiple authors. Interestingly, Vecsey (1983), Hallowell (1942), and Sinclair (2013) all cite the experience of Alexander Henry with a Jiisakaan ceremony in the lead up to the Treaty of Niagara in 1764. In this example, Henry describes how the Turtle Manidoo went and explored to see if the British were amassing troops to attack the

Anishinaabeg. The Turtle confirmed that rather than a trap, their proposal for peace was legitimate. In this important political moment, the Anishinaabeg sought the guidance of the Manidoog through using the Jiisakaan. Indeed, according to Sinclair's (2013) analysis of the text from Alexander Henry, the gifted advice of Turtle was pivotal in political decision-making.

Aside from this story, most other examples of the occasions for the Jiisakaan are not defined by scholars as political. This is due to scholars unconsciously imposing a Western definition of what is political on analyzing the Jiisakaan. Due to this unconscious imposition of European categories scholars have missed the crucial part a Jiisakaan played in collectivizing Anishinaabeg political practices with animals. Sinclair (2013) notes in his narratives about Henry and the Treaty of Niagara that:

The visitation of these Manidoog illustrate a central point: that Anishinaabeg political and spiritual practices are deeply intertwined and embedded throughout all parts of life (and not, for example, restricted to ceremonial circumstances). It is a good reminder that there is little divide between lodge and governance. (pp. 122)

While Sinclair (2013) does not name the Jiisakaan as a political ceremony, the implications of his point can be understood as asking the reader to consider how the assumed categories and divisions developed by European social sciences may hinder, rather than help, understand the practices and institutions of the Anishinaabeg.

I argue that much like collapsing the binary between human and animal relations is necessary for the study of the Anishinaabeg, this must also be done with political and spiritual relations and institutions. To properly understand what is political for the Anishinaabeg, one must use their own stories and cosmology as the lens from which to define political behaviour, and therefore the appropriate spheres from which to discuss



Anishinaabeg political leadership. If we employ an Anishinaabeg lens on personhood and agency the Jiisakaan can be understood as a crucial political institution because of its key role in encouraging interspecies communication. Jiisakaan ceremonies should be understood from within the framework of treaty and zagaswediwin. They are a technology, or what Latour (2004) would call a “speech prosthesis,” to bring other-than-human beings into the council with the Anishinaabeg as a group. Where dreams act as individual communication, Jiisakaan act as social communication and processes of revelation.

In her work on Anishinaabeg treaty-making, Simpson (2008b) contends that the protocols and ceremonies, including the laying of tobacco, practiced by Anishinaabeg hunters is the result of a treaty-making process between the hoofed nations and the Anishinaabeg (pp. 35). We saw this in the story of the Hoofed Nation Treaty (Borrows, 2002; Simpson, 2011, 2013). Simpson uses the conceptual category of nation to describe the populations and structure of the animal groups that Anishinaabeg developed relations with in their territory. Simpson posits that the Anishinaabeg fish clans gathered to renew their treaty relationship with the Fish nations twice a year near Mnjikanming. This was likely the same time they held their own doodemag councils, or they were part of the same socioecological process of renewal, given they were all considered kin in the aadizookaanag. These human bodies and fish bodies were of the same spirit in the aadizookaanag. According to Simpson these relationships with other-than-human nations were essential to sustaining Anishinaabeg livelihood.

Simpson’s (2008b; 2011; 2013; 2017) descriptions of animal groups as nations is paralleled in the Bird (2007), Ladner (2001), and Martin (1978). Martin (1978) argued that the Ojibway understood not only that animals had personhood and intentions, but that

all animals and plants also lived in families and nations in a structure that mirrored that of Anishinaabeg society (pp.71). Essentially, animal nations and human nations shared structures of governance tied to their ecology. Each territorially localized nation of animals had its own leader. Animals were psychologically and spiritually identical to humans in the Anishinaabeg imagination and this produces the ambiguity of the Bear nation in the story of Maudjee-kawiss (Johnston, 2001; Stark and Bauerkemper, 2012).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, John Borrows (2010a) contends that observation of the natural world provided a source of law for the Anishinaabeg. For Borrows, *natural law* was second only to sacred law. The Anishinaabeg understand the behaviours and gifts of each animal to come from the creation stories. Thus, by observing the interactions of animals or plants with the rest of the web of life the Anishinaabeg developed their understanding of natural laws and used deliberative law to discuss the meaning of their sacred laws through retelling their stories. By observing animals and retelling their creation stories they reinforced their traditional governance system, a system which they imagined sharing with other-than-human peoples on their shared territory. This pedagogical approach is like the one put forward by Sinclair (2013) as he studies the iterations of the doodemag system. It is Sinclair's research framework.

Logically, this would mean that animal nations have leaders who facilitate communication.

A comparable understanding of animal nations and leadership infuses Swampy Cree cosmology. Bird (2007) describes his people's experiences with caribou leaders in his storytelling. He even describes how caribou leaders are thought to have powers like "shaman" in Omushkego society (pp. 73). According to Martin (1978), animal leaders were understood as Manidoog who were responsible for regulating game populations (pp. 82). It

was these animal leaders who could cause the disease sanctions central to the thesis of Martin's war between animals and the Anishinaabeg. Human leaders were understood to be able to cause disease and sickness just like animal leaders. Hence the role of understanding health in Hallowell's analysis of the Jiisakaan and Anishinaabeg in culture in general. Martin (1978) argued that the Ojibway were at war with the Beaver and Bear when they made European contact (pp. 107-108). While this may not be the case, we can still relate this to the story of Nanaboozhoo and the flood. His nephew the wolf was killed by Mizhibizhiw for their overhunting. It was the water creatures' role to protect the game.

In other words, moral transgressions or sinning against the animals was a breach of treaty. As aforementioned, Simpson (2013) retells the story of the Anishinaabeg treaty with the Hoof nations. The treaty was created after humans abused and disrespected the hoofed nations. The animal populations dwindled because of this behaviour and the Anishinaabe leadership delegation had to meet in council with the Hoofed nations. Through storytelling and deliberation, a new treaty is reached between the Anishinaabeg and the Hoof nations.

It is important to remember that in Bohaker's (2006) analysis of the Anishinaabeg recreation story with Nanaboozhoo and the other animals, humans are descendants of the original animals. Thus, humans and animals are also practicing kinship diplomacy. What a synthesis of Simpson (2013; 2008b; 2011; 2017), Martin (1978), and Bird (2007) framed within an Anishinaabeg paradigm, suggests is that communication with these nations, and kin groups, was possible through observation, dreams, visions, and ceremonies like the Jiisakaan. Further, annual renewal of the relationships between nations was just as important for the relationship between the Anishinaabeg and the animals as it was between the Anishinaabeg doodemag and other human nations. Councils were at the heart

of this process of renewal. I infer, it could be that councils allotting territorial rights could have included direct consultation with animal kin, not just human kin. If we recall that the Hoof nation treaty included preserving land allotment for the hoofed nations there is at least a basis for this analysis (Borrows, 2002).

I infer the Jiisakaan ceremony provided the leaders of each nation, animal and human, a way to hold council. This supports Stark's (2010) argument that treaties are processes of renewal through councils and deliberation. Thus, we may be able to gauge that the ceremony was indeed a political ceremony, and the person who conducted the ceremony was therefore a political leader in the community. No matter whether the topic of inquest was the plans of the British Army or the state of their relationship with the Hoof Nations the Shake tent conductor was a political leader. It is my working conclusion and argument that the ability to hold council with other-than-human beings is the central feature of what allows the Anishinaabeg to practice *mino-bimaadiziwin* through *Anishinaabewin*. This ability to deliberate and gain consent is what structures their relationships from my reading of the Anishinaabeg literature. This is the potential other way to relate to animals beyond extractivism which is characterized by domestication and domination. I infer from the literature that it could be the case that through consultation between human and animal kin that animal nations could show up in the clans-in-council. Their human relatives represented them in deliberations.

Synthesizing this literature makes me think back to a class I had with Tobasonakwut-ban where he told us about the signing of Treaty 3 and the Jiisakaan that were held the night before treaty. He told us that in Treaty 3 they were holding a Jiisakaan ceremony to commemorate the signing of Treaty 3 and the over 50 Jiisakaan

that were held the night (or nights) before the treaty signing. As I reflect on this now, I wonder if these Jiisakaan were all the family bands consulting with their relatives about how treaty will affect their relationships with human and non-human nations. I do not know the answer, but it might fit as an explanation. What is less opaque is that the Anishinaabeg outside of the formal treaty council were engaging with their other-than-human realm before agreeing to realignment and shapeshifting with the Crown. I conclude that shake tents are essential technologies of treaty and council. They are required for remaking the world in alignment with the recreation story.

### **5.3 The Midewiwin and the Other-than-Human Nations**

The role of the shake tent in institutionalizing alliances with animal nations is paralleled in the role of the Midewiwin for housing the relationship of the Anishinaabeg to plants. While different, these institutions run in parallel and often intersect. They show that having all types of leaders at the table is essential to negotiating the multipolar reality of life in attachment to land. Secondly, I argue that understanding the Midewiwin role in migration is essential for understanding the context of Anishinaabeg kinship diplomacy. A people on the move to resettle in a lost homeland needs a way to rebuild kinship ties with their former kin.

The role of the Midewiwin in Anishinaabeg society developed to be expansive and fundamental according to the Anishinaabeg literature. Basil Johnston (1976) posits that the Midewiwin developed as an association of medicinal practitioners which was an outgrowth of the traditional herbalist practices of the Anishinaabeg. According to Johnston, differentiated the Midewijig from previous herbalists was the focus on spiritual health

rather than simply physical health. It is from the philosophical nature of the association that the Midewiwin was really born. In other words, the pursuit of *mino-bimaadiziwin* was to have spiritual and philosophical dimensions within Midewiwin tradition (pp. 71).

The Midewiwin is most often associated with its dance and medicinal knowledge by authors like Landes (1968) and Hoffman (1891). While the Midewiwin's role in the Anishinaabeg social formation was far more expansive than these aspects, it is true that the Midewiwin played a significant role in the generation of knowledge among the Anishinaabeg. Geniusz (2009) locates Midewiwin medicinal knowledge as in the realm of guarded knowledge, in contrast to other botanical knowledge which is common, or the property of the people. Geniusz offers that basic knowledge and remedies were commonly known and were freely shared. Payment is not required for common remedies. It is the specific *Midewaajimowin*, or specialist knowledge which belongs to individuals, where payment is required for assistance. *Midewaajimowin* is knowledge taught by the Midewiwin which requires ceremonies and training. Not all Mide specialize in all the specific plants and their multitude of uses. Geniusz (2009) cites Densmore (1928) and Huron Smith (1932) who both recorded medicine people disguising the smells of their remedies and protecting their recipes from others (2009, pp. 64-66). In addition, the Midewiwin degrees only offered members access to a basic set of instruction. Additional knowledge beyond the foundation of each degree had to be purchased from other individual practitioners for a fee. Knowledge could also be traded among peers in the same Midewiwin degree (pp. 85-86).

Geniusz (2009) argues that much like the relationships with animals through dreaming and vision the Anishinaabeg triangulate their botanical knowledge through

dream- revelation, observing animal interaction with plants, and their pre-existing stories and songs. The role of song in curing is as important as the actual remedy itself. The pedagogical practice of animal observation to learn medicinal knowledge is rooted in the creation story of the Midewiwin when Nanaboozhoo teaches Odaemin to observe animals to learn. Geniusz's informants were clear that random experimentation was deadly and was not part of the pedagogical practices of the Mide or Anishinaabeg (pp. 67-75).

According to Geniusz (2009) plants, like animals, in Anishinaabe psychology are animate. Therefore, like the relationships with animal Manidoog, proper protocols and ceremonies are required to maintain reciprocal relationships with plants. Like animal Manidoog appear to the Anishinaabe to pass on knowledge in dreams, plants Manidoog also appear and make relationships with Anishinaabe. Plants, like animals bestow gifts of Manidoog power. As Miller (2010) and Dowd (1993) make clear, access to power was the basis for charismatic leadership among the Eastern Woodland peoples. Synthesizing Dowd's analysis with that of the Midewiwin migration, all those people who descend from the Delaware, as storied by the Midewiwin, believe in this paradigm and definition of power (Benton-Banai, 1988; Johnston, 1982; Deleary, 1990; Sinclair, 2013; Peacock and Wisuri, 2002; Pettipas, 1996; Pomedli, 2014).

According to Miller (2010), the Midewiwin served as an alternative avenue to a leadership role through developing status and prestige based on charismatic power, rather than relying on a hereditary claim to leadership. In effect, it provided an avenue which diffused leadership. On the other hand, Anishinaabeg who held hereditary claims to leadership roles could also leverage additional charismatic leadership roles as a Gichi-Midewijig or a successful war party leader to gain additional social standing to solidify

their prestige. In Miller's analysis of the role of the Midewiwin, this leadership avenue allowed for the diffusion of leadership outside the hereditary system and allowed individuals an opportunity to gain social importance and access Manidoog power.

The Midewijig also played a role in the day-to-day life of the community, including its politics both at a village level, but also an intervillage level. According to Thomas Vennum, JR. (1988) the Midewijig were responsible for blessing the first rice crop of the ricing season and intervened when a family's harvests were stolen. Vennum also noted that many people were appointed ricer leaders or Ogimaag because of their standing as Gichi-Midewijig. Vennum in his field work was unable to ascertain the connection between the Midewiwin ceremonies that occurred annually at ricing time and the actual ricing harvest (pp. 178-179) because he didn't study the stories. Ricing was not as good in Manitoba, thus according to Miller (2010) Midewiwin ceremonies were held during the spring and fall fishing camps (pp. 153). The Midewiwin served to integrate people in the largest gatherings of the Anishinaabeg throughout the year.

In addition to these pedagogical, integrative, healing, and ceremonial functions, Miller (2010) argues the Midewijig also was responsible for calling the game in times of extreme scarcity. Miller cites the captivity narrative of John Tanner and the journal of George Nelson as examples of the *manidookaazowin*, a ceremony to call the game (pp. 160). Thus, the Midewiwin was very important in maintaining the protocols between the Anishinaabeg and other nations, human, non-human alike. If we ground this role in the aadizookaanag, the Mide are mediating a treaty relationship. The Midewijig may not have been the only spiritual practitioner that was able to effect success in hunting.



In my analysis of Angel's (2002) text and supported by the work of Miller (2010; 2013), it appears that the Ojibwe as a people, and the Midewiwin as a central institution of the entire Anishinaabeg, grew and developed within the context of multiple Indigenous prophetic movements, such as those of the Shawnee and Delaware prophets, triggered by the cultural and demographic displacement which was caused by white imperial expansion, as well as in the context of overlapping religious and cultural traditions within Anishinaabeg society such as their own prophetic movements of the Waabanoowiwin and the Midewiwin. In the late contact era, one could argue that the Anishinaabeg societies of North America were experiencing massive amounts of flux caused by the tensions between competing Indigenous and Euro-American religious movements and networks vying for the allegiances of multiple and competing nations, clans, and bands. Angel's (2002) work illuminated how members of Ojibwe society, including Mide leaders like Flat Mouth, moved between different ceremonial complexes and became followers of different minor and major prophets over the course of their lives, some individuals moving in and out of the Midewiwin based on their temporary allegiances to emergent prophetic movements or their own personal visions and other experiences of the Manidoog (Angel 2002, pp.51, 60). It becomes clear that the religious world of the both Anishinaabeg and their neighbours, as well as the Euro-American invaders during the contact era, was dynamic and constantly changing based on the constant stream of perceived revelation through vision and the shifting ground of imperial expansion. It was in this context of dynamic and shifting ground that the traditional leadership roles of the Anishinaabeg contained in the ethnohistorical record was forged.

It is best to understand the religious dynamics of the Anishinaabeg through the lens of Witgen (2012) who argues that Anishinaabeg sociopolitical structure must be understood as multipolar. The major shortcoming of Witgen's work is the absence of the Midewiwin in his narrative and analysis of Anishinaabeg social formation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. According to Witgen, Anishinaabewaki as a social space that was unstable and constantly shifting due to overlapping relationships of power (pp. 279). In Witgen's analysis kinship played the central role in expanding Anishinaabewaki. Witgen's (2012) work suffers from not naming the motivation for the constant expansion west of the Anishinaabeg: the fulfilment of the Midewiwin prophecies through Anishinaabeg migration. Most importantly the relationship to wild rice. If we bring the Midewiwin into the equation provided by Witgen, it becomes more robust and dynamic. The social formation of the Anishinaabeg was constantly shapeshifting and the catalyst for transformation was kinship and prophetic revelation. In this case a relationship to rice helped catalyze a migration. The Midewiwin was and continues to be an important pole of power within this multipolar social formation. It just so happens that much like before contact and after contact there are other poles of both religious and political power that can transform Anishinaabeg society. But to understand why the Anishinaabeg came to be in the first place Witgen's analysis needs to make the Midewiwin visible. Unfortunately, ethnohistory is limited as method in this regard.

It is this understanding of the multipolar nature of Anishinaabeg leadership and social formation that is integral to understanding the current issues at play within Anishinaabeg communities. The religious dynamics of Anishinaabeg communities were multipolar in nature as well. Midewijig and Wabenos existed alongside Jiisakaan and

other prophetic figures, all competing for followers, but the all existed within the Anishinaabeg paradigm of agency. Much like Miller's (2010) description of how hereditary leaders also joined the Midewiwin to bolster their social status and claim to leadership. Visionary leaders joined the Midewiwin to bolster their religious leadership claims. The multipolar nature of the Anishinaabeg social formation led to many overlapping ways to gain social prestige and leadership. . Doodemag had relations with their animal relatives and the local animal nations of their territories. This system was complex, multilayered, and overlapping. But it was connected through kinship and councils the embodied practices of treaty.

From my survey of the religious literature using an Anishinaabeg conception of personhood and collapsing the colonial frame of politics the Midewijig played an important role in politics by bringing in other-than-human knowledge. From my understanding of an Anishinaabeg resurgence perspective that internalizes Simpson's (2017) conception of international relations involving animals, it could be that it would be best to understand Jiisakiiwininiwag and Midewijig as diplomats with the plant nations and animal nations rather than as religious or spiritual leaders as they are framed within the ethnohistorical and religious studies literature. Understanding them as mediators between nations better reflects Anishinaabeg conceptions of agency and treaty, rather than the colonial categories imposed by ethnohistory and religious studies literature. Using this reframing brings the animal nations into council process through consultation with Jiisakiiwininiwag and Midewijig. What also stands out in the literature is the central place of mobility and migration within Anishinaabeg identity. I argue it is from this context that kinship

diplomacy and shapeshifting take place. From my reading of the literature it is also from this context that Anishinaabewin can flourish.

## **Conclusion**

In this thesis, I argued that Anishinaabeg stories highlight that animals were essential kin and allies to the Anishinaabeg before disruption by the settler state. If the Anishinaabeg and their settler allies are committed to lighting the eighth fire, it will require a renewal of treaties with animal nations. This can only be accomplished by recentering the shake tent as a way to rebuild treaties with animals. I understood radical resurgent Anishinaabeg studies requires us to use story as the centre of our analysis. When we centre Anishinaabeg story, animal agency as nations is clear and that working together with animals is required to remake the world. The literature demonstrates that Anishinaabeg clan leaders have used the shake tent and Midewiwin to engage with plant and animal nations in the past and bring communication with them to zagawediwin. In short, the embodied practice of treaty was a multispecies endeavour.

My inference is that given the role of shapeshifting in treaty relationships, resurgence will require the Anishinaabeg and settlers to transform, or shapeshift, to renew treaties with animal nations by making space. This requires the replacement of the state form and capitalist economics because they do not embody values inherent in treaty relationships.

Eastern Woodlands politics revolved around a diplomatic culture that was governed by kinship structured economies and political alliances that facilitated fluidity and realignment with flux. The Anishinaabeg identity was embedded within this paradigm. The

Eastern Woodlands political culture comes out most clearly within the treaty process which was an extension of the clans-in-council. Through analyzing the treaty process that Anishinaabeg engaged in we can understand the role of kinship diplomacy. This provides the foundation for understanding how kinship diplomacy structured relationships with animals.

Anishinaabeg stories make clear the Anishinaabeg understood themselves as having treaties with animal nations. It is my inference that the shake tent, and other ceremonies, allowed Anishinaabeg groups to communicate directly with animal nations to create or renew kinship-based treaties. These ceremonies were part of the consultation that happened before formal zagaswediwin with the other clans. Similarly, ceremonies that involved songs and dance in specific sites relevant to clan relationships with animals also constitute communication with animal nations that were part of the yearly seasonal communicative cycle. This was taking place as the Anishinaabeg migrated and established relationships with new peoples and new animal nations as they moved west towards the rice lakes fulfilling the Midewiwin migration prophecy. As they entered new territory they engaged in kinship diplomacy with both the pre-existing peoples and the animal nations in each place. Kinship diplomacy was the practice of moving across the land and forming relationship of reciprocity and consent. It was how you became embedded and built attachment.

In her book on Treaty One, Aimee Craft (2014) argues that the Creator was a third party to the treaty (pp. 81). I read this through a resurgence lens to be like the Anishinaabeg conception of land. In radical resurgence thought, land is not reified land as a single thing, but instead land is understood as a set of relationships and obligations

(Simpson, 2017; Coulthard, 2014). I read the same thing into the use of the word creator or creation. From a resurgence perspective, I understand the third party to be the entire bundle of relationships from all orders of creation that the Anishinaabeg brought to the council. All the animal and plant nations, as well as celestial forces. When engaging in zagaswediwin, symbolized in the pipe is every treaty relationship the Anishinaabeg hold with animals. These treaties are also present via their clan representatives. In the council ceremony are also the celestial forces like the winds. My inference is that these other-than-human peoples are consulted with through ceremonies like the shake tent before signing treaty. They are also called in to the negotiations using the pipe in the council (Craft, 2014). They have presence and are spoken for through the Anike-Ogimaa from each of the Doodemag. Animal and plant nation presence is also brought into council by the Midewijig and Jiisakiwininiwag who communicate with those nations regularly through observation, dream, and ceremonial practice. My argument is that behind this practice is continual direct and real communication, sometimes individual through prayer or dreams, and sometimes collective through ceremony. Just like Gichi-Anishinaabeg would consult their human family at the fire after a day's council, they could also talk with their animal kin with a shake tent at night to understand how treaty negotiations would affect them and their treaty relationships.

If my reading stands up to validation from Anishinaabeg knowledge holders and Gichi-Anishinaabeg, then my argument is that through practicing the zagaswediwin, and related practices of consultation, once again Anishinaabeg communities can practice Anishinaabewin to understand how shapeshifting must take place to remake the world in an era of climate change and the implementation of UNDRIP. My understanding of

zagaswediwin is that it involves consultation with clan animals and other-other-than-human persons throughout the lead up to formal councils, and after council each day if necessary. It is also my conclusion that treaty relationships with other-human-persons would ultimately guide shapeshifting through a renewal of treaty for the new context presented by the current ecological and political context of crisis. In other words, communication with animals could determine governance and economic change in communities. My understanding of shapeshifting is that it could propel fundamental changes in the resource use rights of the Anishinaabeg in relationship to animal nations. It will compel realignment that respects animal agency.

From my understanding of the literature, if this is to take place and be implemented the Midewijig, Jiisakiwininiwag, and Mayosewininiwag should all be understood as political leaders who have valuable contributions to make alongside Ogimaa, Anike-Ogimaa, and Gichi-Anishinaabeg through practices of internationalism grounded in Anishinaabewin. Recreating a balanced governance system that collapses colonial conceptions of personhood and re-centers Anishinaabeg conceptions of agency might be able to revitalize practices of Anishinaabewin that would fulfil the Eighth Fire prophecy and lead in the remaking of the world. I understand this to involve lots of talking with animal nations.

### **Further Research and Validation**

Given my positionality as a non-Indigenous outsider and the reality that my research was a literature review my work requires validation and engagement with Gichi-Anishinaabeg and Jiisakiwininiwag before I would make a conclusive truth claim about the

role of the shake tent in kinship diplomacy and council. What I have so far is a connecting of the dots for what the literature potentially suggests. Sometimes the literature does not reflect reality or Anishinaabeg perceptions on the ground. Therefore, I will not publish my research on the Anishinaabeg without an Anishinaabeg collaborator or community partner. My thesis calls for future research with Jiisakiwininiwag practitioners to understand what types of political questions can be asked and answered by the shake tent as it is used today in communities. Most of the sources on the shake tent are very old and not developed from within Anishinaabewin or with an eye to resurgence. Given the politics of identity that currently exist to properly decolonize research, I am not even sure given my positionality it would be appropriate for me to attempt this research in the future. What I do think would be a significant contribution to the theoretical literature on animals and politics would be positioning the shake tent as a potential consent-based alternative *speech prothesis* to Latour's (2002) conception of scientists as those who speak for animals. I also would like to work on a response to Donaldson and Kymlicka's *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animals Rights* (2011) and Donna Haraway's *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016) based on Anishinaabeg conceptions of internationalism and consent.

Secondly, the complexities of community are likely going to shape the way resurgence continues to take place on the ground within the constraints of ongoing Canadian settler colonialism and American empire. Future research could be most useful to community by utilizing a combined methodology of Anishinaabeg-tribal-centred epistemologies and activist-as-ethnographer (Kovach, 2009; Frampton, Kinsman, Thompson, and Tilliczek, 2006). Where I think there is major utility in studying leadership on the ground is within Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation and Buffalo Point First



Nation because of their experiences with custom code elections and constitutions. Both are nations in the southeast of Manitoba, related to Red Lake Anishinaabeg, who have had to grapple with competing narratives of leadership selection, clan, and family. I think these communities might illustrate for researchers how the overlay of colonialism really complicates the resurgence of Anishinaabeg leadership and practices of clan leadership. More importantly, I also think that these communities have much to offer in terms of the vitality of Anishinaabeg-framed leadership in the literature. I believe there is a void in the historical literature on this province that needs to be filled by Anishinaabeg voices.

## Glossary

**Aadizookaanag** – Are known as sacred stories or grandfathers. They are told in winter and are understood as having a spirit and being alive.

**Aanji-Maajitaawin** – the idea and practice of starting-over (Simpson, 2011).

**Anishinaabe-Gikendaasowin** – Knowledge, information, and the synthesis of our personal teachings (Geniusz, 2009).

**Anishinaabemowin** – the Anishinaabe language.

**Anishinaabewin** - is a Anishinaabe specific form of grounded normativity defined by Leanne Simpson (2017), as Nishnaabewin, based on Glen Coulthard's (2014) term grounded normativity. Grounded normativity is place-specific practice and relationships. Anishinaabewin is the intelligence required to exist in relationship to a specific place.

**Biskaabiiyang** – understood as the process of new emergence or a creative return.

**Doodem(ag)** – Clan (s)

**Enawendiwin** – concept of interrelationship and interdependence of all beings.

**Gaagiigidowininni** – speaker man. Speaks for a leader or group of leaders in a council.

**Gichi-Anishinaabeg** – Great people or Elders. Often also an Anike-Ogimaa or a clan head.

**Gichi-Mookomaanag** - is the Anishinaabemowin name for Americans. It refers to the big knives (swords) that the cavalry used to carry.

**Mayosewininiwag** – war leaders.

**Meyaagizid** – outsiders, strangers, enemies (Witgen, 2012).

**Midewijig** – Midewiwin leaders.

**Mizhibizhiw** – the great underwater lynx or panther.

**Mino-bimaadizwin** - means the good life or living life well. Simpson (2017) frames it as creative of more life through nourishing relationships.

**Naakgonige** - carefully deliberate and decide when faced with change or decisions.

**Nanaboozhoo** - is also referenced in the literature by many other names such as Nanabush, Waynabozhoo, and Wiiskechaak. In all these cases he represents the Elder Brother figure. They are all the same Manidoo or aadizookaanag.

**Ogimaa** – Leader/facilitator of a village council meeting.

**Ogimaawiwin** - is translated as the noun for leadership.

**Pays d'en Haut** - means the Upper Country, or the land up there. It was the colonial term for Anishinaabewaki or the Indigenous space surrounding the great lakes during the Indigenous-French Fur Trade era. It was known to include more nations than simply the Three Fires of Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi.

**Zagaswediwin** – the Anishinaabeg socio-political institution of the council.

**Zhaaganash** - means white person, but has roots in specifically referring to the British empire. It relates to speaking English. In this thesis it will mean Anglo-Canadian.

**Zhaaganashiiyaadizi** - the process and description of living as a colonized or assimilated person. In a contemporary context to be Zhaaganash is to be a mainstream Canadian and embody all the values that go along with that mode of life (Simpson, 2011).

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