Masters' Thesis:

Bridging Intent and Action: Uncovering Barriers to Indigenous Collaboration in Metro Vancouver's Climate Action Development

By

Laura Taylor

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In the School of Public Administration

©Laura Taylor, 2024
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This dissertation may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

We acknowledge and respect the Lək̓ʷəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək̓ʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Supervisory Committee

Masters' Thesis:
Bridging Intent and Action: Uncovering Barriers to Indigenous Collaboration in Metro Vancouver's Climate Action Development

By

Laura Taylor

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In the School of Public Administration

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Sarah Marie Wiebe, Supervisor
School of Public Administration

Robert Lapper, KC, Second Reader
Lam Chair in Law and Public Policy

Abstract

This thesis investigates the critical alignment between intention and process in the pursuit of 'genuine collaboration' with First Nations and Indigenous communities on climate action within Metro Vancouver. This study explores the unique regional barriers that impede meaningful partnerships toward epistemological pluralism by identifying and analyzing the vital role of Indigenous perspectives in shaping practical, holistic, and inclusive climate responses.

Aligning closely with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and subsequent federal and provincial directives, Metro Vancouver has committed to fostering genuine collaboration with First Nations and enhancing Indigenous inclusion in climate policy. This includes adopting trans-local guidance to engage First Nations in projects in an 'early and ongoing' manner. However, despite these commitments, current engagement with First Nations on climate initiatives often begins at a stage when draft policy documents and project definitions are already established, limiting the capacity to incorporate diverse epistemologies—a core principle underpinning reconciliation-driven collaboration and foundational to effective planetary health interventions. This study investigates the challenges and barriers Metro Vancouver faces in cultivating deep, collaborative relationships with Indigenous communities around varied climate knowledge systems. To focus this exploration, the research examines Metro Vancouver staff's experiences initiating 'early' engagement as an initial step towards achieving 'meaningful engagement' and 'genuine collaboration' with First Nations.

Using interpretive policy analysis and a critical policy lens, this research explores findings from a literature review, critical document analysis and ten qualitative interviews with regional staff to determine how Indigenous climate engagement guidance like 'early involvement' is interpreted, communicated and implemented to pursue genuine collaboration. Finally, the study makes recommendations on how to move forward, albeit incrementally. Findings revealed that for climate policy, development specifically, 'early' is a misnomer, and the process requires ongoing dialogue around climate issues outside of a reductionist project scope to accommodate holistic approaches. A co-developed dialogue space that democratizes knowledge would be a step towards meaningfully considering the systemic

drivers of climate change through epistemic pluralism and would help build collaborative relationships built on trust with First Nations, both of which are needed to create holistic environmental interventions. Effective co-developed climate policy should not seek to overcome differences to co-create but work to accommodate plural epistemologies that challenge Western dualism by focusing on connection and relationships to build transformative futures together. This thesis advances regional efforts towards more effective and socially just climate solutions in Metro Vancouver by identifying barriers and proposing pathways for stronger Indigenous climate collaboration through equal partnerships.

Table of Contents

Title Page i

Supervisory Committee ii

Abstract iii

Table of Contents v

List of Tables viii

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 PROBLEM DEFINITION 2

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY 5

1.3 THESIS GOALS, SCOPE, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS 6

1.4 POSITIONALITY STATEMENT 8

1.5 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK 9

1.5.1 Critical policy analysis 10

1.5.2 Planetary health framework 11

1.5.3 Regionalism 12

1.5.4 Governmentality 12

1.5.5 Discursive Power 13

1.5.6 Reconciliation 14

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND 16

2.1 POLYCENTRIC APPROACH TO FIRST NATIONS CLIMATE ENGAGEMENT 16

2.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK 17

2.3 ‘EARLY’ ENGAGEMENT’S IMPACT ON EFFECTIVE CLIMATE ACTION 19

2.4 FIRST NATIONS EXPECTATIONS 20

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW 23

3.1 Introduction 23

3.2 MAPPING THE PROCESS 24

3.3 FINDINGS 25

3.3.1 Critical and Interpretive Policy Analysis 25

3.3.2 Planetary Health 27

3.3.3 Epistemological Pluralism 29

3.3.4 ‘Early’ Indigenous Involvement in Environmental Management and Climate Collaboration 31

3.3.5 Linguistic and Epistemological Misunderstanding 35

3.3.6 Remaining Questions 36

3.3.7 Summary or Conclusions 36
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS 38
4.1 METHODOLOGY 38
4.1.1 Interpretive Policy Analysis 38
4.1.2 Institutional Ethnography 39
4.2 METHODS 41
4.2.1 Ethical Review 41
4.2.2 Qualitative Interviews 41
4.2.3 Critical Document Analysis 42
4.2.4 Data Analysis 43
4.3 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY 44
4.4. STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS 45
4.4.1 Limitations 45
4.4.2 Strengths 46
CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS 48
5.1 INTRODUCTION 48
5.2 GUIDING DOCUMENTS ANALYSIS 48
5.2.1 Reconciliation 49
5.2.2 Early and Ongoing Engagement and Genuine Collaboration 50
5.2.3 Climate Engagement 52
5.3 CONVERSATIONS WITH RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS 53
Major Themes 53
5.3.1 CHALLENGES 53
5.3.2 Opportunities for a path forward 60
5.3.3 Summary 62
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS 65
6.2 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION/UNEXPECTED FINDINGS 65
6.2.1 Early is a climate misnomer 65
6.2.2 Issues created from the project engagement model 66
6.2.3 Government Structural Blocks to Planetary Health Outcomes 69
6.3.2.2 Organizational fear of risk and experimentation 71
6.3.2.3 No guidance or formal support on incorporating Indigenous Knowledges 71
6.3.3 Staff Empowerment 73
6.4 PATH FORWARD 76
6.4.1 Long-term recommendation: Establish an ongoing, climate dialogue 76

6.4.2 Potential Models 77
6.4.3 Medium-term recommendation: Operationalize active listening 77
6.5 SUMMARY 80
6.6 NEXT STEPS 82
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION 84
References... 92

List of Tables

Table 1: In which I illustrate the concept of co-developed collaborative dialogue spaces' impact on identified barriers..79

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Globally, the most effective climate action occurs when regional, multi-actor collaborations bring together diverse parties to achieve more holistic and effective outcomes by combining multiple forms of knowledge and perspectives (Metro Vancouver, 2018; Phare et al., 2017; Whyte, 2017; Brousselle et al., 2022; Wiebe, 2019). However, effectively and equitably comingling multiple forms of knowledge creates complex challenges, particularly when Indigenous and non-Indigenous parties are involved (Whyte, 2017; Arsenault et al., 2018; Castleden et al., 2017).

Globally and locally, Indigenous groups have set the most progressive climate targets and have been stewarding the land with the holistic worldview needed for systemic climate action (Wiebe, 2020; Whyte, 2013; FNLC, 2022; ICA, 2023; Redvers et al., 2020; Reed et al., 2024). Indigenous Peoples have advocated for their rights to inclusion in climate mitigation and adaptation efforts for decades (ICA, 2023; FNLC, 2022; Canada, 2024; Whyte, 2020) and are responding to the global climate threat in diverse, holistic ways (Nursey-Bray et al., 2022; Wale & Husan, 2024). These varied approaches are based on critical knowledge for successfully mitigating and adapting to climate change in a way that fulsomely considers interconnected ecosystems and local contexts (Canada, 2024; ICA, 2023; Whyte, 2020; Wale & Huson, 2024; Wiebe, 2019; Abele, 2007). The success of Indigenous perspectives and approaches to environmental stewardship is proven, as Indigenous peoples occupy territory that holds "eighty percent of the world's biodiversity, and yet they inhabit only twenty-two percent of the earth's surface" (Redvers, 2020, p.1). Metro Vancouver has dual commitments to lower emissions that contribute to climate change and strengthen relationships with First Nations, partly by promoting early engagement and ongoing communication as a principle of Indigenous engagement (Metro Vancouver, 2020). Yet the organization's current climate plans and policies typically have First Nations comment on already drafted actions, and perhaps relatedly, their climate plans also fall short of set emission reduction targets (Metro Vancouver, 2021).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identifies that global temperature increase must remain below 1.5°C to maintain a livable world (IPCC, 2018). Yet, "it is estimated that global warming is likely to pass this amount by 2030 under intermediate, high, and very high emissions scenarios" (First Nations Leadership Council, 2022, p.3). To play its role in the steep global emissions reduction necessary to maintain a livable world, Metro

Vancouver must work with all orders of government (Metro Vancouver, 2022) and collaborate with diverse perspectives (Black, 2019; Wiebe, 2019) to implement transformative actions to tackle the systemic drivers of climate change.

The current global climate crisis is partly caused by Western relationships with the natural world in a capitalist colonial system that commodifies nature (Reed et al., 2024). Increasingly, many leaders and policymakers recognize that more than Western science and governance processes are needed to solve the complex issues born of the same system (Reed et al., 2024; Abele, 2007; Brouselle et al., 2017). Only recently, the IPCC acknowledged colonialism as a driver of climate change: "Vulnerability of ecosystems and people to climate change differs substantially among and within regions (very high confidence), driven by patterns of intersecting socio-economic development, unsustainable ocean and land use, inequity, marginalization, historical and ongoing patterns of inequity such as colonialism and governance (high confidence)" (IPCC, 2022, p. 12, as cited in Reed et al., 2024). So, sufficiently addressing this imbalance caused by dominant systems will require reorienting the climate agenda towards meaningful approaches grounded in knowledge and process decolonization to improve our relationship with the land collectively.

To be effective, climate action must be tailored to local Indigenous contexts (Wiebe, 2020), which requires, "collaboration and true partnerships between First Nations in BC and all other entities" (First Nations Leadership Council, 2022, p.12). Policy failures occur when hierarchical top-down decision-making trumps lived experiences, local knowledge, and Indigenous knowledge (Trembley & Wiebe, 2019; Wiebe, 2020; Brousselle et al., 2020). Collaborative environmental governance that goes beyond typical Indigenous engagement relies on traditional knowledge, is informed by fluid stories within local Indigenous communities, and can potentially transform climate planning processes and outcomes (Trembley & Wiebe, 2019).

1.1 PROBLEM DEFINITION

Challenges that emerge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous environmental collaboration are systemic and complex. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* (2016) (UNDRIP), federal guidance stemming from *Truth and Reconciliation Report* (2015) (TRC) commitments, and the *BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (2022) (DRIPA), as well as Metro Vancouver's internal guidelines, advise conducting 'early

and ongoing' Indigenous engagement for all projects. Still, this guidance is designed primarily for First Nations consultation on environmental assessments or infrastructure projects that require ground disturbance on First Nations territories rather than climate planning. Neither translocal guidance nor internal processes have provided tailored instructions or guidance for climate engagement or collaboration with First Nations, which leaves a process vacuum for potential forms climate collaboration can take but can be seen as comparatively flexible as legislation does not yet guide this process (Giunta, 2019). Why has the comparatively flexible process, driven by the principle of 'early' involvement, backed by the intention of 'genuine collaboration', not resulted in more meaningful Indigenous climate engagement?

Despite climate change's transformational effect on land, water, regional ecosystems, and Rights and Title, ground disturbance consultation processes are roughly applied to regional climate action development. Many of the same values and principles for meaningful engagement are likely still relevant for regional climate policy, including 'early involvement', as deep collaboration is required to reap the benefits that fulsome inclusion of Indigenous perspective in regional climate action would provide. Indigenous scholarship has been vocal that Indigenous peoples hold great potential to develop plans and institutional practices that guide *everyone* towards a better relationship with the environment, but this will only produce the needed system transformation towards more just futures if Indigenous peoples are given decision-making power and inclusion in project design (Wiebe, 2019). Given First Nations' inherent jurisdiction over their lands, which includes rights to environmental protection of those lands and related ecological protection planning (UNDRIP, 2016; FNLC, 2022; ICA, 2021; Giunta, 2019), First Nations and Indigenous communities have demanded a place of priority in climate action and policy development, while acknowledging current policy creating processes are inherently colonial (Indigenous Climate Action, 2023). Incremental progress on Indigenous inclusion in climate action will not see potentially paradigm-shifting climate outcomes until addressing the challenges within the existing colonial institutions.

Metro Vancouver process guidance recommends 'early engagement' of First Nations in formal and informal guidance documents, reports vocally support the idea of 'genuine collaboration' with First Nations generally, and the organization has committed to increased Indigenous perspective in climate action (Metro Vancouver, 2020; Metro Vancouver, 2023;

Metro Vancouver, 2018). However, staff typically contact First Nations for input, comment or collaboration on climate policy development with already roughly drafted policy documents (Metro Vancouver, 2022). The escalating climate crisis and First Nations sovereignty call for new frameworks for Indigenous knowledge inclusion in environmental policy that go further than typical engagement guidance for marginalized identities and fulsomely consider Indigeneity and epistemological pluralism (Wiebe, 2019). Through the lens of UNDRIP, DRIPA and reconciliation guidance, this research examines the perspective and experience of staff implementing climate engagement processes, how the intention of genuine collaboration is being pursued by investigating where challenges lie to involving First Nations 'early' in climate action, and how the process could better accommodate collective Indigenous systems, knowledge and self-determination.

This research focuses on Metro Vancouver staff perspective as the Indigenous perspective of barriers to settler government collaboration, advocacy for inclusion in all levels of government environmental planning, and assessment of formal government consultation processes are relatively well documented (Udofia et al., 2017; Whyte et al., 2013; FNLC, 2022; Castleden et al., 2017; Boyd & Lorefice, 2018; ICA, 2021; ICA, 2023; Wale & Huson, 2024). Before committing to collaborative processes or even pursuing Indigenous perspectives on any potential collaborations, Metro Vancouver needs to identify the challenges borne of its own approach, map steps towards internal readiness, and establish concrete actions to operationalize 'political listening' to honour the right to be heard, rather than just providing more avenues for Indigenous voices to speak (Dreher, 2017). To move towards meaningful listening, a prerequisite for deep collaboration between multiple epistemologies, Metro Vancouver must practice reflexivity to imagine and reformulate how to involve Indigenous peoples in full participation in environmental policy design and governance processes (Wiebe, 2019).

So, what are Metro Vancouver's challenges to engaging First Nations 'early' to develop deep, collaborative Indigenous relationships around diverse climate knowledge? Using Interpretive Policy Analysis (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2011; Bartels, n.d., Åm, 2020), institutional ethnography (Teghtsoonian, 2016; Smith, 2006; Karnuga, 2018; Smith & Turner, 2014)and a critical policy lens (Orsini & Smith, 2007; Abele, 2007; Murray, 2007), this research explores findings from a narrative literature review, ten interviews with regional staff involved in implementing First Nations climate engagement, and critical document

analysis. It makes recommendations on how to move forward toward more meaningful collaboration, albeit incrementally.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study explores the challenges experienced by regional government staff to genuine collaboration with Indigenous groups on climate policy in Metro Vancouver, starting with examining the implementation of 'early' involvement, and identifies recommendations to overcome these challenges. First Nations and Indigenous communities have clearly expressed their desire for inclusion in decisions affecting their land and the health of their communities (FNLC, 2022; ICA, 2023). Some Nations assert that where there is a formal opportunity for input in settler government decisions, there is an asymmetry of power among the governments involved due to varying factors like unequal resources, access to information, and cultural inclusion (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018; FNLC, 2022). While consideration for systemic resource allocation is undoubtedly needed, like increased capacity funding for First Nations to participate in settler government processes, increased funding alone won't address the systemic colonial marginalization of Indigenous knowledge systems, which are critical to combating the climate crisis. Diverse worldviews are needed to combat climate change (Wale & Huson, 2024) driven by capitalist colonialism. Current solutions are partly developed by "the ill-conceived notion of Settler colonial institutions, government agencies, and scholars that Western knowledge systems and solutions are universally useful or applicable" (Castleden et al., 2017, p.1). Indigenous access to decision-making forums and climate project design is paramount to this, and analyzing barriers to epistemological inclusion is a question of power-sharing as the intersection between knowledge systems, like approaches to climate action, is where the role of power shows itself (Castleden et al., 2017; Wale & Huson, 2024; Murray, 2007).

Research on collaborative environmental stewardship arrangements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments tends to focus on resource management agreements and procedures that are legislated, like Environmental Assessments (Udofia et al., 2017; Arsenault et al., 2019; Whyte et al., 2017; Abele, 2007). Although there has been research into the challenges faced by settler governments in Canada when collaborating with First Nations on environmental management and resource development (Castleden et al., 2017; Whyte, 2017; Arsenault et al., 2018; Latulippe, 2015; Udofia et al., 2017; Boyd & Lorefice,

2018), primarily at the federal or provincial level, and into the integration of Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge in environmental research (Pictou Landing Native Women's Group et al., 2016; Wiebe et al., 2017), there has not been enough analysis of the collaboration between settler and Indigenous governments on local climate action planning. Furthermore, the role of regional or municipal governments in supporting the guidance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) remains underexplored. Regional climate outcomes will not be improved by Indigenous Knowledge inclusion without identifying why current Indigenous climate engagement processes are not fulsomely accommodating Indigenous knowledge systems and meaningful relationship building. Assumptions brought into interactions in the current engagement process can be unknowingly imbued with colonial historical disparities, impeding integrative practice and developing relationships (Castleden et al., 2017). Climate action planning is ultimately working towards building healthier relationships with one another and the environment and having Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies inform both governance of and relationship to our environment is a valuable opportunity for climate and colonial healing (Redvers et al., 2020; Castleden et al., 2009).

Without beginning to identify and address the fundamental issues that prevent 'early' collaborative climate dialogue, First Nations knowledge and feedback may be incorporated into already drafted climate policy, which can amount to tokenism and can cause harm to Indigenous communities (Castleden et al., 2017; ICA, 2023) and any future relationship building between governments. This research will begin to outline suggestions for what climate policy collaboration might look like and how new relationship frameworks may introduce new ways of developing more effective climate policy while deepening government-to-government relationships at a more intimate staff level and furthering reconciliation through shared goals of regional climate mitigation and adaptation.

1.3 THESIS GOALS, SCOPE, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Challenges that emerge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous government collaborations are systemic and complex, not least due to unequal power structures created by a history of colonization and racist legislation like the Indian Act (1876). This research only attempts to make some progress towards identifying and analyzing barriers to implementation and seedlings of a path forward in the region for improved climate collaboration. The research

explores the implementation of suggested best practices for collaboration (Udofia et al., 2017; Whyte et al., 2013; Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, n.p., 2023) set by UNDRIP, DRIPA and other regional guiding documents through the perspective and experience of individuals working in the regional government that play a role in First Nations engagement on climate action projects. This research focuses on government collaboration challenges faced by Metro Vancouver staff, both due to access and insight by the researcher's positionality and to narrow the scope from the distinct legislative and historical relationships the federal and provincial governments have with Indigenous peoples.

The challenges for the non-Indigenous government in potential Indigenous climate collaborations, which may cause them to fall short of implementation of reconciliation efforts outlined in UNDRIP bear greater investigation. Further challenges and opportunities on each side of the collaborative relationship can be explored after assessing if best practices like engagement, "as early as possible in the planning stages" (Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, n.p., 2023) are being implemented successfully and identifying what other process barriers are preventing epistemological pluralism.

There are other barriers to fulsome Indigenous participation in regional climate action planning, like financial funding, First Nations staff capacity, participation fatigue and the perceived level of influence over project outcomes (Udofia et al., 2017; Whyte et al., 2013; ICA, 2020). These compounding and interrelated issues are relevant but out of the scope of this research, but certainly affect the complex issue of climate collaboration. Nation-to-Nation sovereignty issues may also affect interest in participation in regional government climate initiatives, as opposed to Crown or provincial initiatives. Potential opinions on parallel versus polycentric alignment are also out of the scope of this research, as it investigates benefits and barriers for the region.

This research examines, through the perspective and experience of staff implementing the processes, if the intention of 'genuine collaboration' is effectively being pursued by engaging as early as possible, to include respect for collective Indigenous systems, knowledge and self-determination. The research explores the challenges to Metro Vancouver initiating early involvement of First Nations partners in order to foster meaningful collaboration and epistemological pluralism; however, the definition of 'early' in this research is intentionally vague. The subjective interpretation of 'early' was one of the initial focal points of

investigation. Whyte (2018) identifies that Indigenous representatives in American environmental projects understand ‘early’ to mean when a multi-actor project is established so they can still determine the design and alternative pathways. Many institutional and settler understandings appear to differ from this interpretation, where ‘early involvement’ means after the project’s vision or structure has been created (Whyte, 2018).

1.4 POSITIONALITY STATEMENT

As an employee of Metro Vancouver and a researcher conducting qualitative interviews with other government employees, I am an insider of the power structure and bureaucratic dynamics of the organization. I occupy the role of privileged observer, as I both know the participants and am their colleague. This insider status gives me access to staff, potentially puts me in a position of trust, and allows for a nuanced understanding of the context and perspective of the participants, but it also brings potential bias and limitations to the research.

I have a professional relationship with each of the interview participants, with varying lengths of personal histories. There is potential for unintentional bias where I have provided either a critical or a positive interpretation of the interview answers depending on my personal history with the interviewee and my experience working on climate projects with them. As I am involved in coordinating Indigenous engagement on climate projects in my professional role, there is a potential conflict of interest where I may have asked leading questions by holding preconceived notions of the issue or have blind spots in institutional shortcomings. My previous professional role as a First Nations governance consultant may have subconsciously influenced my opinion negatively on government and proponent intention behind environmental consultation.

The coding of the interviews was potentially subject to my bias, and some interpretive research literature notes this coding can futilely seek objectivity in a subjective social phenomenon (Arrona & Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, 2019). This interpretive bias has been helped by collecting other data like published project reports that summarize the extent of Indigenous engagement on similar climate initiatives and reported institutional intent.

To limit potential ethical considerations, a criterion for potential interviewees was people that I do not have any organizational power over in a hierarchical structure. Everyone interviewed

is in a parallel or superior position to me, and most are in a different department. I am not directly in a position to fire anyone, or vice versa.

To help combat bias created by the interactionist nature of this relationship, I engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process, both acknowledging and critically reflecting on my positionality and how it may impact the research findings (McGregor, 2018). I have done this through keeping a journal of my own thoughts and impressions as the research progresses and reviewing this throughout. I sought to maintain a non-judgmental stance towards the participants and awareness of any potential power imbalances between us, within the bureaucratic hierarchy. Some ethical considerations I have considered include:

· *Informed consent:* I informed participants of the purpose of the study, what their participation will entail, and any potential benefits and risks according to Canada's Tri-Council Policy (2014).

· *Confidentiality:* Participants' identities and employee information have been kept confidential and their responses have been anonymized to minimize risks to employment and data will be stored securely.

· *Bias and objectivity:* As a colleague in the regional government, some bias is unavoidable. I have been transparent about my positionality and have been reflexively mindful of how biases could affect research findings.

· *Collaborative review:* A subset of participants have been asked to review my findings from the interviews, thematic analysis, and how quotes from interviews have been presented in the findings.

· *Ethical approval:* This project required ethical approval from UVic human research ethics board (HREB).

1.5 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This section outlines the theoretical and analytical framework guiding this study, which integrates critical policy analysis (Orsini & Smith, 2007; Abele, 2007; Murray, 2007), regionalism (Orsini & Smith, 2007; Abele, 2007; Mahon et al., 2007), governmentality (Murray, 2007; Reed, 2013; Juillet, 2007), and reconciliation (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018; National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015; FNLC, 2013; Hickey, 2006; Abele,

2007) as multidimensional lenses for understanding the complex barriers to meaningful climate collaboration between First Nations governments and Metro Vancouver, beginning with 'early' involvement. These combined approaches to analysis are employed with the broad goal of advancing democracy, social justice, and sustainability by emphasizing how policies are driven by communicative practices that are shaped, at times unintentionally, by hegemonic powers and values (Critical and Interpretive Policy Network, 2013).

By employing critical policy analysis, the research interrogates the power dynamics and underlying assumptions in the policy development landscape through the experience and agency of individual staff. The governmentality framework offers a unique perspective on understanding how policies not only regulate but shape subjectivities and behaviours (Orsini & Smith, 2007), in this case the individuals within institutional processes. Reconciliation (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018; National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015; FNLC, 2013; Hickey, 2006; Abele, 2007; Castleden et al., 2017, ICA, 2023), as a theoretical concept and practical process, bridges these frameworks, providing a means to address historical and ongoing marginalisation and power imbalances while fostering inclusive policy solutions. This analytical approach enables a holistic understanding of both the structural forces at play and the potential pathways for more equitable and reconciliatory climate policy development, which could eventually result in stronger climate policy outcomes.

1.5.1 Critical policy analysis

Critical policy analysis emerged in the 1980s in response to the failings of more traditional forms of policy analysis to investigate certain policy nuances, as this method examines how discourses and power relations may be involved in the constructing and functioning of public policy (O'Connor & Rudolph, 2023). Its critical orientation focuses on the social, cultural and potential context of policy, and looks at how this method of analysis may unearth opportunities for change (O'Connor & Rudolph, 2023). This form of policy analysis offers methodological pluralism, with multiple lenses through which to analyze the policy concerns and foster collective learning and critical engagement, which is suitable for research focused on collaborative structures aimed at epistemological pluralism. This research employs generative approaches to critical policy analysis to examine how processes to develop policy are formed globally, federally, and provincially and operate locally, how policy questions are formed, and how Indigenous ontologies are often excluded from Western epistemological practices.

In recent decades, decision-making on public policy has become dispersed from the sole discretion of traditional institutions, and this implies a reimagining of how diverse groups can participate in governance is needed, as well as the supremacy of scientific expertise and an expansion of voices that have an impact on decisions (Murray, 2007). Applying a critical policy lens to this new paradigm is not meant to be an "ideological straitjacket" (Orsini & Smith, 2007, p.386) that does not allow for political realities and organizational constraints, rather it is an orientation to look at policy creation from a nuanced perspective driven by a desire to speak truth to power (Orsini & Smith, 2007). Stepwise and incrementally, public policy in Canadian institutions has opened to the possibility that Indigenous peoples may have knowledge and perspectives that are specific to their ways of knowing that are valuable and even critical to public decision-making (Abele, 2007), and critical policy analysis allows interrogation of the friction between expressed interest of incorporating this perspective and actual implementation outcomes.

1.5.2 Planetary health framework

A planetary health approach contends that the most effective environmental action considers the holistic nature of human and ecosystem health (Hill-Cawthorne, 2019; Castleden et al., 2009), but government silos and settler power structures often impede holistic climate planning, particularly meaningful inclusion of Indigenous knowledge (Whitee et al., 2015; Pattanayak, 2017; Castleden et al., 2009). Many solutions to achieve planetary health have already been identified, both globally and locally, so the current problem is securing long-term commitments for action and implementation (Brousselle et al., 2018), and identifying governance roadblocks to holistic climate action, especially meaningful inclusion of Indigenous knowledge (Whitmee et al., 2015).

Achieving planetary health locally requires valuing an 'importance of place', which is both geographic and a way of looking at the world borne from the local environment (Castleden et al., 2009). To make sense of the climate crisis in Metro Vancouver means meaningfully considering Indigenous knowledges about their ancestral places that inform ways of knowing and communicating with the land (Wale & Huson, 2024; Redvers et al., 2020) that makes up Metro Vancouver and considering the social relations and power structures contextualizing these Indigenous environmental worldviews (Wiebe, 2020). Indigenous traditional knowledges are collective, holistic, and land-informed ways of knowing inherently

interwoven with community and the environment (Redvers et al., 2022) and honour the complex reciprocal accountability and responsibility between humans and the surrounding environment (Redvers et al., 2020). For the purposes of this research, traditional knowledge is, "... the knowledge particular to the society's own history, language, culture, and economic, political, and social practices" (Abele, 2007, p.235). Metro Vancouver's climate actions will become more effective when based on local knowledge systems, and the in-region First Nations environmental perspectives and practices could potentially be supported by Metro Vancouver's regulatory powers and scientific staff capacity (Redvers et al., 2020; Abele, 2007), if the partnership was created with a mutual intention that equally values each knowledge system.

1.5.3 Regionalism

Translocal legal and political guidance, like UNDRIP, have dramatically shifted political agency from the traditional power landscape, and undermined the position of sole power holding from Western, central governments (Orsini & Smith, 2007). Regionalism as a lens of analysis refers to both the distinctive local character and contexts of a geographic area (Reed, 2013) and of the practice of dispersed, regional governance decisions instead of central systems of administration with decreasing hierarchical implementation (Orsini & Smith, 2007

This shifting of political agency is not just delegation of authority from federal and provincial governments, it is also the re-mixing of decision-making arrangements and implications, as public, private and NGO sectors configure (Mahon, Andrew & Johnson, 2007) in the new spatial horizons of governance. These new complicated arrangements of power require examining assumptions that policy decisions are favoured at a national level, or subsequent 'levels' of government, as these rising power dynamics cannot be fully planned for through 'downloading' of responsibilities. This research employs the lens of regionalism to examine the complicated landscape of authority and legitimacy for both climate action and the active practice of reconciliation for subsequent levels of governments from the Crown's Nation-to-Nation relationships.

1.5.4 Governmentality

In Foucault's (1978) theory of governmentality, government is not centralized by one institution, or even set of institutions, but is the outcome of the process of diverse thoughts, knowledges and practices that shape societal assumptions about, "what government is, how it

should be exercised, by whom, and for what purposes" (Murray, 2007, p. 167). Applying a lens of governmentality analyses the mechanisms of government and the specific processes inside government institutions that cut across domains outside of state power - where they are not a sole actor but an assemblage of diverse elements, ways of thinking and associated power relations. While sovereign First Nations are certainly not governed by Metro Vancouver, governmentality proposes that governance through state powers is only one form of government, and that actions through government institutions alone can't achieve desired policy outcomes (Reed, 2013), like reducing GHG emissions in the Region's airshed, which is shared by the 10 First Nations with territory in the Region.

1.5.5 Discursive Power

Through a governmentality lens, knowledge is foundational to power, to the point that they can be considered one and the same (Murray, 2007), and any existing knowledge implies foundational power relations. There are different forms of power, and discursive power refers to the ability of some actors in political decision making to influence the categories of thought, symbols and linguistic norms which can determine the actions of other actors in the process, or the ability for these actors to obtain new capabilities (Reed, 2013). So discursive power grants actors in policy development the ability to shape and frame not only the political issue in public policy, but also shape the source of legitimate authority to take action.

In a non-linear power/knowledge formation, power isn't something that one institution possesses, it is decentred and diffuse (Murray, 2007). While policy actors may vie for influence and have competing ideas, this process is somewhat limited to control by discursive practices, the latent parameters of what is acceptable to be both thought and spoken (Murray, 2007), which controls the outcome. Currently, the role of discursive power on environmental policy in Canada has not been a widely applied lens (Juillet, 2007). However, it is a useful lens to look at how knowledge and power shape environmental management through discursive practices, and analyze how different types of political knowledge, especially 'expert' and scientific knowledge, legitimize and reinforce certain ways of knowing and resulting actions (Murray, 2007), and may obstruct epistemological pluralism. The study of governance, through a governmentality lens, is most effective when examining how types of knowledge shift over time, and what they are used to justify, who is excluded, and how this connects with larger political processes (Murray, 2007).

1.5.6 Reconciliation

Meaningful consultation and genuine collaboration between Indigenous Peoples, the Canadian state, and subsequent orders of government within the Canadian state have been emphasized as a cornerstone to fostering reconciliation by the Canadian Supreme Court (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018). Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (2015) defines reconciliation as: "the restoration of a mutually-beneficial relationship, based on trust and respect, after years of conflict, distrust and anguish brought on by the marginalization of Indigenous people in Canadian society" (n.p.). Tokenistic consultation or engagement with Indigenous Peoples can impede, or even damage future, healthy mutually beneficial relationships between First Nations and settler governments in Canada and can further politically marginalize First Nations governments (ICA, 2022; Boyd & Lorefice, 2018). The conceptualization and application of reconciliation is an important element of fruitful climate action partnerships between the two governments, and indeed an important tool for decolonization required for successful climate interventions from settler governments generally.

It is worth noting that there are differing understanding and uses of the term reconciliation, and some First Nations voice that the concept can only occur only between sovereigns (FNLC, 2013), so this work happens between First Nations, Metis and Inuit and the Crown. Analysis of the implications of settler sovereignty within a polycentric governance system is not within the scope of research, but this research is framed on the understanding that it is within the interest of all settler governments to foster relationships built on respect and trust for mutually beneficial outcomes. The TRC specifically calls upon, "federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt" the UNDRIP as the framework for reconciliation (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015). Collective national understandings of reconciliation are always changing, including the opportunities, limitations and contradictions of this work (Wilson & Breen, 2019). Ultimately, reconciliation continues to have different meanings to different people, including, "reconciliation as attempts to improve social relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples; reconciliation as specific calls to action and processes outlined by national governments; reconciliation as healing within our families and communities; reconciliation within ourselves. We have also understood this word to be associated with exploitation and ongoing colonialism" (Wilson &

Breen, 2019, p.3).

Conceptualizing engagement within a reconciliatory framework can also have different understandings. Indigenous Peoples typically understand it within the context of extensive political and historical relations, which is emphasized in the TRC definition, while some research shows settler governments and industry still tend to look at it more narrowly, focusing on current relationships and projects (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018; Abele, 2007). All western Canadian government bodies emerge from a worldview based on colonial doctrines of discovery and claims to settler-state land title, which serves to justify the disenfranchisement and land dispossession of Indigenous populations (Hickey, 2006). Epistemological questions are central to analyzing reconciliation, as Western epistemology considers its methods superior to all others, which in conjunction with discursive and colonial structural power causes Indigenous epistemologies to be marginalized (Hickey, 2020; Castleden et al., 2017). Despite the ongoing complexities to untangling the language around reconciliation discourse, it is clear that supporting Indigenous self-determination, recognizing Indigenous Peoples' rights and meaningful Indigenous inclusion in decision-making is critical for effective climate action and for addressing the interrelated impacts of climate change and harms of colonialism (Reed et al., 2024).

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

2.1 POLYCENTRIC APPROACH TO FIRST NATIONS CLIMATE ENGAGEMENT

Metro Vancouver receives its climate action authority and air quality regulatory authority from the Province of BC, delegated in the Environmental Management Act (Metro Vancouver, 2021). The polycentric governance model in BC and Canada generally means that rather than one single monocentric organization governing climate action and decision-making, multiple governing authorities are active on different scales with different spheres of authority (Ostrom, 2009). In the case of Metro Vancouver's regional authority for climate policy, the other authorities are typically First Nations, the Federal Government, the Provincial Government, member municipalities, and regional health agencies. There are benefits to the polycentric model, including greater scope for experimentation by multiple actors, which leads to mutual monitoring and diverse learning, which can potentially result in more equitable and effective climate action (Ostrom, 2009), if each authority does not silo its work and decision-making (Brousselle et al., 2018).

Under this polycentric governance model, Metro Vancouver sets its own policies and procedures to strengthen its relationships with First Nations, but policy language and the relationship building approach is at least influenced by the provincial and federal approaches. This is evidenced in a Metro Vancouver Indigenous Relations Committee Manager's Report (October 2023), which outlines regional policy implications from the federal government's United Nations Declaration Act (UNDA) Action Plan and the implications of the release of the BC Government's first annual report on its Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) Action Plan (Metro Vancouver, 2023).

The Government of Canada contends that meaningful engagement and consultation with First Nations requires, "early and ongoing exchange of information, active and critical exchange of ideas and engagement within the spaces of the Indigenous communities involved" (Government of Canada, n.p., 2022). The BC Government directs proponents and other governments, "to engage with First Nations as early as possible in the planning stages to build relationships and for information sharing purposes" (Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, n.p., 2023). Both the federal and provincial guidelines, as well as Metro

Vancouver's own guidelines, are designed primarily for Indigenous consultation in Environmental Assessments or other projects that require ground disturbance or construction on First Nations territories, rather than climate action planning despite the monumental effect that climate change has on the land and regional ecosystems.

Metro Vancouver expresses the intention to engage more deeply with First Nations on climate action (Metro Vancouver, 2023) and cites "early and ongoing" engagement as a foundational principle (Metro Vancouver, 2021; Metro Vancouver, 2022). However, project staff typically reach out to First Nations for input, comment or collaboration on climate policy development on already drafted policies or established project approaches (Metro Vancouver, 2022). One of the main advantages to the regional model within polycentrism is it can increase communication among diverse parties which increases trust and cooperation for collaborative decision-making (Cole, 2015; Friesen, 2015; Smith, 2022; Doberstien, 2022), which could be applied to Indigenous and regional government collaboration for climate action.

First Nations often apply a holistic, interconnected worldview to governance, which conceptualize land health, human health and governance as inseparable (Redvers et al., 2020). Governance models that emerge from this worldview tend to be relationship-focused and practice consensus building towards decision-making (Canada, 1996). When considering polycentric governance models with the Crown, Indigenous reports tend to focus on the history, context, and nature of these relationships rather than siloed authority (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018). Many First Nations-authored publications argue that "political will to establish and maintain these relationships" (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018, p. 58) should drive consultation and engagement, rather than focus on legal obligations or seeking feedback on single projects (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018; ICA, 2023; ICA, 2021; FNLC, 2022).

2.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

In the 'urgent and transformative' resolution to address "government inaction" on the climate crisis, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) (2019) identifies the following UNDRIP articles as relevant to First Nations inclusion and leadership in climate action planning by Canadian settler governments:

> Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied

> and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.
>
> Article 29: Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.

The AFN (2019) climate emergency declaration states the climate crisis, "is significantly altering First Nations' relationships with the lands the Creator has bestowed upon First Nations and upon which First Nations have inalienable rights as entrenched in Section 35 of the Constitution Act (1982), affirmed in the UN Declaration, and confirmed in Treaties and other constructive arrangements between First Nations and the Crown" (p. 5). They are clear that reconciliation from all levels of Canadian settler governments must work towards resolving climate impacts that affect First Nations holistic relationships with the environment and the land. The UNDRIP, addressing lasting colonial inequality within Canada, requires that Indigenous peoples are active partners in democratic processes, and have decision-making power (Wiebe, 2019), not just invited to provide feedback on identified approaches.

A part of Canada's federal response to the UNDRIP has been to develop an Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda, which aims to remove systemic barriers to Indigenous climate action and the ability to implement self-determined climate strategies through government-to-government partnerships (Canada, 2024). This approach acknowledges long-standing dialogue with Indigenous peoples has already identified known facts including that engagement of Indigenous Peoples in climate-related decision-making and policy development is currently poor in Canada, and there are limited opportunities for Indigenous participation throughout a climate policy cycle, and that resulting policies have poor consideration of Indigenous knowledge, laws and lived realities (Canada, 2024). This agenda identifies interrelated and complex capacity issues, mainly focusing on federal funding structures, but it also specifically notes insufficient support, "at the community, regional, and national level" (Canada, 2024, p.6), which regional governments who create climate policy can theoretically help to increase at a regional scope. The federal guidance provides concrete actions without implementation advice, by clarifying, "Indigenous Peoples [must] have a seat at the table in climate-related decision-making and are engaged in meaningful ways [and

policies should prioritize] collaborative decision-making on climate policy and stable, and well-defined engagement mechanisms" (Canada, 2024, p.7).

The BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) establishes the UNDRIP as the province's framework and action plan for reconciliation, as called for by the TRC's Calls to Action (2015). This declaration outlines actions for co-development of environment protection and climate action, which emphasize new forms of collaboration aimed at reconciliation, including increased Indigenous ways of knowing in environmental plans, and encourages collaborative development of climate plans, "that benefit our shared climate and advance reconciliation" (Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, n.d.). DRIPA directs proponents and other governments, which would include Metro Vancouver, "to engage with First Nations as early as possible in the planning stages to build relationships and for information sharing purposes" (Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, n.p., 2023).

This legislative and formal guidance background provides valuable support and foundational principles to develop improved relationship processes, but this research shows that the meaningful climate dialogue needed for genuine collaboration and epistemological pluralism is implemented at a staff level in participating governments. So actionable staff guidance should be developed and fostered parallel to government-to-government legislation, which offers little 'on the ground' process guidance. Creating new spaces not dictated by the order of colonial hierarchy can better honour Indigenous First Law (Redvers, 2019) and accommodate multiple worldviews and varied levels of engagement (Wiebe, 2020) aimed at reconciliation.

2.3 'EARLY' ENGAGEMENT'S IMPACT ON EFFECTIVE CLIMATE ACTION

To truly accommodate multiple knowledges and perspectives, collaboration must begin at the initial stages of climate action planning (Brousselle et al., 2020; Whyte et al., 2018). Despite translocal and internal guidance on early engagement, Metro Vancouver's current climate action planning typically does not include Indigenous input 'early enough' and so the resulting policies likely reflect the western scientific approach to conservation and sustainability by not incorporating sustainable Indigenous approaches meaningfully (Whyte et al., 2017, Mitchell, 2020).

Indigenous communities have consistently demanded earlier participation in government environmental consultation (Udofia et al., 2017; FNLC, 2022; Arsenault, 2019; ICA, 2021). Law in Canada (Udofia et al., 2017; ICA, 2021) has never prescribed the definition of meaningful participation, or early involvement. The development of polycentric government planning for climate action is a relatively new framework compared to long-established infrastructure consultation processes, and the flexibility resulting from the 'newness' of process could allow for deeper collaboration that benefits both First Nations and the regional government by improving climate outcomes (Udofia, et al., 2017; Giunta, 2019; Whyte, 2017). As climate action planning does not typically involve legislated ground disturbance, it lends itself well to the benefits of regional polycentricism: more nimble experimentation and increased collaboration (Thiesen, 2014; Ostrom, 2009; Cole, 2015).

2.4 FIRST NATIONS EXPECTATIONS

Indigenous environmental justice movements grounded in sovereignty, have been strong and effective within Canada at increasing decision-making power and Indigenous recognized environmental authority (Gobby et al., 2022), and parallel to this work, Indigenous communities have consistently demanded earlier participation in settler government environmental consultation (FNLC, 2022; Arsenault, 2019; ICA, 2021). While ongoing colonial capitalism drives the climate crisis, Indigenous communities and Nations offer an antidote through, "urgently needed alternative values, worldviews, social organizations and economic systems" (Indigenous Climate Action, 2023, p. 8). Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) contends, "nothing short of transformative societal change can prevent the worst of what will happen to communities everywhere if governments around the world continue to enable the driving forces behind the climate crisis" (UBCIC, 2022, para. 5). Some Indigenous climate groups in Canada have expressed cynicism about government intentions for meaningful early engagement as Indigenous Peoples ability to care for the lands and waters has been systematically undermined through extractive development and colonial power relations (Indigenous Climate Action, 2024; Wale & Huson, 2024).

Indigenous groups and First Nations have been clear about what level of consultation they expect in environmental management and climate action planning processes. First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) (2023), comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, state

they expect “early and ongoing engagement throughout the entire scope of a project with early and sufficient notice to review data and information received as well as the ability for First Nation-led assessments and research on a particular issue” (p. 2). They also assert that the strength of the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan (2021) serves to remind all levels of government that climate action can only be successful when co-created with First Nations in ways that protect and strengthen Title and Rights with Indigenous Knowledge thoroughly considered in all aspects of climate planning.

Indigenous Climate Action (ICA) (2024) reinforces the need for consultation to begin at the earliest stages of project conception and asserts that governments need to make significant efforts to include Indigenous Peoples in the initial design of climate policies in order to respect the rights to full and effective participation and honour the principles of collaboration. FNLC (2022) states that to tackle climate change, “there must be collaboration and true partnerships between First Nations in BC and all other entities” (p. 12), which would include Metro Vancouver, and collaboration must address past and present harms of colonization that the FNLC identifies as “as an essential component of developing accountable relations for climate action” (FNLC, 2022, p. 12).

First Nations in BC, both individually and through collective bodies like the First Nations Leadership Council, have been clear that although orders of government in Canada have given legislative frameworks like UNDRIP significant lip service, they have not resulted in many meaningful collaborative partnerships, nor meaningful decision-making power that includes alternative approaches (FNLC, 2022; Indigenous Climate Action, 2023). Given First Nations’ inherent jurisdiction over their lands, which includes rights to environmental protection of those lands (UNDRIP, 2016; FNLC, 2022; ICA, 2021), First Nations have demanded a place of priority in climate action and policy development. FNLC of BC provides concrete examples of how settler governments can honour these commitments, including engagement with First Nations as inherent Rights and Title holders by focusing on partnerships that co-develop and co-implement climate action (FNLC, 2022), which requires engagement to begin at project conception (ICA, 2023).

Indigenous Climate Action (ICA) (2023) performed a survey across so-called Canada on First Nations perspective on climate action. The findings point to the inadequacy of the ‘typical’ process of policy development and drafts internally approved by organizations before any form of meaningful engagement is done with Indigenous peoples, a process that ignores the

self-determinative intent behind reconciliation (ICA, 2023). ICA (2023) calls for true climate government partnerships that include, “collective Indigenous wisdoms and sovereign will” (p. 51).

ICA (2023) contends that although many settler governments in Canada have been successful in ‘Indigenizing’ colonial policies, defined as incorporating Indigenous perspectives to some degree, they have not developed sufficient decision-making arrangements, so their efforts can be considered tokenism and ultimately harmful. To incorporate Indigenous perspective into climate action more fully, governments and communities must work towards ‘decolonizing’ these structures, which requires systemic change and de-centering of colonial power (Wale & Huson, 2024; ICA, 2023). This research is valuable in evaluating organizational readiness for actual meaningful collaboration, and what is required internally to honour the reconciliatory values behind climate collaboration, before undertaking further investigation around what First Nations expect from Metro Vancouver collaborative arrangements.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This research is informed and situated within three main areas of literature. First, the critical and interpretive approaches to policy research which understands communicative policy processes through the lens of situated meanings and historical and social constructs (Critical and Interpretive Policy Network, 2014). Second, the transdisciplinary research paradigm of planetary health, particularly how Indigenous worldviews and practices are central to effective climate action and third, collaboration between First Nations and settler governments on environmental management, and what foundational principles are needed for epistemological pluralism in government climate action, if it is even possible. For the purpose of this study, we look at how implementation of 'early' engagement guidance can influence the level of resulting Indigenous perspective inclusion, which theoretically affects the environmental outcome.

Regional, multi-actor collaboration for environmental stewardship bring together diverse parties to achieve more holistic and effective outcomes by combining multiple forms of knowledge and perspectives (Metro Vancouver, 2018; Phare et al., 2017, Whyte, 2017; Reed et al., 2024). However, these governance arrangements also create complex challenges, particularly when both Indigenous and non-Indigenous parties are involved (Whyte, 2017; Arsenault et al., 2018; Latulippe, 2015; Udofia et al, 2017; Reed et al., 2024). A planetary health approach contends that the most effective environmental action considers the holistic nature of human and ecosystem health (Hill-Cawthorne, 2019; Castleden et al., 2009; Brousselle et al., 2022; Baquero et al., 2021). Planning this type of holistic action tends to be negatively affected by government silos and lack of diversity in decision-making, particularly insufficient inclusion of Indigenous knowledges and ontologies (Whitee et al., 2015; Pattanayak, 2017; Castleden et al., 2009; Brousselle et al., 2022; Baquero et al., 2021; Mignolo, 2009; Redvers et al., 2020).

Whyte (2017) identifies a relative lack of information tailored to multi-actor environmental initiatives involving Indigenous Nations, especially at a regional level. While there is an

emerging body of research on shared co-management boards generally established by Treaty, Abele (2007) shares Whyte's assessment that the existing bureaucratic experiment studies don't provide an analysis of where Indigenous epistemology could potentially alter Canadian democracy and decision-making. Approaches that braid Indigenous and Western ways of knowing have well-recognized environmental benefits (Reed et al., 2024; Castleden et al., 2017), but only approach reconciliation principles and are mutually beneficial if the process is coproduced to support complementary knowledges systems without either dominating or subsuming the other (Reed et al., 2024; Castleden et al., 2017; Abele, 2007).

This literature review explores research on Indigenous and non-Indigenous government environmental collaboration, which varies in scope from legislated Environmental Assessments, climate action development, and broad environmental partnerships. The best practices and researched approaches to establishing the most effective planetary health outcomes are outlined. The complex and interrelated challenges to meaningful collaboration are explored, and early involvement of Indigenous partners is presented as a main principle of the co-creation required for effective collaboration.

3.2 MAPPING THE PROCESS

To conduct this narrative literature review, the following electronic databases were searched [1]: JStor, Google scholar, and the University of Victoria library.

The articles selected for inclusion in this review had to meet the following criteria:

1. Peer-reviewed journal articles, books, or book chapters;
2. Published in English;
3. Address the topics identified above in search terms;
4. Collaboration involving a Western, democratic government [2]

The articles that met the inclusion criteria were read in their entirety, and relevant data was extracted and synthesized.

---

[1] The following terms were searched: planetary health, barriers to collaborative government, intergovernmental collaboration barriers, climate change collaborative barriers, collaboration between Indigenous government and settler government, integration of traditional knowledge, early collaboration, Indigenous collaboration timeline, Traditional Knowledge collaborative orientation, Indigenous collaboration outcomes, Indigenous collaboration process and collaborative consent, Planetary health, planetary health Indigenous stewardship, epistemological pluralism, alternative climate futures, Indigenous futures, resistance governance, Indigenous climate action, collaborative engagement, plural epistemologies climate, First Nations environmental stewardship collaboration, consensus building with settlers, political listening, active listening, political listening, cosmological perspective climate, sensing policy.

[2] Western democratic government systems were included as criteria as they affect climate change policy and relationships with Indigenous Nations.

3.3 FINDINGS

3.3.1 Critical and Interpretive Policy Analysis

Metro Vancouver, and Canadian regions and cities generally, have risen in public policy relevance over the last few decades, as the monopoly of federal power has dispersed, and politics have been decentered and recentered (Mahon et al., 2007), both within polycentric government authority, and through increased importance of translocal guidance, like the UNDRIP. This comes with the historical context under Federalism outlined in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) almost 3 decades ago that, “to some degree the aspirations of both local governments and Aboriginal peoples have been marginalized and compromised by federal and provincial governments… [resulting in] the interface of municipal and Aboriginal interests, important to Aboriginal self-government, being rendered all but completely invisible” (Canada, 1996, n.p.). The shift in political agency to both First Nations and regional and municipal governments since the Royal Commission has bestowed increased importance and increased action on the interface between First Nations and local governments, like the City of Vancouver’s UNDRIP strategy and action plan (2022).

Whereas previously, First Nations collaboration on policy typically happened at the Federal level (Canada, 1996), the shift over the last few decades in political agency and authority,

both to regional governments like Metro Vancouver and First Nations, bestows increased importance in climate collaboration at this level. Collaboration between governments at this level can increase both the effectiveness of the environmental policy, and the perceived legitimacy to the public of resulting outcomes (Abele, 2007). Orsini & Smith (2007) emphasize that the shifting political landscapes that determine where policy decisions are favored, are increasingly taking place in an "institutional void" (p.190) where the process to agree upon the rules and norms that guide political action, relationships and policy creation are vague and unclear. The authors note that this doesn't decrease the importance of political institutions like Metro Vancouver developing policy, but it does require a new system of political action, and critical policy analysis can be a useful tool to re-examine entrenched societal views of both democratic participation and the various 'spatial horizons' that governance actually occurs (Orsini & Smith, 2007). Largely due to the strength of sustained, Indigenous political mobilization in Canada, and transnational guidance like the UNDRIP, institutions within Canada have moved from oppressive and authoritarian measures directed at excluding Indigenous peoples from settler government processes, to take account of traditional knowledge in public policy creation, and in some rare cases rely upon it (Abele, 2007). However, these shifts take place in a paternalistic, colonial settler state and institutions where Indigenous peoples interact with Canadian governance processes demonstrate significant discursive power that greatly influences the power relations in the policy creation process (Abele, 2007; Redvers et al., 2022).

Currently, the limited integration of Indigenous Knowledge and perspectives into climate public policy in Canada have largely been symbolic or essentialist (ICA, 2022). Abele (2007) offers the examples of opening a western government event with a prayer by an Indigenous Elder or engagement of an Indigenous individual to provide an 'Indigenous perspective'. Engaging with Indigenous Peoples devoid of political and historical contexts can be seen as an act of epistemic violence (Castleden et al., 2017), and cause material harm to Indigenous communities (ICA, 2023). One suggested way to work toward true integration could be thorough institutionalization of Indigenous ways of framing issues and making decisions (Abele, 2007; Redvers et al., 2020), to contextualize and appropriately utilize the resulting knowledge.

3.3.2 Planetary Health

Planetary health is, "the health of human civilization and the state of the natural systems on which it depends" (Hill-Cawthorne, 2019). Within a planetary health model, achieving the highest standards of intertwined human and environmental health requires addressing implementation failures resulting from governance challenges (Whitmee et al., 2015), which is the main barrier to effectively implementing identified solutions (Brousselle et al., 2018). Pattanayak (2017) and Whitmee et al. (2015) agree with identifying the key role government failures have in current planetary health outcomes, and with the former asserting that a main barrier to solution implementation is insufficient demand by decision makers for improved and diverse knowledge.

Governance challenges to effective climate action planning and implementation are particularly relevant to Indigenous collaboration. Indigenous stewardship is based on holistic responsibility, and planetary health is a philosophy that has been applied for countless generations to center sustainable development (Ratima, 2019). Indeed, even the term planetary health is a Western re-packaging of long-existing knowledge embedded in Indigenous cultures (Baquero et al., 2021), which is a colonial action that erases the authority of the Indigenous cultures these narratives originated from (Mignolo, 2009). Baquero et al. (2021) argue that this insistence on epistemological marginalization discredits perspectives that do not separate humans from nature and the people fighting for this approach. This appropriation without recognition comes as an insult after Indigenous perspectives, "have [historically] been socially located outside of accepted knowledge" (Castleden et al., 2009, p. 800). Indigenous governance is based on the idea of accountability to not only one's community but also the environment the community is dependent upon (Canada, 1996; Brousselle et al., 2022). This ontology is reflected in Indigenous languages. For example, the Nuu-chah-nulth refer to the term *Hishuk ish tsawalk* meaning everything is connected (Castleden et al., 2009) and *Gina waadluxan gud kwaagid* means everything depends on everything else in the language of the Haida Nation (Brousselle et al., 2022). The Indigenous intertwined approach to governance and land emphasizes that people do not have dominion over the land but are subject to the land's dominion (Canada, 1996).

In planetary health literature, there is increasing 'importance of place,' which is not only geographic but also a way of looking at the world (Castleden et al., 2009). Places are imbued with social relations and power structures, so attention must be paid to undoing the systemic

dismantling of Indigenous worldviews and understanding how these worldviews are operationalized to make sense of increasing environmental crises (Castleden et al., 2009). In the case of climate action planning, the causes are both global and local (IPCC, 2018). However, regional planetary health interventions are tied to the regional space and must consider the local communities and knowledges that inform and communicate both with the land and local ways of knowing (Castleden et al., 2009; Pattanayak, 2017; Brousselle et al., 2018).

Mignolo (2009) claims that in planetary health, knowledge-making for well-being rather than for imperialist control and epistemic obedience must come from local experiences and needs, which aligns with Castleden et al.'s (2009) assertions around the importance of place-making. Indigenous traditional knowledges are collective, holistic, and land-informed ways of knowing inherently interwoven with community and the environment (Redvers et al., 2022). Redvers et al. (2020) refer to the land-specific First Laws governing Indigenous worldviews and practices based on complex reciprocal responsibilities between humans and the biosphere. While land-informed, place-based knowledge is critical to effective climate action, it should be noted that some Indigenous groups including the Assembly of First Nations, have pointed to devaluing language in government climate conversations that refer to Indigenous peoples as 'local communities' which can diminish the standards, rights and status of Indigenous peoples laid out in documents like UNDRIP (Reed et al, 2024).

Climate action and planetary health interventions generally are too often hindered by siloed, "reductionistic mechanisms of governance" (Brousselle et al., 2022, p.337), whose singular authorities create singular initiatives and priorities. This type of government planning and the worldview that informs it prevents meaningful consideration of systemic solutions to the systemic problems planetary health calls for (Brousselle et al., 2022). Brousselle et al. (2022) call for decentralizing decision-making and democratizing knowledge to holistically enhance the ability to respond to climate change. Indigenous knowledges tend to work towards understanding relationships as opposed to objects, and these complex relationships between ecosystem elements are often missed in a Western approach (Castleden et al., 2017).

Redvers et al. (2020) supports Mignolo (2009), Baquero et al. (2021) and Castleden et al.'s (2009) assertion that the holistic and contextual Indigenous scientific method is needed to fulfil Brousselle et al.'s (2017) call to decentralize decision making as we cannot solve environmental problems, "from the same worldview that created them in the first place"

(p.5). Climate outcomes will be stronger when Western scientific government processes actively respect other knowledge systems and can reflect a reciprocal planetary health worldview (Redvers et al., 2022). Pattanayak (2017) and Baquero et al. (2021) agree that the incorporation of First Laws will strengthen government environmental policy (Redvers et al., 2020) and emphasize that local knowledge systems coming from those who do not exercise hegemony, need solidarity and support from the regulatory powers and the scientific community to have a wide-reaching effect. So, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous government climate collaboration can benefit both governments and create stronger planetary health outcomes if created with intention.

3.3.3 Epistemological Pluralism

Planetary health literature tends to agree that combining, or creating room for without subsuming, different ways of knowing in decision-making spaces are needed to improve planetary health (Brousselle et al., 2020; Redvers et al., 2022; Castleden et al., 2009; Baquero et al., 2021; Pattanayak, 2017; Abele, 2007). Epistemic pluralism contends that recognizing and accommodating multiple sources and streams of diverse knowledge can increase the success of climate action and ultimately improve transformative action (Brousselle et al., 2022; Baquero et al., 2021; Mignolo, 2009). These findings are revisited in Costanza-Chock's (2020) exploration of the community-led approach of 'design-justice,' which emerges from a large community of practice that believes in meaningfully designing policy development processes to challenge, rather than reproduce, structural inequalities. She asserts that community-led, collaborative design practices are likely the only way to transform marginalizing systems, which she refers to as the "matrix of domination" (p.3), by recognizing the linked worlds of collective liberation and ecological sustainability. However, there are challenges to combining knowledges for climate action as the Indigenous perspective based on intertwined, reciprocal responsibility to the earth can be at odds with the human-centric, colonial perspective that typically guides climate action (Redvers et al., 2022).

Arsenault et al. (2018) support Redvers et al. (2022) assertion that combining knowledge forms can be contentious and establish that, typically, the existing colonial imbalance creates a system where Western science is in a position to either validate or invalidate Indigenous knowledge. This aligns with Castleden et al.'s (2017) assertion that the colonial power imbalance creates a system where Indigenous Peoples must make their knowledge and

differences accessible to the 'disciplining modes of power,' Western scientists and environmental managers. Redvers et al. (2020) assert land-specific First Laws and Indigenous Knowledges are sacred, so they cannot simply be viewed as information to be slotted into western scientific knowledge systems. Latulippe (2015) supports this and further argues that even the framing of environmental management is Euro-Canadian as it separates humans from the natural world, making integrating Indigenous Knowledge into conventional environmental management regimes and typical models for climate action impossible.

The impossibility of epistemological pluralism is supported in some cases by Abele (2007), who contends that translating Indigenous knowledge into English and other European languages is incorrect, and some principles are not interculturally communicable without both parties speaking the Indigenous language it comes from. He points to the relational language of Indigenous languages borne of Indigenous cosmologies that explains "how to live in the world and best be human" (p.237) and how there is no sharp distinction between humans, animals, water, land, etc., unlike in English. Although they tentatively support knowledge-braiding approaches, Reed et al. (2024) and McGregor (2018) take Abele's idea one step further to contend that Indigenous Knowledge is uniquely positioned to best identify successful climate action by arguing that while Western science can describe the natural world, it does not speak to how to live with it (McGregor, 2018). These authors agree that due to the unique and holistic relationship with the environment and understanding "localized seasonal, cyclical and interdependent timing of events such as migrations, hibernations and blooming vegetation, Indigenous Knowledge Systems can identify changes undetected by western science" (Reed et al., 2024, p.45), and provide a more in-depth and complex understanding of how environments change over time. Reed et al. (2024) offer several caveats to supporting potential collaborative approaches, including the potential for Indigenous legal systems to be overshadowed by more dominant systems and general skepticism for Indigenous and Western knowledge systems to ever be successfully framed as equal in a collaborative structure. As a caution, the authors relay Fischer et al.'s (2022) feeling that the two are diametrically opposed as "Indigenous and Traditional Peoples' knowledge is for connecting and living, while Western science is for conquering and controlling" (Fischer et al., 2022, p. 292).

Arsenault et al. (2018), Whyte et al. (2018), and Reed et al. (2024) disagree with the assertion that epistemological pluralism between Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments is

impossible, with the former building on the latter's argument that Indigenous and Western science can effectively collaborate if each knowledge system is equally valued in a new framework of ontological and epistemological pluralism, and the co-construction of actions is based on multiple knowledge systems. Castleden et al.'s (2017) findings support this, arguing that the co-creation of environmental action through co-learning in ontological pluralism, although difficult, can work toward healing both relationships with each other and relationships with our shared environment and create more expansive understandings of the environmental crisis we are in. Redvers et al. (2022) build out this idea and point towards embracing Indigenous methodologies and responsibility-based governance systems in addition to epistemologies in order to make meaningful changes to extractive systems rather than extracting contextless Indigenous knowledge and losing the complex relational system information (Castleden et al., 2017). Reed et al. (2024) agree with Castleden et al.'s (2017) assertion that successful climate action and reconciliation in climate policy development must move beyond the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in Western science and find new frameworks that meaningfully include Indigenous ways of knowing and decision-making processes.

Two-Eyed Seeing, a concept attributed to Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall, describes how one can *learn* to see the strengths of both forms of knowledge: Indigenous Knowledge with one eye and Western Knowledge with the other (Castleden et al., 2017) to create a more comprehensive understanding. To arrive at an even fundamental understanding of how to 'see' Indigenous knowledge, Abele (2007) argues, requires extended study and reflection because the concepts are so different from Western concepts, and this magnitude of difference has resulted in many Indigenous peoples not entering specific discussions or negotiations about land or environment. In potential two-eyed seeing environmental partnerships, Castleden et al. (2017) reason that settler knowledge systems are likely to be reproduced if structured by a pre-established entrenched hierarchy of roles. The authors emphasize that any pretense, neutrality, or progressiveness is upended if the dialogue has actors assuming roles such as stakeholder, expert, and bureaucrat.

3.3.4 'Early' Indigenous Involvement in Environmental Management and Climate Collaboration

To accommodate plural epistemologies, ontologies and methodologies in a way that respects the sovereignty and authority of each government partner, collaboration must begin at the

outset of a planetary health intervention (Howitt, 2020; Brousselle et al., 2020; Whyte et al., 2018; Arsenault et al., 2017; Redvers et al., 2022). Reed et al. (2024) identify that collaborative approaches to the climate crisis that incorporate Indigenous and Western knowledge systems have myriad benefits but need to develop shared priorities at the outset, like the need for holistic and integrative approaches and the complementary differences between the two knowledge systems. Phare et al.'s (2017) case study findings on Watershed co-management between the Province of BC and Indigenous Nations support Latulippe's (2015) and Whyte et al.'s (2018) assertions that effective environmental Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaboration requires establishing a social architecture for long-term planning and relationship building at the outset of any planetary health collaboration involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments.

A mutual space for developing new systems of relating to one another and the environment must exist outside either government's organizational power. Successful interventions incorporating epistemological integration require humble, place-based narratives (Howitt, 2020; Castleden et al., 2009). Castleden et al. (2017) even suggest creating alternative physical collaboration spaces to create alternative social spaces, noting that many Indigenous cultures make decisions out on the land, and a colonial government boardroom location biases the interaction to a Western system. Reed et al. (2024) also identify approaching climate change policy dialogue through an ethical space that equally values and accepts Indigenous Knowledge Systems and ways of knowing as a first step towards decolonizing the process to support Indigenous sociological resilience. The authors identify that it is imperative that all settler governments in Canada support reconciliation and note that the TRC's 94 Calls to Action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015) are beginning to be respected, implemented and prioritized by climate scientists (Reed et al., 2024).

As a process for collaborative governance, Phare et al. (2017) propose collaborative consent as a way of doing business and working together, particularly, "how Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments can work together and advance nation-to-nation relationships for the betterment of communities, the environment, and the economy" (p. 1). Phare et al. (2017) assert that UNDRIP and lasting colonial inequality require all levels of government to change how decisions are made, which is a necessary part of the path forward. Collaborative consent is the process of, "committed engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous

governments - acting as equal partners, each with their asserted authority" (p. 1), to co-develop paths forward on matters of common concern.

The authors emphasize the need for this process to be ongoing and equal to be successful, both relational characteristics requiring 'early' conversations about new environmental protection initiatives. In other words, collaborative climate work that compartmentalizes shared Indigenous knowledge operates to reinforce colonial systems and extractive mentalities, whether intentionally or not (Castleden et al., 2017; Redvers et al., 2020). Successful epistemological collaboration must be ongoing, committed engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments, "acting as equal partners, each with their asserted authority, to secure mutual consent on proposed paths forward related to matters of common concern and all aspects of governance" (Phare et al., 2017, p. 1). Collaborative consent is about changing how decisions at all levels are made, from individual projects up to law and policy. These long-term processes require both Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments to build their own structures to engage and ultimately build new institutions and shared processes for decision-making.

This approach emphasizes the critical need to challenge the implementation of 'commitments on paper' to change the way decisions are made and improve outcomes for First Nations and local ecosystems. Castleden et al. (2017) are also critical of tokenistic Indigenous engagement that amounts to commitments rather than meaningful collaboration and argues that Western state institutions often categorize complex ontological differences as multicultural differences and inadequately respond by opening a small place at the existing decision-making table. Reed et al. (2024) share the tokenistic engagement concern and argue that a new approach must balance existing power relations while supporting the unique strengths of each government and respecting and maintaining differences. A new, shared decision-making space offered by Phare et al. (2017) requires ongoing dialogue, so collaboration initiation on any given project is not owned by either party, despite the project potentially being in control of one organization.

Udofia et al's. (2017) case-study on First Nations participation in Environmental Assessments in Saskatchewan determined that lack of early relationship building with affected communities was particularly common among government project proponents. Arsenault et al.'s (2018) research build on Udofia et al.'s (2017) findings to determine a critical first step to collaboration is to ensure effective contact and communication before,

during and after project completion. These findings align with Brousselle et al.'s (2022) assertion that transformational planetary health action requires reflexive investigation of the organizational structure involved, and allow room for complex dialogue and potential conflict.

Whyte et al.'s (2017) cross-case study on regional partnerships involving Indigenous Nations from the Great Lakes region asserts that asking for Indigenous input after the project goals and decision-making structures have been established makes Indigenous partners' ability to pursue their own parallel goals difficult. The authors do not include any examples where Indigenous partners are involved later in the project for comparison. However, Udofia et al.'s (2017) similar findings from projects in Saskatchewan can serve as an informal comparison. Whyte et al.'s (2018) findings on the difficulty of mutually beneficial collaboration without early involvement are reflected in Latulippe's (2015) assertion that the co-development of knowledge-sharing frameworks from initial stages is needed to achieve ontological pluralism.

Arsenault et al. (2018), Phare et al. (2017), and Whyte et al. (2018) acknowledge that epistemological pluralism can only be achieved if colonial power systems that lend imbalanced authority to Western science and ways of knowing are addressed. Boyd & Lorefice (2018) focus this claim to note that where the formal opportunity for input into decision-making exists, Indigenous groups have repeatedly pointed to a fundamental asymmetry in power during consultation partly caused by the lack of inclusion of cultural practices and knowledge. Without respectful processes in place that address power imbalances and allow for early co-development and epistemological pluralism, the Indigenous holistic stewardship model can be exploited and extracted, unless the processes are community led and land-based (Redvers et al., 2022).

While none of these authors fulsomely explored the role of individual actors in establishing effective collaborative partnerships, Biggs et al. (2017) exploration of resilience in ecosystem management notes that governing human ecosystem services requires collective action and decision-making, so individual actors can create the most effective outcomes by working collaboratively across scales to account for any discrepancies between individual, organizational and societal goals.

3.3.5 Linguistic and Epistemological Misunderstanding

Whyte et al.'s (2018) research revealed that 'early' in consultation practices can be interpreted in many ways, and largely influenced by background and worldview. The authors determined that 'early' tended to be interpreted by Indigenous partners as during project establishment, and government partners tended to interpret 'early' to mean after the project vision and structure were outlined. Literature on these types of collaborations also identifies 'success' as potentially having different meanings and understandings in pluralist settings (Howitt, 2020). By analyzing settler and Indigenous consultation documents through policy frames, Boyd & Lorefice (2018) identify that the meaning of 'early' was produced through the intention of the engagement. Indigenous groups tended to understand that early engagement was for increased involvement in decision-making, while settler governments tended to see early engagement as productive in managing timelines and fulfilling legal and UNDRIP requirements.

This is the type of bureaucratic process, framed by epistemological differences, which Arsenault et al. (2017) point to as exacerbating existing power inequities in Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaborations, and what drives a need for the practice of "mutual recognition, the collaborative building of consent, and the appreciation of cultural continuity for oneself and for other" (Howitt, 2020, p.206). Boyd & Lorefice (2018) agree with the need to build a new, shared decision-making table and illustrate that Indigenous consultation documents tend to recognize the time meaningful engagement would take and that 'sufficient' time must be dedicated to building foundational trust in the relationship first.

Foundational to the success of establishing new, shared collaborative spaces is for the non-Indigenous government to reflexively practice active or political listening, and is a concrete action required to precede ushering in 'mutual recognition' (Wiebe, 2019). Active listening considers that different perspectives are to be retained and necessary to create dialogue and exhibit solidarity (Ashworth, 2020) and create meaning. Active listening becomes political when it becomes a dialogue and creates a call to action (Ashworth, 2020). Learning to actively listen as individual staff, and as an organization, is a main principle of relationship building, rather than leading with solutions first and asking for comment (Wiebe, 2019). While not a complete solution, this active and learned listening can be a first step to working against the type of systemic misunderstandings identified by Whyte et al. (2018), Arsenault et al. (2017), and Boyd & Lorefice (2018).

3.3.6 Remaining Questions

Whyte et al.’s (2017) research begins to outline guidance for early involvement, like creating memorandums of understandings, but the authors focused their research mainly on Environmental Assessments for ground disturbance, and on the Indigenous partners in these types of collaborations, as did Udofia et al. (2017). The implementation of engagement best practices and policies by individuals at a staff level is also under-researched, where most of the research presented focuses on establishing best practices and the organizational structure of collaboration. The staff-level implementation stage is where, even unintentionally, policies and best practices are reshaped and redefined (Arrona & Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, 2019).

The literature explored generally establishes requirements for epistemological collaboration in Indigenous and non-Indigenous government partnerships, including ‘early involvement’. As the engagement outcomes in regional climate policy still don’t consistently achieve meaningful collaboration despite informally committing to this principle, there is a knowledge gap about the challenges experienced by individual actors in implementing ‘early involvement’ of Indigenous partners in collaborative environmental stewardship.

Research in this area tends to focus on Environmental Assessments and projects that require archeological assessments regulated by legislated protocol. More research is needed to determine how the process of establishing partnerships early on in a climate action project is impacted by the more flexible and emergent legislative landscape.

3.3.7 Summary or Conclusions

Meaningfully considering the systemic drivers of climate change and building collaborative relationships built on trust with First Nations, both of which are needed to create holistic environmental interventions (Redvers et al., 2020; Castleden et al., 2017; Wiebe, 2019; Whyte et al., 2013) will require a collaborative space for decision-making and democratizing knowledge (Brousselle et al., 2022; Phare et al., 2017; Arsenault at al., 2017). Any form of co-development should not seek to overcome differences to co-create (Dreher, 2017), but work to accommodate plural epistemologies that challenge Western dualism through focusing on connection and relationship to build transformative futures together (Wiebe, 2020).

The co-learning about others' knowledge systems that is needed to co-develop policy that meaningfully reflects multiple ontologies is a social process and not an end goal that can be reached (Castleden et al., 2017). This type of relational process requires the individuals

involved to investigate their own worldview, and not take for granted the, sometimes latent, hierarchy of knowledge systems (Castleden et al., 2017). Castleden et al. (2017) identify that Indigenous people are typically accustomed to living in two worlds, so the settlers in a potential partnership have ‘work to do’ in order to accept that Indigenous knowledge systems may not neatly fit into Western approaches to environmental management and accommodate a combined approach. Extracting pieces of Indigenous knowledge devoid of worldview context and incorporating it into Western frameworks can be a type of colonial harm (Castleden et al., 2017; ICA, 2017).

The planetary health literature (Castleden et al., 2009; Pattanayak, 2017; Brousselle et al., 2018; Redvers et al., 2020) is clear that meaningful collaboration that approaches epistemological pluralism that fosters would benefit not only Metro Vancouver’s relationships with First Nations, but would also benefit it’s climate policy outcomes and overall emissions reduction. An interesting finding is that not only are First Nations and Indigenous worldviews now increasingly viewed by other governments as ‘important’ to public policy dialogue and climate action development, meaningful inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in government action is now imbuing renewed legitimacy to governments that are increasingly facing a “disaffected electorate” (Abele, 2007).

While experimentation with models for environmental collaboration between Indigenous and Western governments, particularly local governments, is relatively new there are still identified and recommended approaches, including collaborative consent (Phare et al., 2017) and design-justice (Costanza-Chock, 2020) models. Siloed reductionist governance processes are hindering holistic planetary health interventions (Brousselle et al., 2018), and we can begin to see that generally genuine collaboration is also being hindered by narrow governance practices borne of singular authorities and the centering of Western governance practices that may reinforce the systems driving climate change. In this context, the process is the outcome, so by identifying barriers to genuine collaboration processes through honest and clear-eyed reflection, we can begin to identify a path towards improved climate outcomes.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

4.1 METHODOLOGY

This chapter briefly discusses the two qualitative methodologies employed in this research, interpretive policy analysis and institutional ethnography, outlined in these themes: overview of methodologies and theoretical background, methods used, data sources and analysis, validity, and the strengths and limitations of this research approach.

4.1.1 Interpretive Policy Analysis

This qualitative, exploratory research employed interpretive policy analysis (IPA) in order to develop an initial understanding about potential challenges regional staff face when initiating early involvement with First Nations on climate policy development. This was done through the lens of institutional discourse that highlights the intention to foster meaningful climate collaboration, based on the data that emerged from qualitative interviews with staff who initiate these potential collaborations. This analysis started with the understanding that the various issues climate policy is created to address hold different meanings for different groups of people (Bartels, n.d.). This critical methodology seeks to discover how different perspectives affect regional staff actions when engaging on climate policy development and the implications this has on others in the equation and thus the outcome (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2011). Employing IPA allowed insight into knowledge creation in the organization, lived experience of staff, and how discursive power operates in regional climate policy.

Despite the guiding principles and policies around "early and ongoing involvement" (Government of Canada, 2022, n.p.) to collaboration or engagement with First Nations, the language in this guidance can have varying interpretations which can be shaped by one's values, background, organizational interests and agendas (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2011). IPA accommodates "sensitivity to meaning-making" (Åm, 2020, n.p.), so considered that actors working on regional climate policy belong to institutions and professions that are regulated by their own norms and meaning-making, which can influence their view of both the climate policy development process and collaboration with First Nations. Making space for plural realities in the research methodology was valuable for this research, which is ultimately concerned with frameworks for epistemological pluralism in climate policy development.

Where differences in institutional narratives and discourse arose in the research, particularly friction between Metro Vancouver guiding documents and interview findings, is where the focus for analysis was given extra attention for significance (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2011). To do this, the researcher employed abductive reasoning, theorizing where tension and surprise were found in plural interpretations and following plausibility based on available information toward a possible explanation (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). The participants' own voices have been used where suitable in the findings to help redistribute ethnographic authority (Pachirat, 2018) away from the researcher.

This interpretivist methodology followed a hermeneutic sense-making circle, meaning there was no fixed starting point or conclusion for investigation. Research began where the researcher's initial understanding followed an iterative-recursive process between discoveries, was then paused to write and present findings from this research, but this research has no finalized conclusive end (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012). Both participants' subjective perspectives, guiding texts and policies, and legislation, are continually shifting in this landscape and the understanding of this line of inquiry should shift in parallel so this exploratory approach should be continually revisited.

4.1.2 Institutional Ethnography

Institutional ethnography is an analytic approach that aims to elucidate the links between the wider ruling and governing processes that organize and guide local practices (Teghtsoonian, 2016). In this case, it has been employed to better understand how the goals and ambitions set by influencing forces like UNDRIP, and federal and provincial governments' consultation policies are interpreted and applied locally by Metro Vancouver staff, and the effect this has on First Nations climate engagement and meaningful collaboration. This was done by investigating participant's understanding of their roles and experiences to better understand how these roles and experiences are organized and coordinated by institutional forces that affect climate outcomes.

This research positioned participants as 'key informants' about governing relations rather than treating them as research objects being investigated. This interpretive, institutional ethnographic analysis started with people's everyday experiences, practices and knowledges (Teghtsoonian, 2016). The interviews were designed to explore individual experience to better understand *how* things happen at an institutional level, rather than *why* at an individual

level, in order to create ‘knowledge for action’ (Smith, 2007) to change potentially problematic Indigenous engagement processes ‘from below’.

Ethnography from an institutional lens can help discover how discourses circulate, which is needed to illuminate how governing is largely made up of the sum of everyday tasks and activities individual people perform in parallel roles (Karnuga, 2018). Discourse in this context can be defined as the, “translocal relations coordinating the practices of individuals talking, writing, reading and so forth, in particular local places at particular times” (Smith, 2006, p. 29). This research investigates how ‘translocal relations’ like UNDRIP guidance and Federal and Provincial reconciliation commitments coordinate ‘local implementation’ of these principles, and thus explores how staff participate in discourse reproduction by performing the activities for initiating Indigenous engagement on climate policy development, like letter-writing, meeting internally to decide project process, determining timelines, and meeting with or calling First Nations staff. Conceptualizing discourse, both through background text analysis and within the interviews, is valuable to discover the way Metro Vancouver staff’s thoughts and actions are constrained by influencing forces. It also emphasizes the power individual staff have when engaging with discourse and ‘translocal’ guidance (Smith & Turner, 2014), as their daily activities work to circulate discourse through which ruling governance is practiced.

Through interviews with participants, the researcher looked for traces of institutional discourse, by analyzing the way in which it operates broadly, in order to potentially identify possible sites for disruption. This research identified a “problematic” through the interviews and early document analysis, which is a puzzle experienced by participants and translated for inquiry (Smith, 2006), in this case beginning with the organizational commitments and stated intentions compared to the current outcomes within climate policy development. These problematics arise when the knowledge and intentions of local actors, in this case Metro Vancouver staff, are subordinated into processes originating elsewhere (Smith, 2006) like other orders of government, positivistic standards set in western climate action, UNDRIP, or even Metro Vancouver’s own processes set for projects involving ground disturbance. The goal of this research aligns with broad institutional ethnographic goals: to extend the knowledge discovered in this local setting to other local governments with similar climate authority operating under the same translocal ruling relations and experiencing inadequate Indigenous perspective inclusion.

4.2 METHODS

4.2.1 Ethical Review

This project required ethical approval from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) and was approved under certificate number 23-0452. The research is relatively low risk based on Canada's Tri-Council Policy (2014), as participants are anonymized in the results, the researcher did not stage the research, which was relatively non-intrusive.

4.2.2 Qualitative Interviews

The primary data collection method used in this study was in-depth, semi-structured interviews, which can be more accurately understood as conversations (Smith & Griffin, 2022) and are referred to as that in the findings. As participants were considered key informants and experts about the processes they are involved in rather than research objects, an interview guide provided a rough outline for open-ended questions and loose prompts that encouraged participants to share their own unique perceptions about the challenges and opportunities they have experienced in initiating early Indigenous climate collaborations. The conversation was free to roam to any relevant topics participants wanted to discuss which provided room to discover unanticipated information (Teghtsoonian, 2016) to best capture their plural social realities and ground the conversations in participant experience rather than the researchers' framing. The conversations with 10 Metro Vancouver staff were conducted face-to-face or through video conferencing and were audio-recorded then transcribed by hand.

The loose format of the conversations aided the institutional ethnographic approach to learn from participants in a work of discovery that went beyond what any one individual participant knew by encouraging the conversation away from institutional abstractions and into the concrete of everyday experiences (Smith & Griffith, 2022). The conversations served as a tool to understand the process of initiating 'early engagement' of First Nations in climate policy development, by relying on participants' knowledge of how they get things done, what guides their actions and how these actions assist or hinder 'genuine collaboration'. The research moves from this understanding of staff experiences to exploring how ruling relations influence these actions.

The study used purposive sampling to recruit 10 participants from seven Metro Vancouver departments who have been involved in various aspects of climate policy projects that initiated Indigenous participation for policy development. Access to interviewees was obtained through the researcher's employment within Metro Vancouver. Initial participants were chosen due to the researcher's awareness of their involvement with climate policy development and these participants were asked to suggest other staff to be included, to limit the bias of participants being selected through the lead researcher's knowledge and understanding.

A detailed ethnographic research diary was kept during interviews and analysis to observe and record interactions and points of tension (Pachirat, 2018). These detailed records assisted in re-visiting the qualitative data to ensure accuracy of memory of the interactions along with the detailed recordings, and the diary keep a record of where initial surprises or tensions were found in participants responses before understanding changed through hermeneutic enquiry on these discoveries through later analysis (Pachirat, 2018). The aim of these ethnographical records and interpretivist inquiry generally, is to illuminate how shared, "meanings and their relation to power inform the structure of the social world and the study of the social world" (Pachirat, 2018, p. 48).

4.2.3 Critical Document Analysis

Documents initially identified by the researcher through searching Metro Vancouver's public record database, and expanded through the interview process, were critically analyzed for institutional discourse, in particular the organizing influence translocal guidance and internal commitments may have over regional climate staff's actions. All the Metro Vancouver documents analyzed in this research are publicly available. Institutional ethnography explores texts as carriers of institutional discourse, which refers to any, "widely shared professional, managerial, scientific, or authoritative way of knowing (measuring, naming, describing) states of affairs that render them actionable within institutional relations of purpose and accountability" (Teghtsoonian, 2016, p. 336). These texts represent conceptual systems, and driving worldviews, that carry institutional purpose (Teghtsoonian, 2016) which may influence process and allow greater insight into friction caused by textual commitments and implementation outcomes.

4.2.4 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data created in the interviews, by identifying key themes, phrases, terms, ideas, values and narratives (Yanow, 2000), emphasizing those repeated by participants or noted as important by individual participants. Significant passages were outlined for each interview and thematic elements were identified, extracted, and categorized to the major domains in 'challenges' with the current process and 'opportunities' for a path forward. Formal coding was generally avoided as the coding process can generalize and standardize (Smith, 2006), but to make sense of the data collected, the content was indexed in a responsive way and attempted to avoid imposing categories without fluidity and nuance (Smith, 2006).

The process of analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase guidance framework for thematic analysis:

1. *Familiarization with the data:* the first phase consisted of the researcher immersing herself in the data through initial transcription then repeated reading of the transcripts, noting initial ideas. This phase identified initial patterns in the data.
2. *Generating initial indexes:* the transcripts were then systematically indexed by hand using coloured categories that allowed for intersection. This involved identifying and labelling segments of the data that were relevant to the research questions with one or multiple colours. This indexing was driven by both theory and data, as some initial categories were informed by the theoretical frameworks but others emerged inductively through analyzing patterns in the data.
3. *Searching for themes*: After the indexing and categorising was complete, these were grouped together to form themes. This involved collating data that was relevant to each topic and identifying broader patterns of meaning. 'Key' themes and narratives of relevance were identified both through repetition in interviews, implying that it was a widely shared staff experience, and through participants' direct engagement with underlying theory where they clearly speak to their frustrations with limitations to act as they feel they should under reconciliation and healthy power structures. These emergent themes were then reviewed against their relationship to the research question and the coherence of assigned data.
4. *Reviewing themes:* In this phase, themes were refined by checking if they worked with both the categorized data and the entire data set. Some initial themes were

discarded as they were not supported by enough data or did not contribute to the overall narrative. Some themes that shared enough data were merged into a larger theme for analysis. This phase also involved revisiting the transcripts and earlier coding documents to ensure nothing was missed in the generated themes.

5. *Defining and naming themes:* This phase involved the process of defining and naming the themes involved identifying the 'essence' of each theme, determining what aspect of the data each theme spoke to, ensuring each theme was distinct enough from the others, and discovering the overall story the data told. Analysis was then conducted to identify any sub-themes and to understand the relationship between them.
6. *Producing this report:* the final stage of analysis was writing this report, involving presenting the themes in a coherent narrative that directly answers the research questions and identifying lingering questions in the data for future research. Direct quotes from the interviews have been chosen to illustrate the themes, and to allow participants' own words to speak to their perceptions.

Discourse analysis was then performed on the interview transcripts and the background institutional documents to look for institutional discourse within the conversations. This revealed the presence of institutional discourse and how it operates and provided a starting place to discover possible disruptions to make 'change from below' (Smith, 2006) based on incongruence with discourse provided in guiding Metro Vancouver documents, based on translocal documents like UNDRIP. The process of discourse analysis from an institutional ethnographic point of view was done by building a 'second dialogue' on what has been learned from dialogue produced in the original data: interview transcripts and institutional documents. The researcher developed understanding about staff actions and practices from the transcripts and brought them into a "second moment of dialogue" (Smith and Griffith, 2022, p.10) that illuminates the moments of interaction with ruling forces. This second dialogue was applied with the theoretical framework in result analysis.

4.3 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

In interpretive and ethnographic research methods, bias is an inevitable part of the research as every piece of the research has a point of view (Pachirat, 2018; Smith, 2006). The interpretive ethnography approach gave explicit attention to the power relations involved in policy implementation by highlighting and articulating that point of view, based on the belief that by

connecting deeply with people within the institutions, we can begin to understand the individual perspectives and institutional limitations affecting process implementation (Pachirat, 2018). The unstructured interview format, without formalized questions, helped to limit researcher bias and validate the resulting data and the understanding of participants' experience, which did not conform to a pre-existing conceptual frame and limited the ethnographer's conceptual dominance (Smith & Griffith, 2022).

To enhance reliability, the researcher sought out "inconvenient facts" (Pachirat, 2018), which are perspectives and opinions that called into question the researcher's assumptions, interpretations and conclusions (Pachirat, 2018). This was done by asking simple questions about the existence of perspectives that stress-tested the understanding the research created at each development point (Pachirat, 2018). These questions were asked both participants within the interviews or during follow-up conversations to clarify data, and also asked reflexively of the researcher in conducting research for analysis.

Throughout the interview process, and subsequent data analysis stages, the researcher maintained reflexivity by documenting her own perspectives, biases and any potential influences on the data. These ethnographic records kept throughout the research serve in enhancing reliability as it provides a deeper sense of how the co-developed understanding was developed and the researcher would refer to them to challenge or interrogate the research conclusions as they developed (Pachirat, 2018).

A subset of research participants was asked to clarify vague data and provide their opinion on data inconsistencies to help validate the accuracy and relevance of interpretations. Deep understanding of the issues surrounding implementing early involvement of First Nations in regional climate action, can only be realized through co-generation between the interviewer and participants as they interpret events and phenomena and make those interpretations legible to one another (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

4.4. STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

4.4.1 Limitations

The limitations of this research include the potential researcher's bias as an institutional insider, which can influence the findings. Sharing either the same profession or employer, the researcher can unintentionally take for granted she understands the participants responses

when institutional language is used (Smith and Griffith, 2022), if not encouraging the conversation into a 'concrete' realm and away from these abstractions. The research is dependent on the researcher's interpretation and reliant on the level of ability to see complex factors influencing regional climate staff without inserting personal bias, some of which has been mitigated by processes outlined above. Research outcomes are also dependent on participants' credibility and honesty (Arrona & Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, 2019), and they may have undisclosed political agendas or biases the researcher doesn't catch.

While ethnography and interpretive investigation of participants within government structures are a way of investigating the plural reality of policy implementation, the value of investigating these 'ground level facts' can be minimized if they are not expanded beyond anecdotes (Pachirat, 2018). The regional focus within the legislative landscape may limit the generalizability of the findings. The nature of interviews and ethnographic methods mean the findings can't be extracted across time and space without changing the research question and scope significantly. Focusing on the lived experience of staff can also characterize the ruling structures in place as stable and invulnerable, and unintentionally reinforce the strength of the status quo (Smith & Griffith, 2022), rather than identifying them as places for change as the research intends and is foundational to its recommendations.

Change making from within involves participating in the ruling relations and organizing action 'from below' (Teghtsoonian, 2016), which is a strength but also a potential limitation as the entrenched hierarchy of decision making within Metro Vancouver does limit the pace of change and may deter staff from pursuing this type of action within their roles. This research acknowledges that any internal change making is creating a localized environment of readiness for more meaningful collaborative relationships and will be most effective when considered alongside the strength of Indigenous environmental justice movements and extralocal forces like Supreme Court rulings that continually change the environmental engagement landscape.

4.4.2 Strengths

The exploratory nature of the research methods and data analysis provided flexibility, both in the conversations that allowed for unguided responses and provided space for participants to identify topics through their own experience and in the thematic emergence of analytic themes as opposed to pre-identified frames. The interpretive nature of the research was well

suited to investigate the qualitative evidence of policy implementation from a staff perspective rather than quantitative data, which may be more biased and difficult to obtain (Arrona & Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, 2019), especially in government documents which are generally vague, brief and framed by institutional narrative.

The 'anecdotal' trap of the interpretive research method has been lessened by the breadth of participants and varying roles and positions in the institutional hierarchy. The research's limited scope and generalizability do not diminish the value of accessing deep understanding through ground-level facts, which still provide useful recommendations to improve current ecological collaboration initiation and, ultimately, climate outcomes, if even at a regional level. The surrounding political and ecological contexts that shape climate action are always shifting. The nuance needed for effective collaboration between First Nation and settler governments will need to be constantly amended through future co-creation. Institutional ethnography encourages organization and group reflection as a form of resistance, to potentially address how a community of colleagues are perhaps unknowingly contributing to problematic processes and how we may act differently (Teghtsoonian, 2016).

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research examined 15 publicly available documents on consultation with Indigenous groups, plans that mention First Nations engagement or collaboration intention, reports and formal statements about Metro Vancouver's goals for relationships with First Nations, guidance documents, and websites. The documents were initially chosen based on availability and public accessibility, and documents were added to the analysis when referenced by participants. These documents play a role in guiding the process of engaging for climate action development by relaying institutional purpose and intent and reflect the standpoint of the process's ruling relations (Teghtsoonian, 2016).

The 10 research participants were from varying Metro Vancouver departments: Indigenous Relations, External Relations, Parks and Environment, Liquid Waste Services, Water Services, Regional Land Use and Planning, and Air Quality and Climate Action. There was a mix of gender, educational background and role, and stage of employment with Metro Vancouver. In this research context, staff are implementers of procedure, rather than procedure establishing, and so range from Director to Senior Specialist. Below are the major themes that emerged during the conversations, separated into challenges and opportunities for a path forward.

5.2 GUIDING DOCUMENTS ANALYSIS

The guiding internal documents stated intentions and outlined goals to meaningful engagement and 'genuine collaboration' with First Nations helped to illuminate the relationship between the discourse they carry and the staff agency to deploy or act on these discourses to achieve strengthened relationships with First Nations to reach climate goals (Smith & Griffith, 2022). These documents were analyzed first to simply compile institutional intent, and reviewed further to find the friction created by an incongruence between what is stated as the institutional intention, and what actions are currently done in implementation.

The Metro Vancouver documents reviewed clearly demonstrate the intention to more deeply engage with First Nations on current and future climate action (Metro Vancouver, 2023;

Metro Vancouver, 2021), and specifically site “meaningful engagement” and “genuine collaboration” as an institutional goal (Metro Vancouver, n.d., n.p.), and reinforce the TRC’s and UNDRIPs guidance for ‘early and ongoing’ engagement. This goal for the future implies room for improvement from current engagement processes; the reporting documents for climate action initiatives show a lack of truly collaborative climate policy development to date and many point to plans to conduct deeper collaboration ‘in the future’ without any identified plans, processes, or timelines. The various committee reports, climate strategies and action plans reviewed are not in alignment on how they frame both the value and expected outcomes of First Nations engagement on climate initiatives. This reinforces Indigenous Climate Action’s (2023) assessment that while most governments include mention of including Indigenous Peoples and perspectives in their climate policies, the quality and depth of reference varies widely.

The following sections separate the textual analysis into relevant themes.

5.2.1 Reconciliation

Metro Vancouver defines reconciliation as, “a continuing and shared responsibility across individuals, communities, and all orders of government, to be willingly engaged and repair relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples” (Metro Vancouver, 2024, n.d., n.p.). Metro Vancouver’s 2024 Financial Plan lists reconciliation as a ‘central priority’ identified by the Board in its strategic plan to guide and inform the development of plans and budgets (p. 7). This commitment is strong in platitude but vague in concrete actions and definitions by stating the intention to, “continue building and strengthening respectful and reciprocal relationships with local First Nations. Metro Vancouver will also continue to engage meaningfully with First Nations on plans, programs and projects” (Metro Vancouver, n.d., n.p.). This document does not define reconciliation, ‘meaningful engagement’, or specific programs that action reconciliation. Research shows this commitment to reconciliation practices could reasonably be interpreted by others to include implications for Rights and Title considerations for environmental management and climate action planning as referenced in the UNDRIP, and resulting provincial and federal guidance (Canada, 2024; FNLC, 2022; ICA, 2021; Giunta, 2019; Whyte et al., 2013; Reed et al., 2024; Udofia et al., 2017). A 2023 Board meeting agenda package explains that there are significantly increased expectations from the federal and provincial governments, First Nations, and the broader public that Metro Vancouver continuously take concrete actions towards reconciliation with

First Nations, but this document doesn't outline what concrete actions are being demanded (Metro Vancouver, 2023) nor what the organization proposes to satisfy this demand.

The priority actions that are listed to strengthen the relationship in pursuing reconciliation are building trust through "genuine collaboration, creating a mutually respectful space for meaningful dialogue and outcomes, and creating opportunities for Board-to-Nation relationships to thrive" (Metro Vancouver, 2024, n.p.). DRIPA outlines actions for co-development of environment protection and climate action, which emphasize the need to create *new forms* of collaboration aimed at reconciliation. While Board-to-Nation relationship building is important for broader relationship healing under reconciliation, genuine collaboration on specific governance topics that combines multiple epistemologies, in this case climate action approaches, is planned and developed at a staff level (Smith, 2006; Karnuga, 2018) and processes developed to increase genuine collaboration need to reflect that reality.

UNDRIP clearly states that the rights of Indigenous Peoples include a "healthy natural environment with Indigenous ways of knowing incorporated into the protection and stewardship of lands" (Article 29). In the federal action plan to achieve this goal, platforming Indigenous Peoples leadership and ways of knowing is named as central to climate action planning, policy development and decision-making (Canada, 2023). A main point of tension repeated throughout the Metro Vancouver guiding documents is created by strongly recognizing and acknowledging the changing social and political landscapes in Canada with increased, "...First Nations expectations with respect to the provincial and federal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Acts" (Metro Vancouver, 2024, p.21), but falling short of making commitments to meet these expectations. These documents, which influence and guide institutional discourse (Smith, 2006), instead relay vague values related to, "the Board's commitment to reconciliation" (Metro Vancouver, 2024), but not the Acts themselves or concrete actions linked to the relationship-based *practice* of reconciliation (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015) rather than the *idea* of reconciliation.

5.2.2 Early and Ongoing Engagement and Genuine Collaboration

Metro Vancouver's publicly available plans and reports repeatedly state the desire for 'genuine collaboration' (Metro Vancouver, 2024) and strengthened First Nations participation (Metro Vancouver, 2019), including as a 'pathway to action' in the draft Lower

Mainland Flood Management Strategy (Metro Vancouver, 2023). This initiative cites the influence of the UNDRIP on the intention to engage meaningfully with First Nations on climate resilience, Rights and Title impacts, conservation of lands and resources and free prior and informed consent (Metro Vancouver, 2023). This intention aligns with both the UNDRIP guidance and Indigenous calls to action (Canada, 2024; TRC, 2015; ICA, 2021; FNLC, 2022; Wale & Huson, 2024) but also implies this level of engagement hasn't been reached yet on the current initiative despite the developed draft and the document identifies that investment in First Nations capacity building by Metro Vancouver will be needed to achieve this goal (Metro Vancouver, 2023). While this is certainly needed, no attention is given to what actions would be required internally of Metro Vancouver staff, process development, existing knowledge, and project timelines to implement greater collaboration. A main point of tension from the guiding documents generally is that many of the published draft and final plans identify an intention to collaborate or meaningfully engage on an already created draft document, which at this stage of development has already missed the opportunity to meaningfully include First Nations epistemologies and ontologies. Wiebe (2019), Redvers et al. (2020) and Brousselle et al. (2018) identify epistemological and ontological inclusion as critical to be able to benefit from Indigenous holistic worldviews and environmental practices.

Metro Vancouver Committee reporting (Metro Vancouver, 2023) shows interest in aligning policy with both the federal and provincial Action plans for UNDRIP, which includes co-developing an Indigenous climate leadership agenda with First Nations that have interests in the region that ensures Indigenous Peoples have the authority and resources to, "fully exercise their right to self-determination on climate" (Canada, 2023). In these publicly referenced translocal guiding documents, Environment and Climate Change Canada (Metro Vancouver, 2023) reinforces the importance of using two-eyed seeing, to "bridge, braid, and weave Indigenous science with western science to inform Environment and Climate Change Canada's science, policy, and program decision making" (n.p.). These managers' reports and committee reports emphasize principles expressed by other governments and guiding documents, but fall short of suggesting recommendations or actions for Metro Vancouver staff to implement to reach any of the commitments made to principles.

5.2.3 Climate Engagement

Currently, climate action at Metro Vancouver is developed under *Climate 2050*, its long-range mitigation and adaptation climate strategy. This plan states that, "policies and programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate must not exacerbate existing economic, social, or geographic disparities… [and] should also strengthen relationships with First Nations including contributing to reconciliation with First Nations peoples in the region" (Metro Vancouver, 2019). The strategy acknowledges that traditional knowledge can be incorporated into climate planning processes at Metro Vancouver, and that combining Indigenous wisdom with "new information, evidence and technologies" can help Metro Vancouver develop more holistic strategies and actions (Metro Vancouver, 2019). It should be noted that while the strategy highlights the value of two-eyed seeing without naming it, and commits to strengthening relationships with First Nations, it does not offer any examples or attempts of two-eyed seeing in developing the strategy. *Climate 2050* engagement reporting shows that there was engagement with First Nations on the strategy and resulting roadmaps separated by topic, but co-development or collaboration wasn't pursued, and generally, feedback was received from First Nations on a draft document (Metro Vancouver, 2023).

For example, the *Climate 2050* Nature and Ecosystems Roadmap draft presents a vision that, "Indigenous ways of knowing about the natural world are showcased and more widely understood and embraced by all" (Metro Vancouver, 2022, p.12), alongside a Climate Action Committee Report with a *request to begin engagement*, including with First Nations. This Committee report notes the draft Roadmap was developed with feedback from 'various groups' but does not explicitly mention First Nations involvement in co-developing the draft vision about Indigenous ways of knowing or any specific developed process or engagement mechanism to access and incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing to ensure incorporation didn't sever it from a holistic worldview and ontology (Castleden et al., 2017). The engagement plan accompanying the draft report frames engagement as a 'listening and learning' opportunity that may identify future means for engaging local First Nations and including local and Indigenous perspectives in climate action planning and implementation (Metro Vancouver, 2022). However, the conversations with participants revealed the majority of First Nations engagement on the Roadmaps was an opportunity to provide feedback on the already drafted Roadmap, rather than co-development or dialogue on initial approach. The intention to 'listen and learn' by Metro Vancouver from First Nations likely cannot happen in

a meaningful way that honours multiple ways of knowing, as the framework for knowing, and issues to be addressed, has already been drafted and is offered for comment.

The *Climate 2050* overarching strategy document outlines the various roles and responsibilities in the region for climate action, which highlights the value of a polycentric governance model. The federal and provincial government's influence is outlined in assigned jurisdictional authority to create policy and regulations. First Nations don't have equal influence or authority even in their own jurisdictions due to a colonial history of disenfranchisement, and the strategy recognizes that First Nations provide services to their communities impacted by climate change, and may adopt regional sustainability or land use plans (Metro Vancouver, 2019) but falls short of outlining what inherent Rights and Title and environmental self-determination may mean for climate planning engagement outlined by UNDRIP and the Canada's Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda.

5.3 CONVERSATIONS WITH RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Major Themes

5.3.1 CHALLENGES

Almost all staff interviewed noted that when engaging First Nations on climate projects, they often hear feedback from First Nations staff that engagement was not initiated 'early enough', and those First Nations governments expressed a desire for a chance to co-develop climate policy and action. Despite hearing this feedback consistently, all participants acknowledged they have never worked on a climate action project that could be considered 'genuine collaboration' with First Nations. The following findings identify areas where challenges to collaboration are felt by staff most significantly and outlines critical issues that need to be addressed to achieve epistemological pluralism in future climate planning for improved environmental and relationship outcomes.

5.3.1.1 Not Engaging Early Enough

Unlike Whyte's (2018) exploration of settler government interpretation of 'early', all staff interviewed in this research understood 'early' to mean at the idea generation stage at project conception when there was still opportunity to shape the project, but identified a dissonance was created by most projects engagement being initiated on already drafted plans or policies,

past project approach or idea generation stage. The most significant causes of this dissonance identified were:

- *Project timelines:* the majority of participants (6) noted that engaging fulsomely and meaningfully can conflict with pressure from conflicting internal priorities like using project budget within a calendar year and decision-makers inconsistently understanding the value in time tradeoff for improved climate outcomes with deeper engagement.

- *Lack of precedent or roadmap:* Some participants (3) emphasized the role organizational fear of risk played, where typically processes were only approved and initiated that had a past example internally or from another jurisdiction and pushing for an innovative process is generally up to individual staff to advocate for. Participants all perceived a lack of concrete internal guidance for timing outside of 'early', which meant the timelines for outreach seemed to vary depending on team and staff understanding, motivation and background.

A common line of conversation was that participants stressed that climate collaboration with First Nations, or any other group or government, is a completely different process than ground disturbance or infrastructure projects, and it is very difficult to apply guidance created for these projects. Participants mostly identified climate action planning as an ongoing process, and conversations about identifying priority issues and potential action is also ongoing and often iterative process. So to begin a conversation 'early' with First Nations governments on a defined climate action that's already been roughly drafted is already too late for epistemological pluralism, let alone incorporation of Indigenous ontologies. The process then reflects Pattanayak (2017) and Whitmee et al.'s (2015) identification of government failures to planetary health outcomes coming from decision-makers overseeing processes that do not demand diverse knowledge inclusion.

5.3.1.2 Project outreach timing reinforces power imbalance

A few respondents reported that due to the process of only reaching out to First Nations for feedback on specific projects, where staff decide the timing of outreach and method, Metro

Vancouver staff inherently decides what projects may be important to First Nations. Participants identified that generally more involved processes are assigned to species or ecosystem initiatives, rather than allowing messier issue salience processes where First Nations identify important shared issues for themselves which would come closer to the self-determinism outlined in the UNDRIP and federal guidance. This aligns with Hankivsky (2019) and Cormier's (2019) findings that issue salience and agenda setting play a foundational role in power relations in policy writing between multiple parties. One respondent relayed that First Nations that are seen by Metro Vancouver as having higher staff capacity to develop their own climate plans are often identified by Metro Vancouver staff as more interested or able to engage in climate issues, which results in those Nations receiving more tailored effort from staff.

The conversations revealed that climate issue salience, or determining which climate issues require priority action, is set internally by what is deemed important to internal decision-makers but is positioned as objective and supported by data, so it is not typically up for discussion. The potential actions are debated in project engagement, but a few respondents noted they have never seen the issue definition included in dialogue with First Nations. One participant reflected Abele's (2007) concern around knowledge subsumption if Indigenous knowledge is only ever slotted into a Metro Vancouver controlled processes:

> Can you take their worldview and put it into this worldview without, like, fundamentally changing it? Or, you know, absorbing it into this system? (Personal Communication, Participant #4, Burnaby, 2024)

This participant surmised that one institution deciding what climate issues could be discussed, or what issues they make room for, in mutual dialogue made absorption of any Indigenous Knowledge input devoid of worldview context an inevitability as Metro Vancouver retains control of the environmental narrative.

5.3.1.3 Difficulty incorporating holistic perspectives into fragmented project work

Metro Vancouver's climate program typically engages with First Nations around narrow project scopes, and the majority of respondents identified that this causes fragmented conversations about compartmentalized topics with no process for considering any holistic, interrelated feedback. Van Hulst and Yanow (2014) discuss this splintered process by

describing how asking narrow questions in engagement will only yield narrow responses. One participant referred to this narrow topic process as a, "nebulous call and response" (Personal Communication, Participant #7, Burnaby, 2024). Participants noted they consistently hear from First Nations that siloed climate dialogue on already formed approaches is not the way environmental management works, which leads to greater communication issues. These research findings reinforce Wiebe's (2019) and Brousselle et al.'s (2018) findings that successful environmental interventions require valuable Indigenous epistemologies that are, "multifaceted, diverse, fluid, nonlinear, and relational" (Wiebe, 2019, p. 583). Connecting lived-experience to climate knowledge production will require Metro Vancouver respecting these knowledge systems as equally legitimate systems that better connect senses, bodies and spirit to the environment (Wiebe, 2020).

> We silo things, and we are always hearing from Indigenous partners that's just not the way the world works. It's all interrelated and interconnected (Personal Communication, Participant #9, Burnaby, 2024).

Some participants identified that the temporal nature of project work fragments any dialogue and impedes relationship progress. Almost all participants noted that after engaging on a project, staff will disappear for sometimes years and when they reappear it is often different staff and on a related but equally narrow topic for the conversation to start from the beginning. Other project structure issues emerged during participant conversations, the most significant being that it was difficult for participants to see how to incorporate reconciliation principles into project delivery, and the current project engagement model's effect on issue salience, where Metro Vancouver holds the reins on all aspects of the conversation, like timing, scope and funding, due to the project ownership.

5.3.1.4 'Grey Area' of climate processes

Research conversations revealed that Metro Vancouver has a centralized approach to protocol development and First Nations engagement, which the guiding document analysis shows at least considers UNDRIP and DRIPA guidance, and that these protocols are mainly developed around utility projects with archeological concerns. The majority of participants felt this guidance is often ill-fitting for climate planning, and alternate tailored engagement approaches, while formally recommended, often "slip through the cracks". Some participants identified organizational inconsistencies in Indigenous engagement around climate, as

planning and implementing a tailored approach varies widely on department, individual staff motivation, understanding of the engagement purpose, and values.

Some staff discussed feeling that the lack of a clear engagement process on climate can be seen as beneficial to some decision-makers. A few participants reported hearing from senior management that a lack of clarity around Indigenous climate engagement is useful as it means the project is not beholden to rigid processes, but they noted that in reality, this grey area usually results in less effort, not more.

> I guess it's possible to see climate's grey area as potentially benefiting the process because we're not tied to rigid processes like archaeology mandates and have more freedom to innovate, but in practice it mostly means it gets dropped unless someone is personally motivated to do an involved process (Personal Communication, Participant #1, Burnaby, 2024).

5.3.1.5 Lack of guidance on incorporating Indigenous Knowledges into climate plans

Without reassurance about how to properly incorporate Indigenous Knowledge on climate, some staff expressed fear of making a mistake, so they erred on the side of caution and avoided the messy conversations about differing perspectives that are needed for relationship building and diverse policy perspectives. These findings align with Castleden et al.'s (2017) research that two-eyed seeing is not being achieved through settler government interpretation and only through really listening and difficult, respectful conversations about how to honour both perspectives can the two ways of knowing exist together. Some staff expressed concern that climate action feedback from First Nations that offered plural perspectives is currently being filtered by the technical project staff applying the information to policy, so is inherently impacted by individual staff background and perspective, but they didn't feel informed or empowered to hold these messy conversations or how to 'really listen' without formal organizational support. Some staff expressed disappointment that they were doing an inadequate job of the inevitable, sometimes invisible translation of Indigenous knowledge or input to include it in climate documents where some context meaning would be lost.

> You're always translating when you hear indigenous knowledge, or in an indigenous lunch, through your experience, putting it inside this, like, colonial format, having it reviewed and approved by other, presumably settlers, who have also grown up in this

> system, and then putting it back out (Personal Communication, Participant #4, Burnaby, 2024)

Staff all identified needing deeper collaboration and meaningful dialogue to co-determine how to come to agreement on approaches and outcomes for climate projects, rather than trying to, "quantify our way towards agreeing with Indigenous Knowledge" (Personal Communication, Participant #3, Burnaby, 2024).

This reinforces Costanza-Chock's (2020) contention that transformative collaboration processes must emphasize rethinking historical narratives in order to center formerly marginalized design practices, like Indigenous environmental decision-making practices, rather than simply including pieces of information from another culture into the prevailing, typically Eurocentric, design practice. This feeling of frustration aligns with Wiebe's (2019) identification of governments and decision-makers need to, "act as a witness and actively engage in the knowledge being shared [by Indigenous partners] through a transformative, dialogical experience" (Wiebe, 2019, p. 590), and participate in reciprocal dialogue that can transform climate policy outcomes.

5.3.1.6 Organizational fear of risk and experimentation

Almost all respondents identified that Metro Vancouver has typically been reluctant to give away decision-making power to non-Metro Vancouver decision-makers and appears hesitant to dilute authority and climate expertise. UNDRIP and DRIPA mandate new relationship frameworks and consultation processes, but a few participants stressed that novel processes without implementation examples, even from other jurisdictions, are difficult to get approved internally. These participants expressed frustration that the unprecedented state of climate change and new and evolving First Nations relationship frameworks both necessitate experimentation and innovation for Indigenous climate engagement, but novel proposals are seen as risky and usually rejected.

Some participants identified that they sensed part of the internal fear of risk in this area came from the elected decision-makers being interested in 'visible' initiatives that have short-term successes, and fulfil reporting timelines, rather than the long-term commitment that may have difficult or even contentious periods like First Nations climate relationship building, whose successes would likely take longer than local election cycles. One participant described the difficulty of changing to novel processes by stating:

> The way we've always done things - we're pretty far down that path. So to back out of that path is tough, it's like reversing on a single lane highway with traffic behind. It's hard just to back out, let alone turn around" (Personal Communication, Participant #7, Burnaby, 2024).

5.3.1.7 Staff education needed about purpose of Indigenous climate engagement and UNDRIP implications

A continuous thread through all major themes in these conversations was that implementation of First Nations climate engagement varied and seemed subject to individual staff perspectives. Some respondents noted that their experience showed that when individual staff that had education or experience with First Nations intergovernmental planning were involved in engagement processes, there was a difference to project outcomes, and the majority of participants expressed that there seemed to be great inconsistency across the organization on understanding the value of Indigenous holistic perspectives in climate action. This reinforces Levac & Gillis' (2020) research finding that latent colonial ideas about Indigenous communities as, "small, resource starved and weak...in governing capacity" (p. 57), which reinforces historic representation that these communities are dependent on non-Indigenous governments for policy action, which affects government action. A few staff identified that education was needed for staff, specifically on UNDRIP and DRIPA climate implications, to encourage reflection on individuals' colonial beliefs.

All participants seemed to reflect an understanding that UNDRIP and DRIPA have changed how the organization engages and consults with First Nations on climate projects and policies, and UNDRIP was raised in all conversations as a guiding force by the participants. However, some followed that acknowledgement with confusion about external legislation and internal processes not reflecting the elevated decision-making role. These participants said they were unsure how to factor in UNDRIP and DRIPA to project delivery in general, particularly if legislation has not changed to offer firm guidance. Some participants expressed frustration that there had been "quite a bit" of staff education around treating First Nations as 'not another stakeholder' but not as sovereign Nations and Rights Holders within climate policy landscapes. These participants identified their frustration came from understanding their projects were to elevate the First Nations engagement process beyond project stakeholders, but they received no guidance about what this guidance means for local climate project processes and how to action that advice within project delivery.

5.3.1.8 Formality of process impedes staff-to-staff dialogue

About half of the participants said they felt caution and fear about going outside of approved processes despite the processes being unclear or vague. This combined caution and lack of clarity impeded staff-to-staff conversations about environmental issues. Some staff noted that they were told to treat First Nations as another order of government in climate policy, but that they perceived more freedom in their role to reach out to climate staff in the member municipalities or the province, and so have developed relationships with staff that produce more meaningful conversations about upcoming climate priorities. One participant said:

> We just miss a lot of stuff, important stuff that comes out of the human interaction and the conversation and the debate that should occur with so many guardrails around other humans with good knowledge. I think we're missing more of the voices, right? (Personal Communication, Participant #10, Burnaby, 2024)

These staff said they felt there were more guardrails around contacting First Nations environmental staff directly, which has led to a “procedural and manufactured” (Personal Communication, Participant #7, Burnaby, 2024) relationship in which meaningful climate dialogue is difficult.

Participants all identified that the government-to-government relationship building tends to focus on high-level staff and officials of each government but noted that none of those individuals are involved in developing or implementing climate plans. Some staff identified that these government-to-government efforts, despite being fruitful in other ways, weren’t trickling down to climate project delivery and so these relationships aren’t translating into more diverse perspectives in regional environmental management and improved climate outcomes.

5.3.2 Opportunities for a path forward

The conversations with participants revealed some opportunities for a path forward, through identifying the current challenges and barriers and following the line of inquiry to what could potentially alleviate the issues. The most significant, and common, topic was the need for ongoing climate dialogue focused on relationship building that exists outside project work. Almost all participants expressed that to identify how to collaborate on a particular climate

topic or action would require ongoing, long-term dialogue with First Nations staff about environmental issues and perspectives untethered from project timelines and scope. Some staff also noted that an ongoing climate dialogue structure would help alleviate the issue salience problem by providing an avenue to co-identify priorities outside of projects. A few respondents noted that a shared climate space would help the organization to co-develop an effective approach to First Nations climate partnerships that are distinct from utility and construction work. A decolonized approach to collaborative, place-based policy development will better platform Indigenous ontologies ability to create “a world where many worlds fit” (Costanza-Chock, 2020, p.67) and resulting policy that meaningfully acknowledges the interdependence of all people, beings, and the earth. The need for an ongoing dialogue structure came up as a potential relief for many of the identified challenges including: project timeline constraints, accessing and incorporating holistic perspectives, decolonizing western siloed government approaches (however incrementally), and materially elevating the relationship beyond “another stakeholder”. This is outlined in Figure 1.

When discussing multiple knowledges and two-eyed seeing, some respondents expressed the need for a new, equal space untied from Metro Vancouver project work to have a conversation about how to actually develop two-eyed seeing with Indigenous peoples, rather than primarily internally. One participant said they desired a place for open, honest conversation to co-develop an evaluation framework for each knowledge system when collaborating and offer advice to one another on how to understand and incorporate knowledge and data from the other. These types of participatory evaluation models themselves are complex and require long-term commitments, but they can potentially transform power relations and improve program performances (Campilan, 2000). Another participant said:

> Wouldn't it be nice to have a real conversation, where we are trying to squish these two things together, and we're recognizing that they can't really be squished together. And we have to find a way to recognize them both as legitimate, and also a way to evaluate that information as being legitimate. That’s a valuable thing to think about - but does that happen in Metro? No, I don't think so (Personal Communication, Participant #9, Burnaby, 2024).

There were issues identified during the conversations that would not be addressed by forming an ongoing climate dialogue relationship structure. There were internal readiness issues identified, like inconsistent staff understanding of the benefit and purpose of deeper Indigenous climate engagement, ability and empowerment for staff to 'listen deeply', and even organizational fear of risk and formal support that participants expressed would need to be addressed internally before embarking on building dialogue models let alone partnership models. The conversations revealed that education for staff working on climate action on the benefits the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives has on climate outcomes is required to encourage reflection on individuals' beliefs and organizational actions. It was noted that Metro Vancouver does this type of education on Indigenous history and relationship building, but these participants had not seen any of these opportunities tailored to climate or environmental management.

> We all breathe the same air, drink the same water and eat the same fish. So if we think about how we're connected, as opposed to our governance structure, we might get actually somewhere, like, if we started thinking about it from a land based approach, right? (Personal Communication, Participant #7, Burnaby, 2024)

5.3.3 Summary

The research findings from organizational document analysis and conversations with research participants were unequivocal that Metro Vancouver promotes the principles of UNDRIP, TRC and DRIPA guidance, including encouraging 'early and ongoing' engagement and pursuing meaningful engagement, is vocal about a commitment to 'genuine collaboration', and Indigenous worldview inclusion in climate policy. However, there was no concrete guidance to staff about what these principles mean in action at a project level, and conversations with participants identified that implementation of this goal so far is mostly only in intention for climate action.

The document analysis revealed that while the challenge to engaging 'earlier' did not necessarily come from a lack of organizational support or direction, as the commitment to pursuing more genuine collaboration and meaningful engagement was repeated throughout public-facing reports, participants felt that a lack of concrete guidance about how to enact these principles at a project level was a major challenge. It was not just a guidance void; participants also identified that pursuing this level of collaboration and engagement had

uneven support due to the effect of conflicting priorities. The various public committee reports, climate strategies and action plans reviewed are not in alignment on how they frame both the value and expected outcomes of First Nations engagement on climate initiatives. This supports Teghtsoonian's (2016) assertion that translocal texts like UNDRIP are easily transmitted to different locations in identical form, and carry wider reconciliation and self-determination intentions, but guidance isn't being implemented identically locally. The lack of concrete process guidance around Indigenous climate engagement caused frustration in staff and stagnation in Indigenous climate relationships, which aligns with Smith's (2006) assertion that guiding text's carry institutional intention, but can be interpreted differently in different locations, for example in orienting focus away from implementation principles and towards other priorities like reporting timelines, which is significant as implementation of these documents at a staff level is where the 'rubber hits the road' for creating meaning through action on concepts like reconciliation.

The focus of enquiry started on the concept of 'early' in the engagement implementation guidance, as this was emphasized in internal and translocal guidance as foundational to meaningful dialogue and epistemological pluralism. However, research results revealed nearly unanimous participant input that 'early' is a misnomer in the case of climate action development, perhaps unlike infrastructure construction projects. Participants acknowledged that the typical process of reaching out to First Nations with a draft document or rough action already identified is insufficient to meaningfully consider First Nations perspectives, and voiced this has been repeated by First Nations on past climate engagement. The majority of participants expressed that engaging 'earlier' within a project process wouldn't necessarily fix their inability to interact meaningfully with Indigenous Knowledge on climate and that an entirely new relationship architecture was needed based on ongoing dialogue about climate issues and priorities with all participating partners.

Where published plans and strategies identified future relationship building with First Nations on a particular climate action as a priority for project implementation, some staff participants involved in these projects noted that pursuing these relationships on climate didn't seem to have as much urgency in the work plan as other "more technical" climate actions. The application of reconciliation, as opposed to recognition and conceptualization, is necessary for successful climate action partnerships, particularly in the new political landscape under UNDRIP where political agency has shifted (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018). The

research identified that simply engaging earlier than is currently done, will likely not produce meaningful strides towards reconciliation.

A new dialogue model, rather than engaging earlier in the existing process, was identified in the research to at least partly alleviate other challenges in the current relationship to climate epistemological pluralism like accessing and incorporating holistic perspectives, decolonizing western siloed government approaches, and materially elevating the relationship beyond "another stakeholder". There were frustrations and barriers felt by staff to elevate the relationship in accordance with UNDRIP at a project level that wouldn't be addressed by a new dialogue model and would need to be addressed internally first. These internal barriers were mainly around lack of formal support to actually pursue 'genuine collaboration' and staff not feeling empowered to explore how to co-develop and co-evaluate plural epistemologies and approaches to climate action that didn't necessarily align with Metro Vancouver's identified approach and would require deep dialogue.

Research findings revealed that while participants generally understood implications of translocal developments like the UNDRIP and TRC, they felt the lack of 'on the ground' guidance or process made organizational effort towards 'genuine collaboration' on climate action inconsistent and the process void made actions too biased to individual staff. While participants were mostly aligned in understanding the organizational intention behind reconciliation generally, they identified that on climate project management, staff attention was often shifted from pursuing the strongest First Nations relationship and strongest climate outcomes through diverse worldview inclusion towards competing priorities like budget timelines and Metro Vancouver Board reporting expectations.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The participants described an informal, and perhaps latent, separation of "technical" or "data-driven" projects and Indigenous relationship building, which illuminates the machination of discursive power, and reveals why some participants identified an inconsistent internal understanding of how strengthening Indigenous climate dialogue will strengthen "technical" climate actions. The discursive hegemony (Juillet, 2007) displayed in this policy development frame unknowingly communicates that colonial knowledge structures have the highest chance of both 'correctly' defining the climate issue and creating a successful intervention in the region. Even unintentionally, this works to reinforce the legitimacy of Metro Vancouver's ownership over the region's airshed and related ecosystems and the supremacy of it's knowledge systems (Castleden et al., 2017). The organizational framing of serious climate projects and separate Indigenous collaboration projects may create tokenistic engagement, which can impede both future relationship building and can further politically marginalize First Nations governments as Rights Holders in the region (ICA, 2022; Boyd & Lorefice, 2018), and impede more holistic climate solutions. The co-learning required for 'genuine collaboration' that reflects plural epistemologies and multiple ontologies is a social, ongoing process not a fixed attainable goal (Castleden et al., 2017).

The following section analyses these findings, beginning with the unexpected finding of 'early' being identified as a misnomer in climate policy development, and explores the interrelated barriers to genuine collaboration to finally identify a path forward.

6.2 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION/UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

6.2.1 Early is a climate misnomer

The organizational document analysis revealed support for 'early' engagement, and the conversations showed participants tended to interpret 'early' as project conception stage, when there was still time to incorporate Indigenous epistemologies. So why did the research also reveal this happened very rarely, if ever, on climate projects in the organization? This point of tension revealed the greatest unexpected finding in the research: that staff found 'early' in the case of climate action planning to be a "misnomer", and difficult to apply. This finding aligns with Castleden et al.'s (2017) and Phare et al.'s (2017) assertion that co-

learning between Indigenous and settler governments is a social process and not a fixed goal to be reached. These findings show that engaging at an undefined 'earlier' stage of the project alone will not achieve increased Indigenous knowledge inclusion. While participants reinforced Whyte et al.'s (2017) finding that asking for Indigenous input after the project goals and decision-making structures have been established makes it difficult for Indigenous partners' to pursue their own parallel goals, they also identified this process made it difficult for Metro Vancouver staff to pursue organizational goals of 'genuine collaboration' or more holistic climate action.

A novel co-developed process, or "new ongoing dialogue space" (Personal Communication, Participant #5, Burnaby, 2024) based around climate knowledge and experiences would better achieve the reconciliation goal of respect and partnership and meaningfully center Indigenous knowledge and voices in environmental action by using culturally appropriate, decolonized methodology (Wiebe, 2019). Culturally appropriate methodology and relevant epistemological context can only be provided and guided by First Nations partners, and the resulting ontological partnership would strengthen the environmental outcomes and could potentially enliven democratic processes (Abele, 2007; Wiebe, 2019). These findings align with Latulippe's (2015) and Whyte et al.'s (2018) assertions that effective environmental Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaboration requires establishing social architecture for long-term planning and relationship building, which Brousselle et al.'s (2022) assert will require reflexive investigation of the organizational structures involved, and allow room for complex dialogue and potential conflict in order to produce transformational planetary health outcomes.

The research identifying 'early as a misnomer' was both unexpected and significant in framing the resulting dialogical exploration of the implications of 'early' being ill-fitting guidance for climate collaboration with First Nations, and identification of interrelated challenges resulting from that process that hinders genuine collaboration. The following sections identify those challenges, in order to determine the next steps towards improvement.

6.2.2 Issues created from the project engagement model

6.2.2.1 Difficulty incorporating holistic perspectives

Research revealed that even when participants felt they had initiated First Nations engagement 'early' in a project, the nature of project work with narrow topic scopes and

viewpoints made it difficult to hold and honour conversations about holistic environmental interventions. This aligns with planetary health literature that siloed "reductionistic mechanisms of governance" (Brousselle et al., 2022) impede comprehensive planetary health intervention by mainly looking at single authority and single issues (Whitee et al., 2015; Pattanayak, 2017; Castleden et al., 2009; Brousselle et al., 2022; Baquero et al., 2021; Mignolo, 2009; Redvers et al., 2020). Climate action that emerges from a deep conversation about land-specific, holistic and collective Indigenous worldviews based on complex and reciprocal relationships between humans and the biosphere will have more success in planetary health outcomes (Redvers et al., 2022; Brousselle et al., 2022; Wiebe, 2019) and meeting reconciliation principles. To meaningfully consider the systemic drivers of climate change to create holistic interventions will likely require greater decentralizing decision-making and democratizing knowledge (Brousselle et al., 2022) and holding more dialogue around climate issues outside of the reductionist project scopes.

Some of the participants shared that a better dialogue structure would both foster reconciliation and make room for Indigenous ontologies in climate action, which aligns with Castleden et al.'s (2017) assertion that this relationship building can have a dual benefit to heal relationships between governments and to heal relationships with the ecologies around us. While this research set out to explore how an internal process can more meaningfully incorporate Indigenous epistemologies in regional climate action policy, findings aligned with Redvers et al. (2020) Abele (2007) and Castleden et al.'s (2017) that alongside specialized knowledge inclusion, there is great potential for Indigenous ontologies to energize policy development processes, which is an underexplored area of reconciliation (Castleden et al., 2017).

6.2.2.2 Project issue salience reinforces power dynamics

Document analysis and participant conversations revealed that issue salience played a significant role in Metro Vancouver not fulsomely benefitting from Indigenous holistic environmental practices or meaningfully collaborating with First Nations. Issue definition emphasizes the importance of language and process, and analyses how, "manipulable descriptions structure everyday politics" (Soroka, 2006, p.188). Climate "issues" or problems that require action can be constructed in ways that support certain policy outcomes or attention over competing climate priorities. Findings showed that a co-developed process to

accommodate mutual issue setting and defining could help Metro Vancouver's climate outcomes by potentially accommodating Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies in its climate action development. This need for collaborative issue setting aligns with (Orsini & Smith, 2007) research finding that policy change and policy effectiveness is often linked to changes in issue salience and the redefinition of public issues through diverse perspective inclusion. Individual staff at Metro Vancouver may or may not realize they are prioritizing Western knowledge systems, and the organizational hierarchy involved in issue definition, although about half of the participants identified that they were aware, and all emphasized that the most effective climate action was developed using diverse perspectives and approaches. So analyzing the scientific knowledge that public policy is based on as "situated knowledge" (Soroka, 2006) impacts the way knowledge presented by 'non-experts' based on traditional knowledge or lived experience is received in the policy creation process, and indeed opens up dialogue on who is an expert (Abele, 2007).

Without mutual agenda setting and issue definition with First Nations, Boyd & Lorefice (2018) agree with these findings that it will be difficult for individual staff to question and compromise on their policy positions to develop outcomes that are more robust. The authors findings showed that actors tend to use information and analysis to support and promote their positions unless challenged to do otherwise. When constructing knowledge during climate issue identification, and policy action development, a relational approach is needed to acknowledge community-based knowledge based on the principle of sharing (Wiebe, 2019) and accommodate plural epistemologies in the resulting policy, not leaving it in engagement dialogue. The conversations with participants illuminated that even with 'earlier' involvement on a project, it will be difficult to accommodate mutual issue identification and relational knowledge construction in the current project outreach structure, and that co-construction is needed.

The research revealed that some staff were aware of the construction of climate authority using policy frames and issue salience, and a few identified the added perceived objectivity of 'scientific experts' which has been referred to as the 'god trick' (Haraway, 1988, as cited in Wiebe, 2020) in research on the positivistic, western governments framing of environmental policy creation. Some participants emphasized that engagement process not involving definition setting, and presenting both the climate issue and drafted solution without alternative options, were organizational choices based on individual and collective

values, rather than objective, despite being based in 'knowable science and data', reinforce Wiebe's (2020) assertion that knowledge is never without bias or subjectivity. This reveals the even latent struggle for 'discursive hegemony' that comprises discursive power over climate narratives in the region, which is communicated by policy frames and issue salience that can reduce the complexity of a policy issue to advocate for a particular solution or outcome (Juillet, 2007). Colonial knowledge systems tend to assume, and reinforce through discursive power, the legitimacy of the settler state's ownership over the ecosystems being managed and the supremacy of the knowledge systems (Castleden et al., 2017).

6.2.3 Government Structural Blocks to Planetary Health Outcomes

6.2.3.1 'Grey Area' of climate processes / Lack of Clarity of Process for Climate

While the research conversations emphasized a relatively vague internal process for First Nations engagement, compared to legislative processes for infrastructure projects, the translocal guidance from documents like UNDRIP, TRC and DRIPA are also relatively vague. These documents provided meaningful guidance on principles and rights, but being translocal, offered very little by way of concrete actions or implementation guidance, particularly at a project level or for other orders of government. Orsini & Smith (2007) emphasize that policymaking, and its political contexts, is increasingly taking place in an "institutional void" (p. 190) where the process to agree upon the rules and norms that guide political action, relationships and policy creation are vague and unclear. The authors note that this doesn't decrease the importance of political institutions like Metro Vancouver, but it does require a new system of political action, which re-examines entrenched societal views of both democratic participation and the various 'spatial horizons' that governance actually occurs (Orsini & Smith, 2007).

The 'vagueness' of non-legislated processes was seen by some research participants as a challenge to meaningful collaboration. Wiebe (2019) highlights research that demonstrates liminal policy spaces existing outside legislation can benefit collaborative processes with multi-jurisdictional agencies, and while these discretionary authoritative spaces can create confusion, they can also provide fertile ground for colliding worldviews and successful multilevel collaboration (Wiebe, 2019). Climate action similarly falls under multiple levels of government in the region, each with their own level of authority, and while this can create

narrow scopes of influence it also can provide deep and meaningful opportunities for collaboration.

The urgency of the climate crisis, the rise of regionalism and local governance power under shifting political agency, and the re-mixing of decision-making arrangements as public, private and NGO sectors configure (Mahon et al., 2007) have created new spatial horizons of governance. While the newness of the political landscape creates confusion about layered power and authority, it also provides an opportunity to examine assumptions about where policy decisions are favored , which was previously assumed to be the national or subsequent 'levels' of government (Mahon et al., 2007), and the increased role for collaborative decision-making based on local priorities. Climate action in the shifting political landscape can benefit from increased legitimacy by embracing the increasing 'importance of place' (Castleden et al., 2009) by meaningfully incorporating the local communities and knowledge that informs and communicates both with the land and local ways of knowing (Castleden et al., 2009; Pattanayak, 2017; Brousselle et al., 2018) to better achieve planetary health. Many participants noted that they worked closely with their peers at the province, some in an ongoing, continual relationship, but some participants noted that regional planetary health outcomes are tied to the regional space and would benefit from greater epistemological collaboration with in-region First Nations. To benefit from this knowledge, Metro Vancouver staff would also need to reflexively consider the systematic dismantling of Indigenous worldviews and how these worldviews are operationalized within the social and power structures of the 'place' (Castleden et al., 2009) to make sense of increasing environmental crises.

While the focus of this research is on Metro Vancouver's challenges to collaboration and internal readiness, in public Indigenous climate policy documents (Indigenous Climate Action, 2023; , FNLC, 2013; Boyd & Lorefice, 2018) environmental sustainability was a primary focus, as it was in Metro Vancouver's Board Strategic Plan (2022) so this is a shared priority area where these collaborative third spaces can be created to pursue parallel goals. Pattanayak (2017) and Baquero et al. (2021) agree that government environmental policy will be strengthened by incorporation of First Laws (Redvers et al., 2020) and emphasize that local knowledge systems coming from those who don't exercise hegemony, need solidarity and support from the regulatory powers and the scientific community to have wide reaching effect. Therefore, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous government climate collaboration can

benefit both governments in the partnership and create stronger planetary health outcomes, if created with concrete actions to support reconciliation.

6.3.2.2 Organizational fear of risk and experimentation

The novel and continually changing nature of both climate change, and the legislative landscape around reconciliation and government-to-government relationships means that experimentation is needed to effectively address each interrelated issue, particularly solutions that creatively acknowledge the interrelated nature of these. Brousselle et al. (2022) call for decentralizing decision-making and democratizing knowledge to enhance the ability to respond to climate change in a holistic way. Indigenous knowledges tend to work towards understanding relationships as opposed to objects, and these complex relationships between ecosystem elements is what is often missed in a Western approach (Castleden et al., 2017; Redvers et al., 2020; Wlae & Huson, 2024). Research participants expressed concern that in their experience, novel experimental approaches that didn't have examples and outcomes to cite in a proposal were rarely developed at the organization. The novelty of these issues means that where settler governments are experimenting with approaches, long-term outcomes don't exist yet. This finding aligns with planetary health literature that one of the main roadblocks to effective climate action is governmental structural barriers that make novel experimentation difficult. Where this type of deep collaboration on the environment is being done, including the Province of BC, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, Abele's (2007) research shows that fundamental, conscious redesign of settler government processes are rare. A thorough attempt at 'genuine collaboration' on climate, touted as a Metro Vancouver reconciliation principle will require, "ingenuity, sustained experimentation, institutional and individual learning, and probably, considerable expenditures" (Abele, 2007, p. 285). The stated goals of reconciliation and diversity in climate policy development will not be achieved until, as participants identified, Metro Vancouver embraces the great unknown as it embarks in a new relationship model with First Nations and commits the resources and timelines needed to develop and learn from possible failures within the experimental approach.

6.3.2.3 No guidance or formal support on incorporating Indigenous Knowledges

Interwoven with the lack of clarity about climate Indigenous engagement processes from both internal and external guidance, is the finding that research participants mostly expressed a

lack of clarity or formal support around how to incorporate Indigenous Knowledges into climate policy, if and when it is received. This is an unsurprising finding, as the various organizational committee reports, climate strategies and action plans analyzed in this research were not in alignment with each other on how they frame both the value and expected outcomes of First Nations meaningful engagement on climate initiatives. This reinforces Indigenous Climate Action's (2023) assessment that while most governments include mention of including Indigenous Peoples and perspectives in their climate policies, the quality and depth of reference varies widely.

The findings emphasized current confusion and desire for clarity about how to operationalize organizational platitudes around reconciliation, Indigenous worldview inclusion, and 'genuine collaboration', and translocal guidance from UNDRIP and TRC, and both process and support for how to realistically incorporate Indigenous Knowledges into climate action at a project and policy level. Participants expressed desire to have conversations about how to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge with the Indigenous Peoples providing the context, rather than "settler managers", which shows an awareness of Castleden et al.'s (2017) assertion that Indigenous perspectives can be exploited as a foil against another knowledges system presented as the 'norm', without honest dialogue with each other about how to access and use each knowledge system. The disciplining modes of power at work with both a settler order of government, and policy development that favours positivistic data, results in the onus being placed on Indigenous Peoples to make their difference both transparent and accessible (Castleden et al., 2017) to Metro Vancouver staff. The research conversations and document analysis both reveal that Metro Vancouver's focus on Indigenous climate engagement tends to be on the Board relationship, rather than concern with how to incorporate their perspective into climate action, which would operationalize reconciliation. This finding aligns with some planetary health research identifying government failures role in current planetary health outcomes, with a main barrier being insufficient demand by decision makers for more diverse knowledge (Pattanayak,2017; Whitmee et al., 2015).

Findings that Metro Vancouver, expresses desire to "hear" Indigenous Knowledge and perspective on climate issues without processes in place to honour how to receive that information aligns with both ICA's (2020) assessment of current narrow spaces at climate decision-making tables, and with Abele's (2007) conclusion that ethical, epistemological and especially cosmological ideas that differ from what governing institutions take to be true,

despite common understanding that many vital aspects of human life are not necessarily verifiable by positivistic scientific methods, will probably not be included in final policy decisions. While this deeply systemic issue is not easily rectified, one can't help but think that democratic institutions writing policy to benefit human lives and the ecosystems they depend upon would be improved by even holding open conversations about how to better the systemic imbalance.

6.3.3 Staff Empowerment

6.3.3.1 Formality of process

Research conversations showed that confusion about the climate collaboration process, combined with general caution about the perceived formality of the vague process created a compounding, circular issue that resulted in staff not feeling comfortable to reach out to their counterparts at the First Nations governments and thus ended up incorporating less local, Indigenous knowledge into resulting climate analysis and policy. Abele (2007) stresses the importance of this type of 'expert' dialogue outside of bureaucratic narratives to achieve mutual understanding and highlights anecdotal experience that suggests local Indigenous knowledge being most easily shared between local-knowledge experts and those with scientific or other academic training. This staff-level interfacing, and perceived freedom to have open conversations about their topic of expertise, was found in this research only in conversations with Parks department staff, who noted where they saw the most productive perspective sharing that seemed to foster trusting relationships was between environmental staff from each government out on the land, in the actual parks, talking about their shared interests.

6.3.3.2 Staff Education

Effective planetary health solutions are holistic in nature (Brousselle et al., 2022), so the research findings that discussions held for narrow project-scopes with First Nations, even if initiated at the 'earliest stage', were unsuccessful in meaningfully incorporating holistic perspectives were unsurprising. The finding that a new, co-developed model for shared dialogue is wanted by process implementing staff to better reach organizational goals around both reconciliation and emissions reduction is in keeping with Castleden et al.'s (2017) assertion that Indigenous ontologies can only unsettle the dominant ontologies if the

knowledge integration isn't used for colonial institutions self-legitimation, whether consciously or not. Without co-developed processes in place about how to integrate knowledge, a collaborative process could still compartmentalize Indigenous knowledge, which ultimately works to legitimize the discursive power of colonial knowledge (Castleden et al., 2017). Costanza-Chock's (2020) findings around effective 'design justice' (p.1) highlight that designing thoughtful policy development processes calls for those involved to, "think about how good intentions are not necessarily enough to ensure that design processes and practices become tools for liberation, and to develop principles that might help design practitioners avoid the (often unwitting) reproduction of existing inequalities" (p.5). She instructs collaborative policy designers to think of themselves as collaborative process facilitators rather than merely topic experts.

As the earliest step to even being ready as an organization to start conversations about co-developing processes for knowledge integration on some climate issues, staff education on the purpose and value of collaboration would be necessary. The need for further staff education aligns with Abele's (2007) argument that extended study and guided reflection is needed for epistemological pluralism in Indigenous and Western collaboration, as the concepts guiding each worldview have such a magnitude of difference. Even reflection on the value of meaningful collaboration, can be guided by reflections on Indigenous ontologies and relationship-based practices, including traditional governance consensus building (Canada, 1996). Constanza-Chock (2020) relays the collective design justice principle that before seeking new process design solutions, "we should look for what is already working at the community level" (p.6) and uplift indigenous and local knowledge practices.
The conversations and document analysis revealed the inconsistent nature of implementing Indigenous climate engagement within Metro Vancouver, and the conversations identified that due to the process void inconsistency was tied to individual staff having different values, experience and approaches. This highlights the power that individual staff have in final collaborative and policy outcomes, despite organizational processes attempting to template the process to ensure consistency. This aligns with Smith and Griffith's (2022) exploration of institutional discourse circulation in and through specific organizational contexts and processes in the form of policy manuals and other documents guiding how to approach particular tasks. The authors (2022) highlight that individual agents within institutions inherently translate these documents with their own experiences, needs and values, which shift and shape the meaning and application. This understanding of institutional discourse

through process implies that ‘more process’ or ‘more rigid guidelines’ for climate engagement with First Nations won’t solve the issue of inconsistency emerging from individual translation of institutional discourse. Nor is this finding a critique on individual staff, but rather serves to emphasize the importance of their roles within templated relationship processes and should be used to empower. The individual experiences have been explored to create institutional knowledge for action (Smith, 2006) and empower staff with understanding to make changes to collaboration processes ‘from below’.

What is needed to accommodate the influence of individuals ‘activating’ institutional discourse is education for staff that will empower them to activate the discourse and guidance documents with consistent *intentions*, which would require staff working on the interface of Indigenous engagement and climate policy to understand the value of ‘genuine collaboration’ and feel supported to pursue this. Teghtsoonian (2016) implores that an important effect of institutional discourse translation is the subordination of knowledge and experience of front-line workers implementing internal policy. Therefore, what is needed to create better policy is to not only accommodate individual translation, but respect and listen to staff experiences that are implementing policy, rather than writing it. This can allow a reflexive process that responds to what is working and what is not when Indigenous climate engagement is done with appropriate intention, like the ‘early’ timing guidance being difficult to apply to climate projects.

To fulsomely educate staff on the intention behind internal policy and process, like Indigenous climate engagement, staff will be able to critically reflect on what they are doing or analyze how certain processes unfold. Research conversations revealed varying assumed values or ideas behind their colleagues’ inconsistency, and Teghtsoonian (2016) acknowledges agents interpreting text can lack critical reflection, and in the absence of being empowered with agency for critical reflection the localized relationship-building approaches to knowledge co-creation can be, “displaced by the ruling – frequently managerial – interests that it carries within it” (Teghtsoonian, 2016). So to receive education on historical, systemic and contextual background, and the value to the organization ‘genuinely collaborating’ with First Nations as rights holders on climate action has, staff can better engage with the guiding documents like UNDRIP and DRIPA, and relate them to internal guidance, and take ownership and agency of their role in relationship-focused engagement.

6.4 PATH FORWARD

6.4.1 Long-term recommendation: Establish an ongoing, climate dialogue

Research revealed that following UNDRIP's guidance to respect Indigenous Peoples as equal partners in democratic processes at a regional climate level, would likely mean co-developing a dialogue space to conduct engagement on co-creating climate action, rather than inviting First Nations staff to provide input within Metro Vancouver's existing processes. This co-developed dialogue space would incorporate the design-justice principles of healing the relationship we have with each other and the earth by empowering communities, centering the voices of those directly impacted by process outcomes, and approaching this systems change as an accountable and collaborative process, rather than an end-point that can be reached (Costanza-Chock, 2020). To tackle the identified challenges and begin to account for colonial injustices and pursue more holistic climate policy, social architecture for a shared space for climate dialogue resulting in action must be co-developed (Phare et al., 2017; Wiebe, 2019; Castleden et al., 2020; Abele, 2007; Costanza-Chock, 2020). Effective environmental Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaboration requires establishing a process without hierarchy for long-term planning and relationship building where partners can co-identify planetary health collaborations (Phare et al., 2017; Wiebe, 2019, Juillet, 2007). A co-developed process can help acknowledge the inherent colonial power imbalance present in settler and Indigenous government collaborations creates a system where Western science is in a position to validate or invalidate Indigenous knowledge (Arsenault et al., 2018; Redvers et al., 2020). Effective initiatives that pursue system transformation and reconciliation require an ongoing commitment to dialogue and relationship-building that fosters space for resurgence of Indigenous law and community knowledge (Redvers et al., 2022; Wiebe, 2019), in order to incorporate epistemological integration will require humble, place-based narratives (Howitt, 2020; Castleden et al., 2009), which needs co-development without ownership.

Some of the research participants echoed each other's frustration that translocal guidance they were aware of like UNDRIP and internal guidance was clear that staff were to operate at a project level in a way that elevated First Nations beyond "another stakeholder" but they were confused about how to operationalize that advice within project management processes and climate project engagement. An ongoing dialogue on climate generally, is a model to elevate First Nations in a relationship-based framework that separates the conversation from

"other stakeholders" on any given project (Phare et al., 2017). This co-developed ongoing dialogue process would address many, but not all, of the barriers to meaningful engagement identified in the research like addressing project timeline priorities, better accessing holistic perspectives, and helps to alleviate issue salience problems by co-identifying priorities outside of already established projects, see Figure 1.

6.4.2 Potential Models

A potential model for this relationship is "collaborative consent", which is outlined by the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources and the University of Victoria's POLIS Project on Ecological Governance, and supports UNDRIP scholars' belief that implementation implies building consent and agreement through long-term, ongoing collaborative relationships. The process is described as, "committed engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments - acting as equal partners, each with their asserted authority" (Phare et al. 2017, p.1) to collectively identify, and develop paths forward on shared climate issues. As the emphasis is on co-ownership and co-development, there aren't initial suggestions on formats or methods for this shared space, but details can be developed and agreed upon by the partners. This aligns with Costanza-Chock (2020) and Reed et al.'s (2024) assertion that an ethical path forward must include a new co-developed space for policy change dialogue that equally values and accepts Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of knowing.

While the provincial model of collaborative consent is not prescriptive in what this type of collaboration looks like, there are some identified conditions needed for successful collaborative consent. These conditions are that the partnership is fundamentally based on respect and trust, each government recognizes the other's legitimate authority, the collaboration is a decision-making forum that generates real outcomes, and the ongoing process starts at the beginning, and commitments are in place for the 'long haul' (Phare et al., 2017).

6.4.3 Medium-term recommendation: Operationalize active listening

Metro Vancouver needs to implement some internal conditions to foster healthy long-term climate-dialogue relationships with First Nations and enter into this type of relationship. Alongside internal political commitments that withstand elected decision-maker restructuring and guidance, a process to ensure political listening happens is needed, which Dreher (2017)

offers as a concrete action to ensure diversity of perspective in democratic participation that can have transformative effect on policy outcomes and must be embedded in institutional practice to avoid a ‘recognition crisis’.

The lack of active listening within the organizational process is evidenced in the finding that participants often hear feedback from First Nations about the inadequacy of the current process and a desire to co-develop, yet the research conversations revealed little has been done to action these requests or even formally process them. Metro Vancouver providing a platform for First Nations to speak, but not creating parallel listening processes aligns with Dreher (2017) and Wiebe’s (2019) findings of active political listening being a foundational step to meaningful collaboration. This needed action aligns with Wiebe’s (2019) and Ashworth’s (2020) emphasis on active listening decision-makers must learn to do in order to, “act as witness and actively engage in the knowledge being shared [by Indigenous partners] through a transformative, dialogical experience (Wiebe, 2019, p. 590),” and participate in reciprocal dialogue. Essentially, it is not enough for Metro Vancouver to offer any group a ‘voice’ in democratic climate policy processes but must also have developed parallel processes on how to listen.

6.4.4 Short-term recommendation: Educate staff on climate reconciliation and worldview reflection

The co-learning about others' knowledge systems that is needed in order to co-develop climate policy that reflects multiple epistemologies and ontologies is a social process and not an end goal that can be reached (Castleden et al., 2017). This process requires those involved to investigate their own worldview, and not take for granted the, sometimes latent, hierarchy of knowledge systems (Castleden et al., 2017). To even aim to develop processes that accommodate epistemological pluralism will require staff that implement Western systems of knowing and ontologies to be self-reflective in order to come to a climate dialogue table with an openness to really “see” another knowledge system as equal (Abele, 2007; Reed et al., 2024). Staff education is recommended not only on guidance document intention like UNDRIP and DRIPA, how reconciliation applies to climate action, and the environmental benefit to Indigenous epistemological inclusion, but also how active or political listening will encourage this type of needed reflection.

Figure 1: Co-developed collaborative dialogue space impact on identified barriers

Barrier to meaningful collaboration	**Addressed through co-developed, ongoing collaborative space?**
Not engaging early enough	Yes - early is a misnomer for climate action and an ongoing conversation allows more space for epistemological pluralism
‘Grey Area’ of climate processes / Lack of Clarity of Process for Climate	Yes- the ‘grey area’ isn’t more defined by this approach but a co-developed process informed by First Nations priorities fills the process void, and the co-developed approach would be distinct from utility and construction work.
Fear of experimentation	No
Formality of process impedes staff-to-staff dialogue	Yes - staff become more familiar with colleagues at First Nations and can have more open dialogue guided by peer relationship
Fragmented Project Work	Yes- ongoing dialogue held outside of Metro Vancouver narrow project scopes is a more productive avenue for holistic environmental perspectives
Lack of Guidance about Indigenous Knowledge incorporation	Co-developed, evaluation guidance received from Indigenous peoples alleviates fear for staff entrusted with this information about how to use it.
Education for staff needed	No
Issue salience power imbalance	Yes - co-developed space shares ownership with all participants and issues for

	discussion come about in a manner that is fair to the collaborative partners

6.5 SUMMARY

For Metro Vancouver to practice good governance, as Foucault (1978) defines it, the organization needs to embrace the new power landscapes and need for novel policy development spaces, and create new collaboration models to move beyond decision-making as a sovereign power in order to achieve the greatest health and wellness for the region's population. In Abele's (2007) view, incorporating Indigenous perspectives into decision-making not only supports Foucault's view of better outcomes, but also has the added benefit of improving resulting climate policy's perceived legitimacy from the broad public as it meaningfully embraces translocal guidance. In this case, collaborative decision-making on climate action would not only improve climate outcomes for the governed population but would also work towards reconciliatory goals if past and present harms of colonization were addressed (FNLC, 2022).

The research findings were unequivocal that engaging 'earlier' or even 'early' on a particular climate action development is not an effective way to pursue more meaningful Indigenous climate engagement in order to better incorporate Indigenous epistemologies. To create transformative environmental interventions, new relationship models with First Nations are required, which will require radically changed spaces of engagement and deliberation (Phare et al., 2017; Wiebe, 2019). Metro Vancouver has committed to pursuing 'genuine collaboration' (Metro Vancouver, n.d.), and effective transdisciplinary and collaborative policy processes call for collaborative engagement processes (Levac & Wiebe, 2020). The institutional and normative context of climate policy making processes is the product of discursive politics (Abele, 2007; Murray, 2007) but also acts as a barrier to developing successful narrative framing around policy issues that doesn't meaningfully consider local contexts (Juillet, 2007; Wiebe, 2019; Mignolo, 2009). In Foucault's (1978) view, good governance that is aware of discursive power arrangements would require going beyond decision-making as a sovereign power in order to achieve greater prosperity, health and wellness for the entire governed population (Abele, 2007).

The new framework must be ongoing and prioritize equality of the partnership to be successful, and both First Nations governments and Metro Vancouver must build their own structures to engage and ultimately to build new institutions and shared processes for decision-making. Focusing on shared environmental interests and geopolitical location, can introduce learnings about participants' sense of connections to the environment, reflexivity, and novel frameworks for regional climate policy that break with positivistic, Western ways of knowing and embrace holistic fluidity (Wiebe, 2020; Castleden et al., 2017). While a new space of engagement that is co-developed and conscious of working against entrenched colonial hierarchies like the collaborative consent model (Phare et al., 2017) is needed, simply creating a new format or space for engagement is not enough. Just creating new spaces for collaboration and diverse knowledge sharing alone won't change the power relations, and in some cases they may even make them more visible (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008). While there are examples of traditional knowledge providing critical information for many co-management bodies, particularly in Northern Canada, Abele's (2007) research shows the power relations embedded in the participating institutions themselves had a profound influence on the outcomes and forms of collaboration.

Education and internal support building is needed to work towards organizational readiness before any dialogue with First Nations on their perspectives on a co-developed climate dialogue space begins, for implementation staff level involved to investigate their own worldview, and examine the latent hierarchy of knowledge systems (Castleden at al., 2017). Metro Vancouver staff education should focus on the intentions behind guidance around 'genuine collaboration' and 'meaningful engagement' and the role translocal guidance like UNDRIP and DRIPA have in changing the context of climate policy development. To work towards the epistemological pluralism derived from genuine collaboration, internal education must also lead staff to 'step outside' their own, presumably prevailing, knowledge systems (Castleden et al., 2017) and develop guidance and support for active listening (Ashworth, 2020; Wiebe, 2019). As many Indigenous people already straddle two worlds and associated worldviews, the settler's role in a collaborative relationship is to accept that some aspects of an Indigenous knowledge system will not be easily slotted into mainstream Western approaches, "and that extracting pieces to incorporate into management efforts is not just inappropriate, but colonial" (Castleden et al., 2017, p.10). By embracing the differences in worldview approaches and working together to figure out how they may converge, true knowledge diversity can benefit climate policy outcomes.

The delicate balance Indigenous and settler collaborative bodies must strike to see the environmental benefits of epistemological pluralism is not new information, but the current climate crisis calls for novel and bold arrangements in implementation (Mahon, Andrew & Johnson, 2006; Abele, 2007; Whitmee et al., 2015). Thierry Rodon's (2003) general conclusion in his careful empirical study of five environmental co-management boards in Canada in 2003 is still relevant over 20 years later. He perceived that the practice of co-management greatly influenced the actors who participated in it. The author found that Indigenous peoples could form a vision of political participation in the existing system, and staff from public agencies could benefit from being opened up to Indigenous values and worldview which could be established over time, "...if power games do not favour processes of domination. The co-management experience is still young and its potential is not exhausted" (Abele, 2007, p.288).

6.6 NEXT STEPS

As this research only serves as an initial inquiry into improving regional Indigenous climate engagement, towards the organizational goal of 'genuine collaboration' there is considerable further research needed before embarking on establishing a joint framework for collaboration.

Research how to gain political support for long-term commitments

Gazing inward, the Metro Vancouver Board's role in the current lack of long-term commitments to collaborative experimentation in this area came up with a few research participants. It would be valuable to determine how to best gain the support of the Board, and how to sustain that support as the individual Board members change with political winds. A starting point for this research may be to establish how these potential partnerships can actually increase institutional and policy legitimacy to the public (Abele, 2007) and increasingly disaffected electorate as a potential narrative frame for influencing political support. One participant noted anecdotally that the projects they had seen have the most success with deep Indigenous collaboration were ones that did not require Metro Vancouver Board input at all, which could also be an avenue for further exploration.

Identify methods of effective staff education

Further research will also be needed to establish what methods and modes of staff education would be most effective, with the consideration that staff implementing climate relationships

with First Nations staff vary widely in role and educational background. Another place for further research for organizational development is active and political listening guidance and instruction will need to be developed. An interesting starting place for this work can be Ashworth's (2020) concrete suggestions for how to operationalize active listening, including making oneself the background, placing the other in the foreground and working to retain difference and telling and listening to stories of place and feeling (Wiebe, 2019) is a valuable place to begin.

Initiate conversation with First Nations

When internal readiness has been further developed, a co-development process's next external steps would be Metro Vancouver reaching out to First Nations staff to offer dialogue and to co-develop an agenda for an initial meeting, which may include topics around potential interest in an ongoing dialogue model, concerns, needs, and potential collaborative models.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the barriers and challenges to fostering genuine collaboration between Metro Vancouver and First Nations in regional climate action, specifically through the lens of "early engagement" as a pathway to epistemological pluralism. Through critical policy analysis, institutional ethnography, examination of the intersections between planetary health, and reconciliation models that meaningfully consider Indigenous sovereignty, this research highlights the complex interplay between governmental collaboration frameworks and accommodating and empowering Indigenous knowledge systems in regional climate action.

Indigenous climate collaboration benefits to Metro Vancouver

Planetary health literature is clear that effective climate action considers the holistic nature of human and ecosystem health by incorporating diverse perspectives, particularly holistic Indigenous perspectives and approaches (Brouselle et al., 2017; Redvers et al., 2020). Indigenous holistic worldviews and practices are needed to meaningfully address the capitalist, colonial drivers of climate change (Reed et al., 2024; Redvers et al., 2020) and the effectiveness of Indigenous climate plans and planetary health approaches are proven (FNLC, 2022; Reed et al., 2024; ICA, 2023). Metro Vancouver's climate outcomes will benefit from meaningfully including Indigenous worldviews and knowledge systems to more holistically consider systemic causes of climate change, and in-region First Nations environmental perspectives and practices could potentially be supported by Metro Vancouver's regulatory authority and scientific staff capacity (Redvers et al., 2020; Abele, 2007; Pattanayak, 2017; Baquero et al., 2021), if the partnership was co-created with mutual intention that equally values each knowledge system and serves both organizations priorities. The research revealed that many solutions to the climate crisis have already been identified both globally and locally, and the current roadblock to effective action and implementation is lack of long-term government commitments to novel processes (Brousselle et al., 2018). A required step to addressing these roadblocks is to identify where the government roadblocks are to developing more holistic climate action, especially meaningful inclusion of Indigenous knowledge (Whitmee et al., 2015). This research revealed some of the roadblocks to this type of meaningful inclusion at the regional level to be the project engagement model, lack of

defined processes for climate action development, organizational fear of risk and experimentation, and lack of staff empowerment to engage in deep dialogue.

The benefit to regional climate action of meaningful inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies will only make strides towards reconciliation principles and 'genuine collaboration' if the knowledge systems are treated equally and Indigenous knowledge isn't subsumed into the disciplining power's methods of knowledge creation and issue salience (Abele, 2007; Castleden et al., 2017). Avoiding replicating an imbalanced power structure won't happen due to good intentions alone (Costanza-Chock, 2020) as the climate dialogue is inevitably happening within the larger colonial system where typically Indigenous Peoples must make their knowledge and differences accessible to the 'disciplining modes of power', western scientists and environmental managers (Castleden et al., 2017). A step towards addressing this imbalance requires Metro Vancouver staff implementing new collaborative models and climate dialogue to focus reflexively on the *process* of collaboration rather than fixed outcomes like single project policies and plans. Literature on two-eyed seeing approaches that recognize it as a possibility emphasizes both that it is a process rather than an end-state or policy consideration and a learned approach (Castleden et al., 2017; Abele, 2007; Reed et al., 2024), but requires individuals involved to undertake education, self-reflection and guided study to be able to begin to 'see' each other's knowledge systems.

In recent decades, decision making on public policy has been dispersed from the sole discretion of traditional institutions, resulting in a need for institutions to reimagine how diverse groups can participate in governance to maintain legitimacy, as well as considering the supremacy of scientific expertise, and an expansion of voices that have an impact on decisions (Murray, 2007). Not only will new governance processes that meaningfully incorporate Indigenous epistemologies improve climate outcomes by better holistically addressing the systemic drivers of climate change, these novel processes can reinvigorate western policy and governance processes that require new approaches in the reconfigured political landscape under modern federalism (Mahon et al., 2007).

While the emerging need for power rebalancing to avoid policy creation in an "institutional void"(Orsini & Smith, 2007, p.190) affects many aspects and relationships in regional governance, First Nations perspective inclusion in climate policy is a distinct rebalancing of power relations guided by reconciliation principles and First Nations Rights and Title as they relate to environmental protection. Research revealed discursive power grants actors in policy

development the ability to shape and frame not only the issue to be addressed through climate action, but also shape the source of legitimate authority to take action. The conceptualization and application of reconciliation is an important element of fruitful climate action partnerships between governments, and indeed an important tool for decolonization required for successful climate interventions from settler governments generally.

Epistemological questions are central to analyzing reconciliation, as all knowledge is political (Murray, 2007) and Western epistemology considers its methods superior to all others, which in conjunction with discursive and colonial structural power causes Indigenous epistemologies to be marginalized (Hickey, 2020; Castleden et al., 2017). Supporting Indigenous self-determination, recognizing Indigenous Peoples' rights and meaningful Indigenous inclusion in decision-making is critical for effective climate action and for addressing the interrelated impacts of climate change and harms of colonialism (Reed et al., 2024).

Research problematics

The research revealed points of tension or 'problematics' (Smith, 2007) between and within translocal and institutional discourse, by beginning with puzzles identified by participants formed by organizational commitments and stated goals misaligning with current processes and outcomes within climate policy development. A main problematic is the institutional commitment to pursue genuine collaboration and reconciliation but not developing any internal processes or empowering staff pursuit in climate action collaboration, which is a fertile area where collaboration with First Nations holistic approaches would benefit Metro Vancouver's climate goals. The organizational guiding documents strongly acknowledged the changing social and political landscapes in Canada repeatedly, and the increased expectations from both the public and First Nations driven by UNDRIP (Metro Vancouver, 2024). The institutional documents that were analyzed, including plans, policies, reports and strategies largely fell short of identifying concrete actions linked to the relationship-based *practice* of reconciliation (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015) rather than the *idea* and *intention* of reconciliation. The internal discourse revealed through publically facing documents identified misalignment on goals and intentions for meaningful engagement and genuine collaboration on climate action with First Nations. This misalignment was supported in the participant interviews, which revealed while staff were all clear that UNDRIP and TRC

were main policy and process drivers for engagement with First Nations; they were almost all unclear on how these translocal guidance documents related to climate action development.

Another main problematic is that while ‘early’ engagement was promoted consistently in internal and translocal guidance documents, interviews revealed that that many of the main climate policy and plans engagement with First Nations occurred on an already drafted documents, provided for comment. Due to the stage of development, and lack of process co-development has already missed the opportunity to meaningfully include First Nations epistemologies and ontologies, which Wiebe (2019), Redvers et al. (2020) and Brousselle et al. (2018) cite as needed to benefit from Indigenous holistic worldviews and environmental practices. Research revealed that where Indigenous Knowledge was provided in engagement, policy drafting staff were unclear about how to incorporate this into Metro Vancouver’s knowledge and approaches and this information was often separated into an Indigenous considerations section, not meaningfully incorporated. That lack of clarity and concrete commitments would drive tokenistic outcomes aligns with the literature review’s clear direction that any incorporation must be co-developed to avoid colonial extractive approaches to Indigenous Knowledge (Redvers et al., 2020; Castleden et al., 2017; Abele, 2007).

The literature identified political listening to be a critical component to organizations actively pursuing rebalancing power inequality (Wiebe, 2019) and a first step towards building genuine collaboration (Dreher, 2017). Metro Vancouver consistently promotes the goal of pursuing ‘genuine collaboration’ with First Nations but has not operationalized political listening, at least in climate action development. This was revealed in the majority of participants, with some noting that in current engagement they often hear from First Nations that they have a desire to co-develop and felt the process was inadequate, yet participants revealed nothing has been done to action these requests or even formally process them.

Key revelations

Key findings suggest that currently Metro Vancouver’s Indigenous inclusion on climate action planning fall short of their commitment to pursue ‘genuine collaboration’ due to procedural and structural limitations that prioritize existing institutional paradigms over equal Indigenous partnership approaches. In addition to the findings that identified the various sources of these procedural roadblocks, a paradigm-shifting finding of this research was that research participants generally found notion of ‘early’ engagement to be a misnomer in

climate policy development, and difficult to implement in a way that supported the collaborative intent of engagement. These participants noted this advice was likely appropriate for infrastructure projects where ‘early’ is easier to define and implement, and that intergovernmental climate planning is most successful when it is an ongoing dialogue between peer colleagues. As the literature cautioned (Castleden et al., 2017; Abele, 2007; Reed et al., 2024) if climate action development insufficiently includes Indigenous ontologies in the process development, then the resulting knowledge and epistemologies can be cleaved from their context, resulting in tokenistic engagement (ICA, 2020; Redvers et al., 2020). This not only impedes the development of co-created policies that honor Indigenous epistemologies, thereby limiting the effectiveness of climate initiatives that require a holistic, place-based approach (Reed et al., 2024; Abele, 2007), it also can hurt any future relationship building (Castleden et al., 2017).

While the literature review did not reveal ‘early’ to be difficult to apply to climate policy development specifically, other issues with this temporal guidance were identified, which mainly stemmed from unclear interpretations (Whyte, 2017; Arsenault et al., 2018) and misunderstandings of process expectation (Boyd & Lorefice,2018; Udofia et al’s., 2017). Despite consistent guiding principles and policies around “early and ongoing involvement” (Government of Canada, 2022, n.p.) at all levels of Canadian government and translocally, to collaboration or engagement with First Nations, the language in this guidance can have varying interpretations at an institutional and individual level which can be shaped by one’s values, background, organizational interests and agendas (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2011). Whether consistent guidance of ‘early’ is not resulting in greater epistemological pluralism in policy due to being ineffective for climate policy development or due to translation and misunderstanding issues, deep listening to one another seems to be a consistent path forward (Wiebe, 2020; Dreher, 2017).

The non-Indigenous government in a ‘genuine collaboration’ must reflexively practice active or political listening, as a foundational action required to aid ‘mutual recognition’ (Wiebe, 2019). Active listening considers that different perspectives are to be retained and are necessary to create dialogue and exhibit solidarity and becomes political when it moves into dialogue that creates call to action (Ashworth, 2020). Learning to actively listen as individual staff, and as an organization, is a main principle of relationship building, rather than leading with solutions first and asking for comment (Wiebe, 2019).

Principal Recommendations

By analyzing the concept of “early engagement,” it became clear that while the region aims for genuine collaboration, existing practices often fail to meet Indigenous expectations for inclusivity and co-determination. Through this research, several recommendations emerge to move beyond tokenistic involvement and towards meaningful, co-developed climate solutions. The recommendations for action are described in more detail in the ‘Path Forward’ section but there are two core recommendations that ground the others.

1. Empower staff to confidently implement ‘genuine collaboration’ models with First Nations on climate policy.

While government-to-government relationship building is critical to reconciliation, meaningful climate policy development processes that incorporate multiple epistemologies are generally implemented at a staff level (Smith, 2007; Karnuga, 2018) and so staff must receive education and support to undertake this work. Metro Vancouver staff need enhanced training on the intersections between UNDRIP, Indigenous Rights and Title, and climate change mitigation and adaptation to fully embrace Indigenous ways of knowing. By investing in ongoing professional development, Metro Vancouver can build an internal culture that respects and operationalizes Indigenous knowledge in policy development, guided by strengthened Indigenous relationships, thus strengthening collaborative relationships and regional climate strategies.

Research revealed that individual staff were ‘activating’ institutional discourse originating from translocal guidance like UNDRIP and internal guidance developed broadly and inconsistently. Individual agents within institutions are inherently translating process and policy documents that hold institutional discourse with their own experience, needs and values, which shifts and shapes the meaning and application (Smith & Griffith, 2022). Education around Indigenous climate sovereignty and value to policy inclusion would encourage discourse activation with consistent *intention*. However, intention alone isn’t enough for genuine collaboration, and the development of internal and individual principles is needed to ensure that process design does not reproduce structural inequality (Costanza-Chock, 2020). This understanding of institutional discourse through process implies that a more rigid process and attempts to engage ever ‘earlier’ on climate engagement with First

Nations will not solve the issue of inconsistency emerging from the individual translation of institutional discourse.

2. Co-create equal, shared dialogue spaces for regional climate concerns

The literature review and participant conversations clearly identified that the most effective path forward would be to co-develop a new dialogue space not owned by either party. This model of genuine collaboration, rather than engaging earlier in the existing process, was identified in the research to at least partly alleviate other challenges in the current relationship to climate epistemological pluralism like accessing and incorporating holistic perspectives, decolonizing western siloed government approaches, and materially elevating the relationship beyond "another stakeholder" (Figure 1). There were frustrations and barriers felt by staff to elevate the relationship in accordance with UNDRIP at a project level that wouldn't be addressed by a new dialogue model and would need to be addressed internally first. These internal barriers were mainly around lack of formal support to actually pursue 'genuine collaboration' and staff not feeling empowered to explore how to co-develop and co-evaluate plural epistemologies and approaches to climate action that did not necessarily align with Metro Vancouver's identified approach and would require deep dialogue.

A collaborative dialogue space would assist climate consultation and engagement to focus on the relationships and the process of braiding distinct worldviews rather than seeking feedback on single projects, which was revealed to be an ineffective way to accommodate the holistic approaches needed for effective climate action (Redvers et al., 2019; Reed et al., 2024; Abele, 2007; Whyte, 2013). Braiding Indigenous and Western epistemologies have proven climate outcomes (Reed et al, 2024; Redvers et al., 2019), but only equal co-development processes that empower First Nations as co-designers approach reconciliation principles for effective planetary health outcomes (Reed et al., 2024; Castleden et al., 2017; Abele, 2007; Costanza-Chock, 2024). Co-development of a dialogue space addresses the issue salience concern in the current process by allowing First Nations and Metro Vancouver to establish their own priorities and co-identify shared priorities to better find projects to collaborate on that are mutually beneficial.

Closing reflections

Metro Vancouver should move beyond current Indigenous climate engagement strategies and embrace an ongoing collaborative dialogue model that equally values Indigenous Knowledge

systems. This shift will be critical to addressing the systemic drivers of climate change with a more holistic climate policy, improving relationships with First Nations over time, and fostering more resilient, just, and sustainable futures for all communities in the region. While this research focuses on the benefits and barriers to genuine climate collaboration with First Nations from the Metro Vancouver perspective, the research did reveal some words of caution about these developing governance models generally. Some authors felt that the two knowledge systems and worldviews that guide them are too diametrically opposed to ever be successfully integrated without subsumption (Abele, 2007; Reed et al., 2024; Mignolo, 2009; Latulippe, 2015). Abele (2007) asks an important question about the unknowable outcome of successful Indigenous inclusion in democratic practices:

> Will the inclusion of Indigenous people as representatives in public decision-making lead ultimately to a reconsideration of the forms of decision making themselves, so that instead of mainly symbolic and selective participation, a synthesis of old and new practices actually changes an aspect of Canadian public life? Or conversely, and as many would predict, will participation lead to absorption and assimilation of Indigenous difference? (p.249)

If meaningful collaboration will ultimately have a good outcome for distinct Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies is out of scope of this research, but it is certainly an interesting question to hold space for while moving forward. Ultimately, the governance processes and collaboration models needed to tackle the climate crisis effectively will have to be as unprecedented as the crisis itself to be effective. In parallel, healing our relationships with each other and the environment of colonial wounds will happen incrementally and cooperatively. Hopefully, this research can provide individual and organizational reflection about how vital but delicate this work can be, with long and far-reaching implications.

References

Abele, F. (2007) Between Respect and Control: Traditional Indigenous Knowledge in Canadian Public Policy. In Smith, M. C., & Orsini, M. (2007). *Critical policy studies* (pp.233-256). UBC Press. https://doi.org/10.59962/9780774855372

Åm, H. (2020). 'Rich on Resources' An Interpretive Policy Analysis of Producing Public Good in Salmon Governance in Norway. *The European Consortium for Political Research,* https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/PaperDetails/55895

Arrona, A & Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, J.M. (2019). On the study and practice of regional innovation policy: the potential of interpretive policy analysis, *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 32:1, 148-163, DOI: 10.1080/13511610.2018.1528141

Arsenault, R., Bourassa, C., Diver, S., McGregor, D., & Witham, A. (2019). Including Indigenous Knowledge Systems in environmental assessments: Restructuring the process. *Global Environmental Politics*, 19(3), 120–132. https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00519

Ashworth, J. (2020) "Art-ful Methods of Democratic Participation: Listening, Engagement, and Connection," in Levac, L & Wiebe, S.M. (First Ed.) Creating Spaces of Engagement (Chapter 9). University of Toronto Press.

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) (2019) Urgent and Transformative Climate Action through the AFN National Climate Strategy. In *Assembly of First Nations*. https://afn.bynder.com/m/46ea6408b9e0e229/original/36-2023-Urgent-and-Transformative-Climate-Action-through-the-AFN-National-Climate-Strategy.pdf

Bartels, K. (2021, January 7). *Using interpretive policy analysis (IPA) to drive positive change*. University of Birmingham Resource Center; University of Birmingham. https://hub.birmingham.ac.uk/resources/article/interpretive-policy-analysis-to-drive-positive-change/

Baquero, O. S., Benavidez Fernández, M. N., & Acero Aguilar, M. (2021). From Modern Planetary Health to Decolonial Promotion of One Health of Peripheries. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.637897

Biggs, R., Schlüter, M., & Schoon, M. L. (2015). *Principles for Building Resilience: Sustaining Ecosystem Services in Social-Ecological Systems*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316014240

Black, L. (2013). Vol 9 (1) "Framing Democracy and Conflict through Storytelling in Deliberative Groups, "Journal of Deliberative Democracy.

Boyd, B. and Lorefice, S. (2018), Understanding consultation and engagement of Indigenous Peoples in resource development: A policy framing approach. Can Public Admin, 61: 572-595. https://doi.org/10.1111/capa.12301

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brousselle, A., & Butzbach, C. (2018). *Redesigning public health for planetary health*. The Lancet: Planetary Health.

Brouselle, A. & McDavid, J. (2020). Evolution for Planetary Health. Evaluation. 27. DOI:10.1177/1356389020952462

Brousselle, A., McDavid, J., Curren, M., Logtenberg, R., Dunbar, B., & Ney, T. (2022). A theory-based approach to designing interventions for Planetary Health. Evaluation, 28(3), 330-355. https://doi.org/10.1177/13563890221107044

Canada. (1996). Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Ottawa, The Commission. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx

Canada. (2014). *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 (2022)*. Ethics.gc.ca. https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2022.html

Canada. (2015). *2023 Progress Report on the 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan: Part I*. https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-plan/climate-plan-overview/emissions-reduction-2030/2023-progress-report/part-1.html

Canada. (2016). *Process Document for Ongoing Engagement on the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. Prime Minister of Canada. https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2016/12/09/process-document-ongoing-engagement-pan-canadian-framework-clean

Canada, Impact Assessment Agency. (2022). What We Heard Report: Engagement on the Review of Environmental Assessment Processes. www.canada.ca. https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/programs/participation-indigenous-peoples/indigenous-cooperation-agreement-regulations/engagement-review-environmental-assessment-processes.html

Canada, D. of Justice. (2023). *Draft UNDA Action Plan*. Www.justice.gc.ca. https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/ap-pa/ah/index.html

Canada. (2024). Canada's Partnership with Indigenous Peoples on Climate. www.canada.ca. https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/indigenous-partnership.html

Campilan et al. (2000). Learning From Change: Issues And Experiences In Participatory Monitoring And Evaluation, eds. *Community Development Journal*, *36*(3), 256–257. https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/36.3.256

Castleden, H., Garvin, T., & Huu-ay-aht First Nation. (2009). Hishuk Tsawak (Everything is One/Connected): A Huu-ay-aht worldview for seeing forestry in British Columbia. *Society & Natural Resources*, *22*(9), 789–804.

Castleden, H. E. , Martin, D. , Cunsolo, A. , Harper, S. , Hart, C. , Sylvestre, P. , Stefanelli, R. , Day, L. , Lauridsen, K. (2017). Implementing Indigenous and Western Knowledge Systems (Part 2): "You Have to Take a Backseat" and Abandon the Arrogance of Expertise. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 8(4). DOI: 10.18584/iipj.2017.8.4.8

Castleden, H. & Lewis, D & Jamieson, Rob & Gibson, Mark & Rainham, D. & R, Russell & Martin, Debbie & C, Hart. (2016). "Our Ancestors Are in Our Land, Water, and Air": A Two-Eyed Seeing Approach to Researching Environmental Health Concerns with Pictou Landing First Nation. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309494516_Our_Ancestors_Are_in_Our_Land_Water_and_Air_A_Two-Eyed_Seeing_Approach_to_Researching_Environmental_Health_Concerns_with_Pictou_Landing_First_Nation

Cheung, T.T.T. & Fuller, S. (2022) Rethinking the potential of collaboration for urban climate governance: The case of Hong Kong. *Area*, 54, 408–417. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12781

Cole, D. Advantages of a polycentric approach to climate change policy. *Nature Climate Change*, 114–118 (2015). https://doi.org/10.1038/nclimate2490

Costanza-Chock, S. (2020). *Design Justice : Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need* (1st ed.). The MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/12255.001.0001Critical and Interpretive Policy Network, 2013

Critical and Interpretive Policy Network. (2014). *What is Interpretive Policy Analysis?* Ipa.science. https://ipa.science/who-we-are/what-is-interpretive-policy-analysis/

Deranger, E. (2021). The Climate Emergency & the Colonial Response. *Yellowhead Institute*, 102. Retrieved July 5, 2022, from https://yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/eriel-deranger-climate-emergency-yi-brief.pdf

Dreher, T. (2017) "Listening: A normative approach to transform media and democracy" Ch 2 in Media and Citizenship: Between marginalisation and participation.

Doberstein, C. (2022). Assessing the Promise and Performance of Agencies in the Government of Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *55*(3), 600–618. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423922000324Fischer et al., 2022, p. 292

First Nation Leadership Council. (2022). BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan. *BC Assembly of First Nations*. https://www.bcafn.ca/sites/default/files/2022-04/BCFNCSAP%20Final%20Draft%20%2822April2022%29.pdf

First Nations Leadership Council. (2023, October). BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan: 20 Urgent Calls for Climate Action. *FNLC Climate Strategy*; FNLC. https://fnlcclimatestrategy.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/20-Urgent-Calls-for-Climate-Action-with-QR-Code-October-2023-1.pdf

Friesen, M (2014). Democracy, Governance, and Metro Vancouver: Decision-Making and the Regional Growth Strategy. *SFU Summit Research Repository.* https://summit.sfu.ca/item/14732

Fujii, L.A. (2017). *Interviewing in Social Science Research: A Relational Approach (1st ed.)*. Routledge. https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/10.4324/9780203756065

Gaventa, John & Cornwall, Andrea. (2008). Challenging the Boundaries of the Possible: Participation, Knowledge and Power. *IDS Bulletin*. 37. 122 - 128. 10.1111/j.1759-5436.2006.tb00329.x.

Giunta, A. (2019) Looking back to move forward: the status of environmental rights under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 23:1-2, 149-173, DOI: 10.1080/13642987.2019.1572874

Gobby, J., Temper, L., Burke, M., von Ellenrieder, N., (2022) Resistance as governance: Transformative strategies forged on the frontlines of extractivism in Canada, *The Extractive Industries and Society*, Volume 9, 100919, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2021.100919.

Government of Canada. (2022). What we heard report: Engagement on the review of environmental assessment processes. Canada.ca. https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/programs/participation-indigenous-peoples/indigenous-cooperation-agreement-regulations/engagement-review-environmental-assessment-processes.html

Government of British Columbia. (2021). *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act: Action Plan 2022-2027*. Government of British Columbia. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/ministries/indigenous-relations-reconciliation/declaration_act_action_plan.pdf

Government of British Columbia. (2022). *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. SBC 2019, c 44. https://canlii.ca/t/544c3

Hankivsky, H. & Cormier, R. (2019). "Intersectionality and Public Policy: Some Lessons for Existing Models," *Political Research Quarterly*. Vol 64(1): 217-229, https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912910376385

Hill-Cawthorne, G. (2019). One Health/EcoHealth/Planetary Health and their evolution. 10.2307/j.ctvggx2kn.6.

Hickey, D. (2020). Indigenous Epistemologies, Worldviews, and Theories of Power. *Diversity of Research in Health Journal*, 1, pp. 140–140. https://doi.org/10.28984/drhj.v1i0.56

Howitt, R. (2020). Unsettling the taken (for granted). *Progress in Human Geography*. 44(2), 193-215. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132518823962

Hulst, M. & Yanow, D. (2014). From Policy "Frames" to "Framing". *The American Review of Public Administration*. 46. 10.1177/0275074014533142.

Indigenous Climate Action. (2021). *Decolonizing Climate Action in Canada: Report from Phase 1*.https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e8e4b5ae8628564ab4bc44c/t/6061cb5926611066ba64a953/1617021791071/pcf_critique_FINAL.pdf

Indigenous Climate Action. (2023). *Decolonizing Climate Action in Canada: Report from Phase 2*. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e8e4b5ae8628564ab4bc44c/t/6572ef1200810a3f9b708453/1702031212873/DCP+Phase+2+Part+1.pdf

Indigenous Climate Action (2024). *Indigenous Rights and Sovereignty in National Climate Policies: A Systemic Analysis.* https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e8e4b5ae8628564ab4bc44c/t/656b113b4f5a45687025a0bc/1701515611220/Rights+Analysis+Report+and+Appendixpdf.pdf

IPCC (2018) Summary for Policymakers. In: *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009157940.001.

Juillet, L. (2007) Framing Environmental Policy: Aboriginal Rights and the Conservation of Migratory Birds. In Smith, M. C., & Orsini, M. (2007). *Critical policy studies* (pp.257-278). UBC Press. https://doi.org/10.59962/9780774855372

Latulippe, N. (2015). Situating the Work: A typology of traditional knowledge literature. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 11(2), 118–131. https://doi.org/10.1177/117718011501100203Metro Vancouver, 2018, 2020, 2021, 22

Levac, L., Gillis, J., Wiebe, S. M., & Levac, L. R. E. (2020). Northern Women's Conceptualizations of Well-Being: Engaging in the "Right" Policy Conversations. In *Creating Spaces of Engagement* (pp. 94–116). University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487519889-006

Levac, L. R. E., & Wiebe, S. M. (Eds.). (2020). *Creating spaces of engagement : policy justice and the practical craft of deliberative democracy*. University of Toronto Press.Mahon, Andrew & Johnson, 2007

McKenzie, J. (2021). Greater than the sum of its parts. *International Institute for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved February 28, 2023, from https://www.iisd.org/publications/whole-government-approach-climate-change

McGregor, D. (2018). Mino-Mnaamodzawin: Achieving Indigenous Environmental Justice in Canada. Environment and Society, 9(1), 7-24. Retrieved July 2023, from

McGregor, S. L. T. (2018). *Understanding and Evaluating Research: A Critical Guide*, 1st edition. Sage Publications.

Metro Vancouver. (n.d.) *Indigenous Relations | Metro Vancouver*. Metrovancouver.org; Metro Vancouver. Retrieved November 15, 2023, from https://metrovancouver.org/about-us/indigenous-relations

Metro Vancouver (2018). *Climate 2050 Strategic Framework*. Metro Vancouver. Accessed February 14, 2023. http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/air-quality/AirQualityPublications/AQ_C2050-StrategicFramework.pdf.

Metro Vancouver (2021). Indigenous Relations: About Us. Metrovancouver.org. Accessed March 5, 2023. http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/first-nation-relations/Pages/default.aspx

Metro Vancouver. (2021). *Clean Air Plan*. https://metrovancouver.org/services/air-quality-climate-action/clean-air-plan

Metro Vancouver (2022). Approach to Community Engagement. Metrovancouver.org. Accessed March 5, 2023. www.metrovancouver.org/about/community-engagement/Pages/default.aspx

Metro Vancouver. (2022). *Draft Climate 2050 Nature and Ecosystems Roadmap*. Climate Action Committee Agenda (pp. 50–100). Metrovancouver.org https://metrovancouver.org/boards/ClimateAction/CAC_2022-Apr-8_AGE.pdf

Metro Vancouver (2022) *Metro 2050: Regional Growth Strategy*. Metro Vancouver. Accessed September 23, 2023. https://metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/Documents/metro-2050.pdf

Metro Vancouver (2023). Regional Planning Committee Agenda. Metrovancouver.org https://metrovancouver.org/boards/RegionalPlanning/RPL_2022-Jan-14_AGE.pdf#search=%22planetary%20health%22

Metro Vancouver (2023). Manager's Report to the October 2023 Indigenous Relations Committee. Indigenous Relations Committee Agenda. Metrovancouver.org https://metrovancouver.org/boards/IndigenousRelations/INR_2023-Oct-05_AGE.pdf

Metro Vancouver. (2023). *Climate 2050: Nature and Ecosystems Roadmap*. https://metrovancouver.org/services/air-quality-climate-action/Documents/climate-2050-nature-and-ecosystems-road-map.pdf

Metro Vancouver. (2023a). Climate 2050 Land Use and Urban Form Roadmap – Scope of Work and Project Status. In *Climate Action Committee Agenda*. https://metrovancouver.org/boards/ClimateAction/CAC_2023-Feb-2_AGE.pdf#search=climate%202050%20engagement%20plan

Metro Vancouver. (2023b). Climate 2050 Engagement and Public Education Strategy 2023 to 2025. In *Climate Action Committee Agenda*. https://metrovancouver.org/boards/ClimateAction/CAC_2023-Mar-9_AGE.pdf#search=climate%202050%20engagement%20plan

Metro Vancouver (2022). Approach to Community Engagement. Accessed March 5, 2023. www.metrovancouver.org/about/community-engagement/Pages/default.aspx

Metro Vancouver (2023). Manager's Report to the October 2023 Indigenous Relations Committee. https://metrovancouver.org/boards/IndigenousRelations/INR_2023-Oct-05_AGE.pdf

Metro Vancouver. (2023b). UNDRIP Action Plan: Overview and Next Steps. In *Indigenous Relations Committee Meeting: On Table Item*. Metro Vancouver. https://metrovancouver.org/boards/IndigenousRelations/INR_2023-Oct-05_OT.pdf

Metro Vancouver (2023, March) Draft Lower Mainland Flood Management Strategy: Flood Resiliency Committee Agenda. (2023). In *Metro Vancouver Agendas and Minutes*. Metro Vancouver. https://metrovancouver.org/boards/FloodResiliency/FRE_2023-Mar-3_AGE.pdf

Metro Vancouver. (2024) Metro Vancouver's Regional District Indigenous Relations Committee Agenda. Accessed January 25, 2024. https://metrovancouver.org/boards/IndigenousRelations/INR_2024-10-11_AGE.pdf

Metro Vancouver. (2024). *Indigenous Relations Committee Agenda: Financial Plan* (pp. 7–37). https://metrovancouver.org/boards/IndigenousRelations/INR_2024-10-11_AGE.pdf

Mignolo, W. D. (2009). Epistemic disobedience, independent thought and decolonial freedom. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *26*, 159–181. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. (2023). *Consulting with First Nations - Province of British Columbia*. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/consulting-with-first-nations

Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. (n.d.) Partnering with Indigenous Peoples for Climate Resilience. *Clean BC.* https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/climate-change/indigenous-communities/indigenous-adapt

Mitchell, A. (2020). Revitalizing laws, (re)-making treaties, dismantling violence: Indigenous resurgence against 'the sixth mass extinction'. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 21:7, 909-924, DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2018.1528628

Murray, K (2007) Governmentality and the Shifting Winds of Policy Studies. In Smith, M. C., & Orsini, M. (2007). *Critical policy studies* (pp.257-278). UBC Press. https://doi.org/10.59962/9780774855372

Mosselson, J. (2010). Subjectivity and reflexivity: Locating the self in research on dislocation. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23(4), 479–494. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2010.492771

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. https://exhibits.library.utoronto.ca/items/show/2420

Nursey-Bray, M., Palmer, R., Rist, P., & Chischilly, A. M., Yin, L., (2022). Indigenous Adaptation – Not Passive Victims. In *Old Ways for New Days*. Springer International Publishing AG.

O'Connor, K., & Rudolph, S. (2023, March 22). Critical Policy Analysis in Education. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education. Retrieved 2 Feb. 2024, from https://oxfordre.com/education/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-1831.

Ostrom, E. (2009). A Polycentric Approach for Coping with Climate Change. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*. 5095. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1494833

Pachirat, T. (2018). *Among Wolves: Ethnography and the Immersive Study of Power*. Routledge.

Pattanayak, S. K., & Haines, A. (2017). Implementation of policies to protect planetary health. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, *1*(7), e255–e256. https://doi.org/10.1016/s2542-5196(17)30115-8

Phare et al. (2017). Collaborative Consent and Water Governance in British Columbia. *Polis Project on Ecological Governance*, 1–33.

Ratima, M. (2019). Leadership for planetary health and sustainable development: Health promotion community capacities for working with Indigenous peoples in the application of Indigenous knowledge. *Global Health Promotion.* 26(4): p. 3-5.

Redvers N, Poelina A, Schultz C, Kobei DM, Githaiga C, Perdrisat M, Prince D, Blondin B. Indigenous Natural and First Law in Planetary Health. *Challenges*. 2020; 11(2):29. https://doi.org/10.3390/challe11020029

Redvers, N., Celidwen, Y., Schultz, Horn, O., Githaiga, C., Vera, M., Perdrisat, M., Plume, Kobe, D., Kain, M., Poelina, A., Rojas, Blondin, B.S., The determinants of planetary health: an Indigenous consensus perspective. *The Lancet Planetary Health.* 2022; 6 (2):e156-e163.

Reed, M. G., & Parkins, J. (John). (2012). *Social transformation in rural Canada : community, cultures, and collective action*. UBC Press. https://doi.org/10.59962/9780774823821

Reed G, Gobby J, Sinclair R, Ivey R and Matthews H.D (2021) Indigenizing Climate Policy in Canada: A Critical Examination of the Pan-Canadian Framework and the ZéN RoadMap. *Frontiers Sustainability Cities* 3:644675. doi: 10.3389/frsc.2021.644675

Reed, G., Fox, S., Littlechild, D., Lewis, D., Wray, J., Kassi, K., Ruben, N., Morales, R., & Lonsdale, S. (2024). For Our Future: Indigenous Resilience Report. In *Changing Climate* . https://changingclimate.ca/site/assets/uploads/sites/7/2024/03/Indigenous-Resilience-Report_Final_EN.pdf

Schwartz-Shea, P., & Yanow, D. (2012). *Interpretive research design : concepts and processes*. Routledge. http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB08153028

Simms, R., Phare, M.A., Brandes, O., Miltenberger, M. (2018). Collaborative Consent as a Path for Realizing UNDRIP. In Policy Options. https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/january-2018/collaborative-consent-as-a-path-to-realizing-undrip/

Smith, M. C., & Orsini, M. (2007). *Critical policy studies*. UBC Press. https://doi.org/10.59962/9780774855372

Smith, D. E. (2006). *Institutional ethnography as practice*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Smith, D. E., & Turner, S. M. (Eds.). (2014). *Incorporating texts into institutional ethnographies*. University of Toronto Press.

Smith, D. E., & Griffith, A. I. (2022). *Simply Institutional Ethnography : Creating a Sociology for People* (First edition.). University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487528072

Smith, A. (2022). *Multiple Barriers : The Multilevel Governance of Homelessness in Canada*. University of Toronto Press,. https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487548742

Soroka, (2007), Agenda-Setting and Issue Definition. In Smith, M. C., & Orsini, M. (2007). *Critical policy studies* (pp.185-210). UBC Press. https://doi.org/10.59962/9780774855372

Stout, M., & Love, J. M. (2017). Integrative Governance: A Method for Fruitful Public Encounters. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 47(1), 130–147. https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074015576953

Teghtsoonian, K. (2016) Methods, discourse, activism: comparing institutional ethnography and governmentality, *Critical Policy Studies*, 10:3, 330-347, DOI: 10.1080/19460171.2015.1050426

Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (2022). *BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan*. BC Assembly of First Nations. https://www.bcafn.ca/sites/default/files/2022-04/BCFNCSAP%20Final%20Draft%20%2822April2022%29.pdf

Udofia, A., Noble, B., Poelzer, G. (2017). Meaningful and efficient? Enduring challenges to Aboriginal participation in environmental assessment. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 65, 164–174. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eiar.2016.04.008

United Nations. (2007). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html

University of Birmingham. (2021). Using interpretive policy analysis (IPA) to drive positive change. *MPA Resource Centre*. https://hub.birmingham.ac.uk/resources/article/interpretive-policy-analysis-to-drive-positive-change/#:~:text=IPA%20is%20an%20approach%20to,reaction%20to%20%E2%80%93%20a%20particular%20policy.

Wale, J., & Huson, B. (2024). From Risk to Resilience: Indigenous Alternatives to Climate Risk Assessment in Canada. In *Yellowhead Institute* (pp. 04-20). Yellowhead Institute. https://yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/From-Risk-to-Resilience.pdf

Wiebe, S. M. (2020). Sensing policy: engaging affected communities at the intersections of environmental justice and decolonial futures. *Politics, Groups & Identities*, *8*(1), 181–193. https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2019.1629315

Wiebe, S., Hankivsky, O., & Jordan-Zachery, J. S. (2019). Hearing or Listening? Pipeline Politics and the Art of Engagement in British Columbia. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Intersectionality in Public Policy* (pp. 579–599). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98473-5_27

Wiebe, S. M. (2020). Sensing policy: engaging affected communities at the intersections of environmental justice and decolonial futures. *Politics, Groups & Identities*, *8*(1), 181–193. https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2019.1629315

Wilkins, P., Phillimore, J. and Gilchrist, D. (2016), Public Sector Collaboration: Are We Doing It Well and Could We Do It Better. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 75: 318-330. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.12183

Wilson, S. & Breen, A. (2019). Research and Reconciliation: Unsettling Ways of Knowing through Indigenous Relationships. Canadian Scholars, 2019. ProQuest Ebook Central. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uvic/detail.action?docID=6282054.

Whitmee, S., Haines, A., Beyrer, C., Boltz, F., Capon, A., De Souza Dias, B. F., Ezeh, A., Frumkin, H., Gong, P., Head, P., Horton, R., Mace, G. M., Marten, R., Myers, S. S., Nishtar, S., Osofsky, S. A., Pattanayak, S. K., Pongsiri, M. J., Romanelli, C., . . . Yach, D. (2015). Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch: report of The Rockefeller Foundation–Lancet Commission on planetary health. *The Lancet*, *386*(10007), 1973–2028. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(15)60901-1

Whyte, K.P., Lynn, K. (2013). Indigenous Peoples, Climate Change and the Government-to-Government Relationship. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. 10.2139/ssrn.2319124.

Whyte, Kyle, Is it Colonial DéJà Vu? Indigenous Peoples and Climate Injustice (November 1, 2016). Forthcoming, Humanities for the Environment: Integrating Knowledges, Forging New Constellations of Practice. Edited by Joni Adamson, Michael Davis, and Hsinya Huang. Earthscan Publications. Pages 88-104., Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2925277 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2925277

Whyte, K.P., Reo, N. J., McGregor, D., Smith, M. A., Jenkins, J. F. (2018). Factors that support indigenous involvement in multi-actor environmental stewardship. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 13(2), 58–68. https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180117701028

Whyte, K. (2017). Indigenous Climate Change Studies: Indigenizing Futures, Decolonizing the Anthropocene. *English language notes*. 55. 10.1215/00138282-55.1-2.153.

Whyte, K. (2020). Too late for indigenous climate justice: Ecological and relational tipping points. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews. Climate Change*, *11*(1), e603-n/a. https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.603

Yanow, D. (2000). Underlying assumptions of an interpretive approach: The importance of local knowledge*.* SAGE Publications, Inc., https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412983747