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Traditional beneficiaries: trade bans, exemptions, and morality embodied in diets

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Abstract
Research on the nutrition transition often treats dietary changes as an outcome of increased trade and urban living. The Northern Food Crisis presents a puzzle since it involves hunger and changing diets, but coincides with a European ban on trade in seal products. I look to insights from economic sociology and decolonizing scholarship to make sense of the ban on seal products and its impacts. I examine how trade arrangements enact power imbalances in ways that are not always obvious. I explain how the ban's exemption for Inuit-produced seal goods explicitly aims to protect Inuit from the harshness of capitalism and preserve their traditions. In this respect, the Northern Food Crisis is an embodiment of European visions of who Inuit are expected to be and how they are supposed to act in the global economy.

Keywords Food · Trade · Nutrition transition · Economic sociology · Seal

Abbreviations

EU	European Union
MEPs	Members of European Parliament
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

Although research voices concern about how local food cultures are coopted by global food trade, trade does not uniformly supplant food-focused traditions (Damman et al. 2008; Friedmann 1999, 2005; Grey and Patel 2015; Ofstehage 2012; Reid and Rout 2016; Veteto 2008). Trade-to-diet pathways are complex and our causal pathways need contextual clarification (Basu 2015; Street 2015; Thow 2009; see also Koç et al. 2008). While a body of scholarship tracks how trade informs the presence of foods, this paper focuses on the subtler implications of trade agreements. In this paper, I examine how trade agreements effectively institutionalize visions of who people are and how they should act. I also consider how these visions are embodied in diets as people must work with the foods that are available in their environments, as well as the material conditions of existence that make food-getting possible.

My focus is on how the Northern Food Crisis in Inuit sealing communities in Canada is tied to a loss of trade. The Northern Food Crisis involves hunger, the inability to access country (i.e., traditional) foods like seal meat, walrus, and berries, as well as the increased consumption of southern foods (i.e., processed foods typically high in fats and sugars, as well as other non-traditional foods) (Damman et al. 2008; Egeland et al. 2011; Kuhnlein et al. 2004; Martens 2014; Martin 2012). This food crisis presents a bit of a puzzle for narratives describing dietary changes as resulting from global trade since the crisis coincides with a loss of seal trade, and not heightened exposure to it (Davidson 2015). To make sense of this puzzle, I perform content and discourse analysis on the debate that led to the original ban on seal goods. My purpose is to answer the question of how trade arrangements express ideas about people. My findings illustrate that in their attempts to protect Inuit from the harshness of capitalism, Members of European Parliament implemented conditions that make it difficult to practice sealing culture, and this difficulty is embodied in diets. This research is important because it helps to illustrate how the moral concerns contained in trade agreements have indirect impacts on diets.

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The Northern Food Crisis and its ties to sealing

The ways that people share objects of material culture like furs, oils, and meat are influenced by trade. Inuit have traded seal furs with Europeans for hundreds of years, and Canada–Europe trade in seal furs and vitamin-rich seal oils resulted in seal meat in sealing communities (Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Gombay 2009, 2010; Searles 2002, 2016; Simon 2009; see also Knezevic 2009). In 1983, trade in seal products was temporarily stopped by the European Community and the ban on seal products was extended in 1985 and 1989 (Barry 2005; Damman et al. 2008; Dauvergne 2008; Dauvergne and Neville 2011; Fitzgerald 2011; Sykes 2014; Wegge 2013). By the mid-2000's, European trade ministers complained of variations in the standards that European countries applied to trade in seal products (Fitzgerald 2011; Sykes 2014; WTO 2015). The European Union (EU) responded to complaints by implementing a ban on seal products in 2009 that was upheld in 2014 by the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Fitzgerald 2011; Sykes 2014; WTO 2015). In both the original 1983 ban and the 2009 iteration, Inuit-produced seal goods were exempted (Council of the European Communities 1983; European Commission 2015; WTO 2015). Despite the exemption, Inuit sealers have reported difficulty selling their wares and earning enough money to keep up with costs related to subsistence hunting and fishing[1] (APTN 2013; Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Audia 2014; Damman et al. 2008; Davidson 2015; Sun News 2013; Vice Food LLC 2015; see also Martin 2012).

On the surface, the ban's exemption for Inuit-produced seal goods appears to demonstrate the EU's interest in not interfering with Inuit ways of life. However, statistics on seal consumption and trade, as well as statements by Inuit, illustrate that even with the exemption, the seal ban is undermining Inuit traditional *and contemporary* cultural practices[2] (Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Martin 2012; Searles 2016; Simon 2009; Sun News 2013; Vice Food LLC 2015). By many accounts, the seal ban stigmatized sealing activities, and led to the collapse of the seal industry (Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Damman et al. 2008; Simon 2009; Sun News 2013; Vice Food LLC 2015). While the ban's exemption was described by European politicians as enabling Inuit sealers to continue to hunt and sell their wares, limited international interest in seal furs and oils makes this difficult (Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Audia 2014; Damman et al. 2008; Gombay 2009, 2010; Nunavut Department of Environment n.d.; Searles 2002, 2016; see also Martin 2012).

The ban on seal products interferes with hunting and fishing activities in a number of ways. Global warming and animal rhythms require hunters to travel further distances, and hunting and fishing activities involve extra time, financial costs, and related challenges in comparison to 50 years ago (Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Nunavut Department of Environment n.d.; Searles 2016; Pal et al. 2013; see also Martin 2012). Sealing income used to mitigate some of the costs of hunting and fishing. As Damman et al. (2008, p. 147) explain: "Due to income from the fur and sealskin trade this [cost of hunting and fishing] was not considered a problem until 1982, when the trade collapsed due to the European Community boycott of seal skins" (see also Audia 2014; Gombay 2010; Searles 2016; Simon 2009). "Lost sealing revenue… reduced the income of the Inuit in Labrador, for example, by one-third" (Dauvergne and Neville 2011, p. 201). Although costs vary, a skidoo alone can cost more than $11,000 (CDN) (Gombay 2009, p. 121; see also Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Audia 2014; Simon 2009). Moreover, hunting and fishing require a range of knowledge and skills that cannot be acquired quickly (Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Gombay 2009, 2010; Knezevic 2009; Searles 2002, 2016; Simon 2009). Disruptions to sealing may impact how future generations practice sealing culture, including sharing seal meat with family, friends, and others in their communities (see Audia 2014; Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Gombay 2009, 2010; Searles 2002; Simon 2009; Nunavut Department of Environment n.d.).

Different governments in Canada have implemented programs to improve the availability of country foods (Burnett et al. 2015, p. 146; Gombay 2009, 2010). Hunter support programs can increase community country food supplies by paying hunters wages and subsidizing hunting and fishing equipment (Gombay 2009, 2010). But these programs lead to questions about how to uphold traditions, support close relations and neighbours, and prioritize social above financial relations by sharing food with one another (Gombay 2009, 2010). A federal "Nutrition North Canada" program is designed to subsidize nutritious and perishable foods, but has been criticized for its inability to "address the breadth of food insecurity in northern Canada, especially among Indigenous people," and its inability to deliver the kinds of foods people would like to eat (Burnett et al. 2015, p. 146, see also Galloway 2014; Davidson 2015). Currently, the prices of southern foods in northern Canada are anywhere from 20% to more than 400% higher than what southern Canadians pay (Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Nunavut Bureau of Statistics 2016). As programs are implemented, contested, and adjusted, as many as 7 out of 10 children go to school hungry (Arnaquq-Baril 2016). According to Statistics Canada (2017), "More than half (52%) of Inuit adults aged 25 and older who lived

[1] Gombay (2010, p. 11) describes how words like "subsistence" are "linked to the idea that people are eking out a bare existence, [and] carries negative connotations that do not reflect reality."

[2] The point of the emphasis is not to separate the past from the present, but to affirm that the past is practiced in the present, and informed by "ideas, processes, social relations, values, and institutions" (Gombay 2010, p. 11).

in Inuit Nunangat in 2012—the Inuit homeland in Canada—reported that they had experienced food insecurity in the previous 12 months."

Statistics illustrate that in the 2000's, when fur and seal goods started making a comeback in Europe, country meat and fish consumption increased (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2008; Statistics Canada 2013; see also Arnaquq-Baril 2016). In 2006, when commercial seal landings were at a high, most Inuit Aboriginal Peoples Survey respondents reported that at least half of the amount of meat and fish they ate was country food (Statistics Canada 2013; Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture 2016). Fewer people reported eating country meat and fish less than half of the time in 2006 than in 2001 (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2008), implying that country meat and fish was more accessible to respondents when trade was on the rise. The ways that trade arrangements make foods more accessible and impact diets are not always obvious, and to understand the complexity of how trade manifests in diets, it is worthwhile to consider the history of the ban and its exemption.

A brief history of European objections to sealing in Canada: 1964–2014

Environmental and humane efforts concerning sealing predate the 1960's, but it was in May 1964 when a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation-commissioned documentary entitled *Les Grandes Phoques de la Banquise* showed a seal skinned alive (Barry 2005; Braunsberger and Buckler 2009; Dauvergne 2008; Dauvergne and Neville 2011; Harter 2004; Radio-Canada 2008). The film itself was discussed in more than 300 newspapers around the world via one widely-circulated article (Barry 2005; Dauvergne 2008). Despite the fact that the person who skinned the live seal admitted that the film crew paid him to do it, and that the Deputy Minister of Fisheries met with humane society groups in late May 1964 to revise sealing guidelines, the image of brutality provoked a strong reaction from viewing publics (Barry 2005). Outraged audiences inundated the Canadian Ministry of Fisheries with thousands of letters and demanded an end to the seal hunt (Barry 2005; Dauvergne 2008; Harter 2004; Radio-Canada 2008).

By November of 1964, the Ministry of Fisheries established new sealing regulations on sealing vessels, quotas, and conditions of the hunt, including "prohibit[ing] the skinning of live seals" (Barry 2005, p. 19). Humane societies and conservation groups were allowed to monitor the catch, and prior to the 1965 hunt, one representative stated that the Ministry's measures "fall short, in some respects, of the highest hopes of the conservationists and humanitarians…[but] they represent major concessions by the sealing industry" (quoted in Barry 2005, p. 19). The Ministry of Fisheries' measures mark the start of what would be more than three decades of revised government guidelines on sealing in direct response to public concerns (Barry 2005; Dauvergne 2008; Dauvergne and Neville 2011). Yet these measures did little to appease global consumers who were encouraged by animal rights groups to take action to end the Canadian seal hunt, the largest seal hunt in the world (Dauvergne and Neville 2011; Sykes 2014; Wegge 2013). As Dauvergne and Neville (2011, p. 200) write, "By the early 1980's, at least three million letters and postcards—and perhaps as many as five million—had deluged the European Parliament."

The outrage over sealing took place during a pivotal time in European parliamentary history. The European Economic Community was founded in 1958, but its political operations were not directly responsible to voting citizens until 1979 (Inglehart and Rabier 1978). The change in accountability took place alongside rising questions about how the Common Market would benefit member countries, and how a common European identity would work (Inglehart and Rabier 1978). These political and historical factors suggest that during the late 1970's and early 1980's, Members of European Parliament (MEPs) would have been more inclined to demonstrate their responsiveness to their seal-concerned citizenry, as well as the value of a united European front. In fact, when some MEPs explicitly stated that the seal hunt was not a pressing issue, or described comparisons with domestic hunting industries, their arguments were countered by statements that accountability to citizens was of utmost importance[3] (see De Goede in European Parliament 1983; Van Den Heuvel in European Parliament 1983).[4]

Possibly as a result of these political and historical factors, in 1982 the European Parliament voted 160 to 10 to ban seal imports (Dauvergne 2008). In October 1982, the European Commission recommended a temporary ban on seal, and referenced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade's anti-pornography clause in order to protect public

[3] After emphasizing that the European Parliament needed support from the European Commission so that "the trade will stop," an MEP continues with "Finally, Mr. President, I should like to say this: over 5 million people have submitted signatures on this problem. I think that we have to reflect, as a Parliament and indeed as citizens of Western Europe, that that 5 million is very nearly half the number of people who are unemployed in the European Community just now. We have to recognize that when the North-South dialogue was debated in this Parliament, we did not get 5 million letters. I do not think we got any letters—or very few anyway. When we debated poverty, when we debated hunger, when we debated torture and the misery of many people across the world, the letters did not appear. That, I am afraid, is a reflection on the values that our society sometimes has" (Collins in European Parliament 1983, p. 186).

[4] When quoting a member of parliament (MEP), the citation will state the speaker's last name and page number in the reference European Parliament (1983).

morals (Dauvergne 2008). This temporary ban became binding in March 1983, and was later extended in 1985 (Dauvergne 2008; also; Barry 2005; Fitzgerald 2011; Harter 2004; Sykes 2014). Though the ban focused on the whitecoat seal pups that were hunted by fisheries operating around eastern Canada, and most sealers are Inuit and operate in northern parts of the globe and hunt a range of seal species, the industry for all seal furs collapsed (Arnaquq-Baril 2016).[5]

In Canada, the period from 1983 to 1987 was marked by seal advocates' threats to boycott Canada's fishing industries, and by 1984 United Kingdom grocery stores Tesco and Safeway decided to stop buying Canadian fish products until Canada put an end to its seal hunt (Barry 2005; Dauvergne and Neville 2011). In December 1987, the Canadian government decided "to ban the large-vessel hunt, end the commercial killing of whitecoat and blueback seal pups, and phase out the netting of seals except in traditional northern hunts. It also agreed that scientific evidence was not strong enough to justify a grey seal cull" (Barry 2005, p. 113; see also Dauvergne and Neville 2011). In the interim, additional seal species were added to the EU's ban (Fitzgerald 2011). But the Canadian ban on sealing did not last. In 1995, the Canadian government began to take measures to revive the sealing industry, and cited concerns about seal predation causing declines in fish stocks (Dauvergne and Neville 2011; Braunsberger and Buckler 2009).

In the mid-2000's, Canada's sealing industry appeared to be making gains. "Between 2005 and 2011, Canada exported over $70 million (US) worth of seal products to more than 35 countries, including seal pelts, value-added garments, and edible seal products (oil and meat)" (Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2015). During this time frame, many European consumers viewed fur as "casual, comfortable and youthful" (Skov 2005, p. 12) and felt "tired of being preached at" (Dauvergne and Neville 2011, p. 202), leading to a climate where seal furs and skins could become popular again. As Arnaquq-Baril (2016) explains, by 2008, "Seal skin prices climbed back up to about $100 per skin, which is almost enough to make a living on." Yet as European states entered into new trade agreements, their actions towards seal varied. Some countries like Belgium and the Netherlands refused seal-based products like omega-3 vitamins, and other European fashion houses used seal furs and skins in their garments (Audia 2014; Bowcott 2005; Cartner-Morley 2005; Dauvergne and Neville 2011; Simon 2009).

As seal products began making a comeback, "an increased resistance against seal hunting was observable in many European states" (Wegge 2013, p. 255). The vocal opposition to sealing aligned with concerns about Europe's market harmonization, and in 2009 Members of European Parliament recommended implementing a seal ban mirroring the 1983 ban (European Commission 2015). The 2009 iteration also included exemptions for traditional Inuit and Indigenous goods, travellers with seal products purchased in other countries, and by-products produced on a non-profit basis (European Parliament 2009). Though Canada, Iceland, and Norway challenged the ban at the World Trade Organization, in May 2014 the WTO supported the EU's right to uphold public moral standards, allowing the EU to morally vet the kinds of products that can pass through its borders (Nunatsiaq News 2011; WTO 2015). It is the morality of the exemption for Inuit-produced seal goods that will be examined next.

Morality, markets, and exemptions: understanding how moral concerns are woven into global trade

Even though sealing started making a comeback in the early 2000's, the 1983 ban on seal products has been described as the measure that "devastated Canada's sealing industry" (Dauvergne and Neville 2011, p. 200). MEPs reported that creating "cruelty-free" or like labelling schemes was unfeasible since sealing practices were too difficult to monitor and audit and labelling could impact the free circulation of goods (Collins in European Parliament 1983, p. 186; Narjes in European Parliament 1983, p. 196). However, Inuit's sealing practices were understood to be a fundamental part of their identity and livelihood, so Inuit-produced goods were exempted. Excerpts from the 2009 ban, which mirrors the 1983 ban, echo earlier points:

> Although it might be possible to kill and skin seals in such a way as to avoid unnecessary pain, distress, fear or other forms of suffering, given the conditions in which seal hunting occurs, consistent verification and control of hunters' compliance with animal welfare requirements is not feasible in practice, or at least, is very difficult to achieve in an effective way…
> It is also clear that other forms of harmonised rules, such as labelling requirements, would not achieve the same result…
> The fundamental economic and social interests of Inuit communities engaged in the hunting of seals as a means to ensure their subsistence should not be adversely affected. The hunt is an integral part of the culture and identity of the members of the Inuit society, and as such is recognised by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, the placing on the market of seal products which result from hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit and other

[5] In the European Parliament debate on sealing, the rapporteur explains the "fact that it is difficult to distinguish between the skins of those species which are most under threat and those which are in rather less danger" (Maij-Weggen in European Parliament 1983, p. 185).

indigenous communities and which contribute to their subsistence should be allowed (European Parliament and Council 2009).

The excerpts point to an explicit attempt to prioritize both animal rights by avoiding animal suffering and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by affirming traditions. Nevertheless, as the largest consumer of Canada's seal products refused seal furs and oils, remunerative sealing opportunities waned, making subsistence hunting difficult (Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Audia 2014; Gombay 2009, 2010; Searles 2002, 2016; Nunavut Department of Environment n.d.). In order to understand how Members of European Parliament made sense of animal and Indigenous rights in the ban and its exemption, it is worthwhile to examine the morality that justified the ban.

Morality is "the acting out of collectively held values," and influences the goals and means institutionalized in economic exchanges (Portes 2010, p. 15). The EU exemption for cultural practices may seem explicitly oriented to the goal of respecting Inuit culture, but European ideas of "tradition" and "subsistence" in Inuit culture matter to the design of the ban and exemption. Scholars illustrate that "'cultural' characteristics" are drawn on to justify discriminatory policies and actions, as policy-makers and actors use tropes to diagnose issues and solutions (Browne et al. 2005, p. 21; see also Anderson 2000; Chrisjohn et al. 2006; Daschuk 2015; Stevenson 2012; Tuhiwai Smith 2005). Policy makers and actors may also rely on tropes to determine Indigenous authenticity when cultural expressions do not match their perceptions of what Indigeneity comprises (see Anderson 2000). As LaRoque explains, "Change was always seen as assimilation or vanishing. In other words, our culture became ossified, and the definition of our cultures was that change was impossible. The moment we change, we are no longer Native" (in Anderson 2000, p. 26).

Countries and communities are differently integrated into global trade circuits as the expectations trading partners have of one another, and the stories trading partners have about their wares, impact if and how trade takes place (Bandelj 2002; Wherry 2007; Bandelj and Wherry 2011). Familiarity is important to whether and how trade takes place, as are the exclusionary narratives that draw on ideals of past, present, and future to selectively enable citizens to sell their goods (Bandelj 2002; Wherry 2007). Scholars illustrate how in an era of heightened trade across borders, the social meanings that justify what should be exchanged are influential to what actually gets traded as well as the pace of trade (Bandelj 2002; Wherry 2007; Bandelj and Wherry 2011). Trade agreements are part of "symbolic contests for status in the global community" (Wherry 2007, p. 221) and impact the kinds of goods that are shared through trade, as well as the conditions of sharing.

The seal ban and its exemption illustrate how the EU formally structures trade-related action based on collectively held values, yet the substance of these values is not obvious (see Bandelj 2002). The exemption points to the EU's recognition that it has a role in selectively including sealing communities into world trade, so that animals and Inuit are protected. Yet the substance of these values needs clarification: what narratives justify the EU's selective integration of Inuit sealers, and protections of Inuit and seals? What exactly are Members of European Parliament referencing when discussing the "traditions" and "subsistence" of Inuit? How Inuit sealing fits with European narratives can point to the exclusionary mechanisms that prevent Inuit sealers from selling their goods, sharing their culture with others, and upholding Inuit traditions. The European Parliament's debate on the seal ban can be examined to clarify the filters that Members of European Parliament drew on when deciding about including and excluding seal goods.

Social scientists routinely look to texts like policies, transcripts, and books to make sense of the value-based filters that people work with in their everyday lives (Smith 1987; Zelizer 1979). By examining the 1982 debate that led to the original 1983 ban on seal goods and its exemption, it is possible to understand how morality is fundamental to trade agreements in terms of deciding what gets in and out of borders, and the conditions of acceptance. My research affirms that the substance of the trade ban's exemption rests on the familiarity of trade partners in the context of global struggles over status. However, by drawing on decolonizing scholarship that illustrates how meaning is ascribed to people in ways that "create expert knowledge of the Other" (Tuhiwai Smith 2005, p. 87), my analysis illustrates that the kinds of narratives in play are not just about the goods to be traded or familiarity of partners, but fundamentally reflect ideas about who people are and how they should act. In the case of the seal ban, European ideas about their authority to protect seals and Inuit sealers justifies their intervention. In this regard, community-directed support is actually community-targeted suppression.

Methods

To understand the morality that informs the EU's ban on seal products and exemption for Inuit-produced goods, I drew on the 1982 European Parliament debate that led to the European Commission's original 1983 ban. Although there would have been behind-the-scenes negotiations and discussions, the debate presumably reflects themes deemed palatable to the European voting electorate, since voters pressed their representatives to end sealing and Members of European Parliament were accountable to voters. In this regard, the debate offers a strategic opportunity to analyze the moral

Table 1 Top five frequently cited nouns and verbs in the 1982 European Parliament debate on banning seal products

Word	Number of times mentioned	Weighted percentage
Species	44	0.83
Hunting	33	0.62
People	30	0.57
Community	29	0.55
Population	28	0.53

In order to reveal meaningful themes, if any, in the 1982 European Parliamentary debate on sealing, I compiled the top 50 frequently mentioned words. Since nouns speak to objects and subjects, and verbs speak to how to act in relation to objects and subjects, I pared down this list based on if the word was a person, place, or thing (i.e., noun), or an action, event, or state of being (i.e., verb). I also pared down the list to exclude "seal" and "seals." Weighted percentage refers to the prevalence of words with respect to the total word tally

content of the justifications that guided the seal ban and its exemption. By examining the commonly mentioned words around the future of sealing, and the thematic usage of these words, it is possible to elucidate how MEPs envisioned Inuit's place in the global economy.

I analyzed the 1982 European Parliament debate on seal for common words at least three characters long using NVivo 11. Please see Appendix Table 2 for a list of the 50 most frequently stated words. I pared down this list of words based on whether the word referred to a person, place, or thing (i.e., noun), or an action, event, or state of being (i.e., verb). Nouns speak to objects and subjects, and verbs speak to how to act in relation to objects and subjects. By examining frequently stated nouns and verbs, it is possible to elucidate the moral rationale for the seal ban and its exemption: nouns and verbs make evident the way different people and institutions should act towards seals, why, and how so.

However, after performing an initial contextual review of regularly mentioned nouns and verbs, I decided to narrow down the list even further to words that had a weighted percentage of 0.5 or higher and eliminate nouns and verbs that were titles or tied to multiple themes [i.e., "President" as an address, and "one" as a person or number, and "take" as "take" or consider an idea, or "could not take photographs" (Maij-Weggen in European Parliament 1983, p. 187)]. Last, "seal" and "seals" were the pre-set topic of debate, and not a theme that emerged from the debate, so I eliminated these words from analysis. Please see Table 1 for the list of top five frequently stated nouns and verbs that I analyzed.

I read words in the context of the statements they were contained in for thematic cues. Please see Appendix Table 3 for a list of thematic contexts. In a few cases the statement itself provided limited thematic cues because the speaker referenced previous statements, used sarcasm, or rhetorical strategies when stating the word. In these cases, to code thematic categories, I read the statement containing the word in question within the context of the paragraph to make sense of the message the word was conveying.[6]

Through this blend of content and discourse analysis, the European position that commercial seal hunting is in direct opposition with ethically appropriate cultural hunting practices of Inuit becomes transparent. The stance also becomes clear that MEPs must intervene with respect to the Common Market in order to protect Inuit and restore standards of decency. The emerging narrative is one of Europeans as post-colonial protectors of seals and people without recognition that the position itself is problematic.

Findings: saving Inuit from inauthenticity

The thematic context of different keywords in the debate illustrates that MEPs understand Inuit traditions to be antithetical to commercialism, and commercialism to be antithetical to animal welfare. Following "seal" and "seals," "species" is the most frequently cited word (n = 44) and is largely used in reference to seal extinction. (Please see Table 1 and Appendix Table 2.) Issues like extinction are pressing, real, and at the same time, a product of human knowledge and evolving discussions of this knowledge (Grande 1999; Hannigan 2006; see also Lockie 2006; Reid and Rout 2016), so examining how the death of seals is described as immanent helps to reveal European moral orientations. Seal "species" are described as potentially being at risk of extinction at some point in the future, which justifies intervening on their behalf. As one MEP stated:

> It is a problem of quantity because if we can accept that in the last few years, in given areas and in the case of certain species a definite increase in the population has been recorded, it must nevertheless be pointed out that these increases have taken place against the background of an extremely critical situation, after decades of constantly falling stocks, and we have no valid evidence for arguing that these increases constitute a definite reversal of the trend….But even if we can take the view that the general situation is one of broad equilibrium as regards total numbers of seals,

[6] For instance, in the following quote the second statement containing the word "hunting" references methods but the statement itself does not qualify if the methods in question are good, bad, neutral, or something else entirely. By reading the previous statement, it becomes clear that the methods of "hunting" are considered to be cruel: "Mr. President, I am sure that 20 years is enough time to have protested against an inhumane form of hunting which is degrading to both human being and animal alike. The European Community is partly responsible for these hunting methods since 75% of the products of these seals are sold on the Community market" (Maij-Weggen in European Parliament 1983, p. 185).

> though [it is] still an unstable equilibrium because it is not based on natural selection bur rather on artificial containment of the growth in numbers by the extermination of a certain number of animals (Ghergo in European Parliament 1983, p. 187).

Even though some seal species may not be at risk of extinction during the time of the debate, killing them involves "artificial[ly]" intervening in nature and threatening natural rhythms.

The context of the word "hunting" (n = 33) illustrates how seal extinction is a potential outcome of seal hunting, but only through one type of hunting. As the rapporteur stated, "Let me stress here that we are not complaining about the hunting practices of the traditional hunting peoples of the north; what we have in mind is the mass, industrialized hunt which goes on for between 4 and 5 weeks in each year" (Maij-Weggen in European Parliament 1983, p. 185). While the commercial hunt is described as potentially threatening the growth of seal species, traditional sealing is humane as "the Eskimos have always adopted a very responsible attitude to seal hunting and have never indulged in inhumane practices" (Maij-Weggen in European Parliament 1983, p. 185). Comments that appraise Inuit's "responsibility" and "indulgence" invoke noble savage stereotypes of simple people who live free from the burdens of modernity. Additional comments conform to this stereotype and paint a sweeping picture of Inuit living in meagre conditions. As one MEP stated, "the indigenous population of the polar regions…have a real problem of survival," so "limited and controlled hunting and trading should be authorized" in order "to take account of the economic interests" of traditional hunters (Scrivener in European Parliament 1983, p. 188).

Discussions around hunting involve distinguishing whether the seal hunt is a traditional act practiced by people who are trying to survive, or whether the seal hunt is a commercial activity marked by cruelty. That seal meat feeds communities, extra furs clothe consumers, and Inuit are very much a part of the modern economy is dismissed by statements explaining that the commercial hunt "is an industrialized form of hunting…and not a hunt that is necessary" (Squarcialupi in European Parliament 1983, p. 194). Questions of how the dynamics of the seal trade are involved in the "real problem of survival," and how hundreds of years of trading seal wares with Europeans can be "limited," "controlled," and "authorized" by Europeans are not asked, although most sealers are Inuit and the global prices of seal furs impact their standards of living (Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Audia 2014; Gombay 2010; Searles 2016; Simon 2009). If and how settlement has impacted Inuit hunters, or how local hunting processes and practices are carried out and on whose terms are also not examined.

The brutality of the commercial seal hunt itself is not debated. Instead, "authentic" hunters are described as holding to a certain standard of killing: "Hunting and hunters have their ethics and these are known to forbid the killing of young animals" (Beyer de Ryke in European Parliament 1983, p. 194). The young age of seal pups and some of the methods of their death are drawn on to describe what makes sealing cruel and brutal, despite the fact that (young) lambs and calves are regularly slaughtered for European consumers, and factory farming produces European meat (see O'Neill, forthcoming). Instead, in the context of sealing, industrial hunting is practiced by people who have no legitimate claim to sealing culture.

Furthermore, the actions of commercial hunters have created an historical legacy that is decided to circumvent alternative commercial sealing practices. As one MEP states:

> we might well wonder why less barbaric hunting methods were not developed sooner at a time when new techniques could no doubt have been found, but also—and this is perhaps the underlying reason—why the expenditure involved was not considered worthwhile (Scrivener in European Parliament 1983, p. 188).

Commercial sealing is likened to uncivilized, uncaring activities, and interest in earning money is likened to brutality and inauthenticity. Questions of how Inuit sealing practices involve commercial sales and how these sales are part of northern ways of life are sidelined by pitting money and cruelty against culture and tradition. As questions of money are suppressed, so are questions of who will be impacted by the ban and how so.

"People" (n = 30) refers to both legitimate and illegitimate hunters, and those who are actively trying to change sealing practices. Sealing is described as having a small economic benefit for most people: "As far as economics is concerned, undoubtedly considerable amounts of money are made by a few people involved in the seal hunt, for example, the large shipowners [sic] and pelt processors" (Johnson in European Parliament 1983, p. 189). The implication is that if levels of remuneration are low, then eliminating remuneration will likely not cause problems for the people who do not own large ships or processing plants.

When looking further at the use of the word "people," it becomes evident that the word is generally used to refer to those who are concerned with ending sealing, while Inuit are a "population." As one MEP explains, "It is pointless to kill baby seals. In reality, even if there is some justification for seal hunting by those population groups for whom seal hunting is a tradition…the only reason for the slaughtering of baby seals is the fur, which will be used for luxury coats and luxury goods" (Bombard in European Parliament 1983,

p. 193). Although other MEPs express concerns with how to prevent the Inuit population from experiencing negative effects from the ban, concerns about the Inuit population are expressed alongside concerns about preserving the seal "population" (n = 19). "Population" treats Inuit as countable and containable, something to be monitored from a distance. In this respect, the reference to the Inuit "population" versus "people" echoes historical policies and practices that targeted members of Indigenous communities for re-education, forced movement, and degradation (Chrisjohn et al. 2006; Daschuk 2015; Stevenson 2012; Tuhiwai Smith 2005).

Even though it has regularly revised sealing guidelines in response to public outcries and has its own questionable history of managing Indigenous "population[s]," the Canadian Government is described as not taking measures to minimize sealing cruelty, justifying European intervention. As one MEP said, "The Canadian Government, and I say this with great respect, has shown itself to be totally intransigent on this issue for decades" (Johnson in European Parliament 1983, p. 189). In contrast, the European Community understands "that there is a problem, and there are several issues within that problem that need the attention of the Parliament and of the European Community itself" (Collins in European Parliament 1983, p. 186).

The European Community (community, n = 29) recognizes that it is the largest market, and can tame the brutality of the commercial seal hunt by refusing seal products. "[T]he European Community has immense power in the market place of the world" and can use "its power to exert an influence on questions related to a humane care for animals" (Collins in European Parliament 1983, p. 186). In so doing, the European Parliament can guide "the way in which the European Community is seen outside the Community, and… those who perhaps have different views on the future and destiny of the European Community itself" (Collins in European Parliament 1983, p. 186). The European Parliament makes a statement to the world about its moral and market authority as it decides to discipline Canada and other sealing countries. Thus, the European Community is able to assert its moral and market authority during a time when the United States appears to be a stronger empire (Hansen 2002).

Interestingly enough, while the European community asserts its authority, there is no suggestion of how Inuit "communit[ies]" or "population" and/or Canadian sealing "community" are to readjust in the face of the ban. Instead, the theme is that Inuit sealers can be protected by Europeans, who can act to preserve the "traditional seal hunt":

> the indigenous population of the polar area must not be hindered in their traditional seal hunt. The Commission has already begun, on the basis of those suggestions, to make contact with the population groups of Greenland and now also with a delegation represented here from the Canadian North-West Territories in order to guarantee, in agreement with them, that the traditionally accepted use of the seal stocks will not be hindered by Community measures (Narjes in European Parliament 1983, p. 196).

That the delegation may have spoken with the Commission to protest the seal ban is not made obvious. That the delegation may have come to Europe after animal rights lobbies had invested considerable time and money into persuading MEPs to vote for the ban is also not made obvious.[7] Last, that that the delegation and its constituents may recognize European activities as a form of oppression, and/or argue that the ban and its exemption are problematic is not obvious. Instead, it is implied that all Inuit—as well as Members of European Parliament—agree on the importance of carrying out traditions.

The fact that traditions are practiced in historical–temporal context is not acknowledged. Sealing is performed by people who face multiple demands, including dealing with environmental changes, changing government programs and services, and balancing budgets (Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Audia 2014; Gombay 2009, 2010; Rennie 2014; Searles 2002, 2016; Simon 2009). Whose visions of tradition—and how context facilitates the ways traditions are practiced—are questions that go unasked in the debate. Instead, European interpretations of seal sustainability, what authentic hunting is, whose interests qualify as important, and what kinds of communities can address the ethics of sealing are drawn on in the debate to make sense of how to act towards seal and why.

Discussion: addressing and upholding injustices through trade

Although trade agreements can involve attempts to make financial reparations for historical injustices, the debate on the original ban on seal products and its exemption for Inuit-produced goods explicitly affirms the importance of protecting the Inuit from the nastiness of commercial trade. In the 1983 Directive, sealing is described as "a natural and legitimate occupation and in certain areas of the world forms an important part of the traditional way of life and economy" (Council of the European Communities 1983). Respecting cultural practices is part of the bedrock of Europe's post-colonial project to act on its unified identity "around peace, democracy and human rights" (Hansen 2002, p. 484). But

[7] Some have explained that it is difficult to advance changes in the humane treatment of animals because mutually shared concerns about ecology, human, and animal quality of life are ignored in favour of focusing on polarized positions between hunters and animal activists. Please see Arnaquq-Baril (2016); Audia (2014); and Knezevic (2009).

the fact that European Community (and later, EU) institutions can open and close the valves of the market based on their determinations of how members of Inuit communities should engage in cultural practices is not substantively interrogated. The use of the Common Market to structure trade in ways that preserve other peoples' cultures ignores the fact that white Canadians and European counterparts "have historically enjoyed, and continue to hold, decisive advantages over [A]boriginal people in all forms of institutional power" (Harding 2006, p. 205; see also Searles 2002; Tuhiwai Smith 2012; Anderson 2000).

Even if the exemption for Inuit-produced goods reflects changing attitudes towards Indigeneity, it still reflects the institutionalization of essentialized interpretations about who Inuit are and how they are supposed to act. The interpretation of what tradition is in the 1982 debate actively envisions what it means to be authentically Inuit, and how Inuit culture should be pursued. That some may practice traditions while paying heating bills, watching television, reading newspapers and buying supplies needed for hunting like snowmobiles, gas, and rifles, with hunting taking place far from home is not considered (Davidson 2015; Hughes 2015; Knezevic 2009; Searles 2002). Furthermore, that seal meat may be a precondition of hunting activities, as seal meat provides strength, energy, and bodily regulation needed to withstand the physical experience of northern hunting is also not considered (Searles 2002). Last, how communities' needs may vary by local context and region is not considered. Instead, the recognition of Inuit practices as cultural expressions of tradition becomes a way of mystifying a history of seal trade, as well as current uses of money.

The ways that people share objects of material culture, like food, are influenced by trade agreements. While profit-seeking by states and corporations is often the focus of sociological analysis, thornier questions of how people can share or sustain meaning through global trade need more exploration. In the case of the seal ban, it is decided that making a living is only meaningful if it involves measly returns for traditional activities, and that only barbarians should expect otherwise (see Scrivener in European Parliament 1983, p. 188; Johnson in European Parliament 1983, p. 188). In contrast, European expressions of culture, such as health-conscious consumption of omega-3 oils, furs and skins for the fashion-conscious, or even novel meats for exotic eaters is limited. It may seem that the seal ban and its exemption prevent further forced assimilation and exploitation, however, the review of the morality of the seal ban reveals that European ideas about who the Inuit are and how they should act recreates rather than remedies historical injustices.

Although research on the nutrition transition typically describes relative disposable income and exposure to markets as the lynch pins that shape people's diets, the Northern Food Crisis in sealing communities reflects the complexity of dietary reconstitution. Though members of Inuit communities may savour convenience foods, the seal ban and its exemption thwart opportunities to practice sealing, impeding, to different degrees, members' economic access to foods and self-provisioning efforts, and shaping dietary possibilities. Northern dietary changes may be tied to aggressive marketing, global subsidies and corporate control of the food system, but a refusal of wares is also marginalizing Inuit and narrowing their opportunities to express culinary customs however they see fit.

Conclusion

In 2015, the EU agreed to an Inuit-produced seal labelling scheme to improve the Inuit's access to European markets, suggesting that the possibility of change is underway (CBC News 2015). However, it is worthwhile to be cautious. Whether buying labelled-products involves strengthening food sovereignty or something more nefarious remains to be seen (Phillips 1999; Reid and Rout 2016; Tuhiwai Smith 2005; Waitt 2014). New trade agreements are being developed and may change the way that seal is traded, but this paper suggests that the moral orientation of future trade agreements will create a complex framework that culturally—and economically—orders communities in the world economy. It is difficult to know in advance how social relations will be meaningfully structured without examining "the substantive varieties of social relations" involved (Bandelj 2002, p. 414).

If we consider how different value-based orientations are normalized in trade, we can better understand how people are both drawn into being producers and/or consumers of nutrient-rich and poor foods. People can fight against the interpretations of who they are and how they should act, but must also contend with the daily act of survival. In the north, this fight can involve sorting through the garbage dump for grocery store food waste (Martens 2014), getting involved in electoral politics (Puxley 2015; Talaga 2015), as well as using social media to post photos wearing seal furs (i.e., "sealfies"), illustrating to audiences how life is lived with seals (Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Huffington Post 2014).

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Appendix

See Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2 Top 50 words stated in the 1982 European Parliament debate on sealing

Word	Count	Weighted percentage
Seal	100	1.89
Seals	66	1.25
President	57	1.08
Species	44	0.83
Commission	41	0.78
Also	35	0.66
Hunting	33	0.62
One	32	0.61
Like	30	0.57
People	30	0.57
Community	29	0.55
Population	28	0.53
Take	27	0.51
European	26	0.49
Report	25	0.47
World	25	0.47
Parliament	24	0.45
Fact	23	0.44
Point	22	0.42
Products	22	0.42
Resolution	22	0.42
Even	21	0.40
Maij	21	0.40
Measures	21	0.40
Mrs	21	0.40
Therefore	21	0.40
Weggen	21	0.40
Call	20	0.38
Canada	20	0.38
Make	20	0.38
Must	20	0.38
Monk	19	0.36
Now	19	0.36
Canadian	18	0.34
Million	18	0.34
Animals	17	0.32
Ban	17	0.32
Committee	17	0.32
Public	17	0.32
Think	17	0.32
Baby	16	0.30
Endangered	16	0.30
Fish	16	0.30
Hunt	16	0.30
Year	16	0.30
Group	15	0.28
Harp	15	0.28
Just	15	0.28
May	15	0.28
Trade	15	0.28

Table 2 (continued)

The kinds of words used to describe an issue illustrate the key subjects, objects, and actions at stake, as well as how the stakes are defined. I did not perform a contextual review of commonly used procedural and descriptive words [i.e. "President" as an address, and "one" as a person or number, and "take" as "take" perspectives into consideration, or "could not take photographs" (Maij-Weggen 1983, p. 187)]. Given that "seal" and "seals" were a pre-set topic of the agenda, after an initial review I decided not to perform a contextual analysis of these words (n = 166). Weighted percentage refers to the prevalence of words with respect to the total word tally

Table 3 Thematic context of each word in the 1982 European Parliament debate on banning seal products

Stated word and total count	Context of the word	Count of the frequency of the word per context
Species, n = 44	Seals as endangered creatures	38
	Extinction or predation of fish	3
	Endangered children	1
	Synonym for seal	2
Hunting, n = 33	Industrial, cruel, questionable practices	12
	Subsistence, traditional, Inuit activities and/or culture	9
	As a practice to be monitored	5
	Synonym for sealing	2
	Tourism, photographic interest	2
	Impact on fish stocks	2
	Grounds, place of sealing	1
People, n = 30	European and other citizens (including Canadians) against sealing	16
	Inuit	3
	Other citizens of the world who experience strife, war	3
	Industrial sealers	3
	Visitors who travelled to listen to the debate	2
	European People's Party	2
	MEPs and debate contributors	1
Community, n = 29	European community	27
	Scientific community	1
	Canadian community	1
Population, n = 28	Number of seals	19
	Inuit people	7
	Greek citizens and government	1
	Lobby groups opposed to sealing	1

I reviewed the context of each word for thematic categories. The statement words were contained in typically indicated thematic context. With the word "species," in a few cases the statement itself provided limited thematic cues because the speaker used sarcasm or rhetorical strategies when stating the word. In these cases, to code thematic categories, I read the statement containing the word "species" within the context of the paragraph

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