NUNAVUT: INUIT SELF-DETERMINATION THROUGH A LAND CLAIM AND PUBLIC GOVERNMENT?

by Jack Hicks[*] and Graham White[**], August 2000

Table of Contents

---

* Director of Audit, Evaluation and Statistics, Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Government of Nunavut. (Formerly Director of Research, Nunavut Implementation Commission.) The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author, and should not be attributed to the author's employer. e-mail: jhicks@nunanet.com

** Professor of Political Science, University of Toronto. e-mail: gwhite@chass.utoronto.ca

The authors dedicate this work to the memory of Laura Udluriaq Gauthier (1970-2000). Those who knew her will understand why.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nunavut[1] means "our land" in Inuktitut, the language of the Inuit, the aboriginal people of Canada's eastern and central Arctic.[2] It symbolises how directly the creation of a new territory north of the tree-line emerged from Inuit political and cultural aspirations. Nunavut is an attempt by the large Inuit majority to regain control over their lives and to ensure their survival and development as a people.

Roughly 85 per cent of Nunavut's population are Inuit, so that although it has a 'public government' – in which all residents, Inuit and non-Inuit, can participate – Nunavut is primarily about Inuit needs and Inuit approaches to governance. As such, the political dynamics and the operation of government in Nunavut raise crucial questions about how state structures and political processes can better reflect the nature of society and economy. With its distinctive people, geography, economy and government, Nunavut differs fundamentally from other Canadian provinces and territories. Accordingly, while Nunavut's population may be barely that of a small city in southern Canada, the emerging issues of politics and governance there are of wide interest and import.

Foreign observers – and, truth be told, some Canadians – who are aware of the extensive powers that the creation of Nunavut represents for Inuit sometimes believe that Nunavut entails a separation from Canada and the establishment of an independent Inuit state. This is not simply a misunderstanding; it misses a particularly noteworthy aspect of the Nunavut project – one that may make Nunavut something of an example, as well as an inspiration, for aboriginal peoples around the world.

Nunavut is and will remain very much part of the Canadian federation. Moreover, although important operational and design features will distinguish the Government of Nunavut from those of other territories and provinces, Nunavut will be a fairly conventional jurisdiction within the Canadian context. Nunavut will be different by virtue of its strong Inuit majority and its focus on the survival and development of Inuit culture, but its accommodation of Inuit aspirations will take place squarely within the four corners of established Canadian forms of governance.

---

1 Pronounced 'NOO-na-voot'. The name of the capital, Iqaluit, is pronounced 'ee-KAL-oo-eet'.

2 For useful overviews of Canadian Inuit and Inuktitut, see: Louis-Jacques Dorais, "The Canadian Inuit and their language", in: Dirmid R.F. Collis (ed.), Arctic Languages: An Awakening (Paris: UNESCO, 1990), pp. 185-289; and "Inuit", in: Paul R. Magocsi (ed.), Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples (Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 47-56.

It is fair to add that Canada is one of the most decentralised federations in the world and its subnational units – provinces and territories – exercise a remarkable degree of political and policy-making autonomy from the central government in Ottawa. As well, Canada is a wealthy country and can afford financial support for Nunavut that other countries could not manage. Still, the creation of Nunavut carries important, broadly applicable lessons. After all, Canada is an essentially conservative country, not given to flights of constitutional fancy, yet willing to experiment within broad limits. Put differently, the Nunavut 'package' – the provisions of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, and the resulting division of the Northwest Territories and the creation of the Nunavut territory and the Government of Nunavut – was designed to both accommodate Inuit self-government aspirations yet fit comfortably within established traditions of mainstream Canadian governance. It is not a radical departure.[3]

Another key lesson to be drawn from the Nunavut project is the extent to which major change in the situations of aboriginal peoples can indeed occur if sufficient will exists – both political will and determination on the part of the aboriginal people and good will and flexibility on the part of those in positions of political authority.

As Peter Jull has noted, 'regional agreements' such as Nunavut may be "a means for indigenous people to begin to solve … problems which … police and paternalism will not and cannot".[4] Nunavut is one of a series of 'regional agreements' which Inuit have been able to negotiate into existence in many (but not yet all) parts of the Arctic.

> In recent decades, the Inuit have regained a high degree of control over their lands and experienced widespread cultural and political renewal. They now have what may be a unique opportunity: a chance to create a self-sustaining economy in a region relatively insulated from the intense population and resource pressures that jeopardize indigenous cultures in so many other parts of the world. In this respect, the Inuit represent a 'best case' scenario for indigenous development. And yet the tumultuous social changes, the controversial politics of hunting (the Inuit's primary economic activity), and the uncertainties of resource exploitation in the delicate Arctic environment – all of these factors make the Inuit cultural renaissance still a very uncertain affair. That uncertainty is compounded by global environmental pressures, which are now working fundamental changes in Arctic ecosystems. In both cultural and natural terms, the far north may be on the verge of profound transition.[5]

---

[3] Readers unfamiliar with the evolution of Canadian state policy regarding indigenous peoples may benefit from: Frances Abele, Katherine A. Graham, and Allan M. Maslove, "Negotiating Canada: Changes in aboriginal policy over the last thirty years", in: Leslie A. Pal (ed.) How Ottawa Spends 1999-2000 (Ottawa ON, Carleton University Press, 1999), pp. 251-92; and Peter J. Usher, Frank J. Tough, and Robert M. Galois, "Reclaiming the land: Aboriginal title, treaty rights, and land claims in Canada", Applied Geography 12:2, 1992, pp. 109-32.

[4] Peter Jull, "Lessons from the Canadian experience", Indigenous Affairs 1997:1, p. 41.

[5] Lisa Mastny, "Coming to terms with the Arctic, World Watch January/February 2000.

After briefly sketching Nunavut's geography, society and economy, and providing a summary of Nunavut's history and an account of the principal features of the Inuit land claim, we will examine government and politics in Nunavut with special emphasis on state-society linkages. In doing so we will try to focus on two central issues: first, the prospect that the new regime in Nunavut will generate significant local control over the political and economic processes that affect its people's lives; and second, the extent to which the design and operation of the state in Nunavut does in fact incorporate the values and perspectives of its people. These are, of course, universal themes but they are particularly highlighted in Nunavut because of the distinctiveness of Inuit culture and because no other Canadian attempt at aboriginal self-government has anything like the scope and magnitude of the Nunavut project.

Our discussion and conclusions on these matters are necessarily preliminary, not least because as we write, Nunavut has only existed for a year. Nonetheless, the opportunities and the problems confronting Nunavut and its people, as well as the need for Canadians outside the north to understand them, are sufficiently clear to warrant analysis as the Government of Nunavut is still in its early days.

This chapter brings a political economy approach to bear on the question of why and how Nunavut came to be, and what it means. This requires analysis of somewhat different issues and linkages than is often the case, as political economy incorporates a range of approaches, which view societies as structured by specific power relations, and economies as socially and politically embedded.

Although it is clear that Nunavut is, in important respects, economically dependent on southern Canada, we do not root our analysis in the 'dependency theory' that dominates the writings of many Canadian political economists. Given the tendency of Canadian analysts to focus on the degree to which Canada is allegedly 'dependent' on the United States, it is not surprising that the Canadian north is often described simply as being 'dependent' on southern Canada. Dependency theory recognises that political and economic relationships are the products of inequitable historical relations, but as Philip O'Brien has observed with regard to Latin America "dependency can easily become a pseudo-concept which explains everything in general and hence nothing in particular".[6]

---

[6] Philip O'Brien, "A critique of Latin American theories of dependency", in: Ivar Oxaal et al. (eds.), Beyond the Sociology of Development (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 12. For a critique of other social science concepts as they have been applied to aboriginal peoples, see: Tony Kaliss, "What was the 'other' that came on Columbus's ships? An interpretation of the writing about the interaction between northern native peoples in Canada and the United States and the 'other'", Journal of Indigenous Studies 3:2, 1997, pp. 27-42; and "Europeans and native peoples: A comparison of the policies of the United States and Soviet/ Russian governments towards the native peoples on both sides of the Bering Strait", his unpublished 1999 Ph.D. thesis in American Studies at the University of Hawaii.

Dependency approaches also tend to obscure the opportunity for agency. Any description of how dependent the Canadian Arctic is on fiscal transfers from the federal government should also recognise that – and be capable of explaining how – a highly 'dependent' people managed to negotiate one of the most sweeping aboriginal rights and self-government packages in North America.[7]

[7] For a critique of dependency theory applied to aboriginal peoples in the current economic order, see: Deborah Simmons, "After Chiapas: Aboriginal lands and resistance in the new North America", Canadian Journal of Native Studies 19:1, 1998, and "Against capital: The political economy of aboriginal resistance in Canada", her unpublished 1995 Ph.D. thesis in Social and Political Thought at York University. Simmons advocates an approach which accounts for the historical significance of aboriginal struggles within a global political economy, a method which allows for a material analysis of the linkages between such struggles on an international scale.

2. NUNAVUT – A PROFILE

Geography

At more than 2.1 million square kilometres, Nunavut encompasses 23 per cent of Canada's land mass. The new territory is substantially larger than Québec (Canada's largest province), three times the size of Texas, ten times larger than Britain, and roughly the size of continental Europe. It is so large that, if independent, it would rank as the world's twelfth largest country.

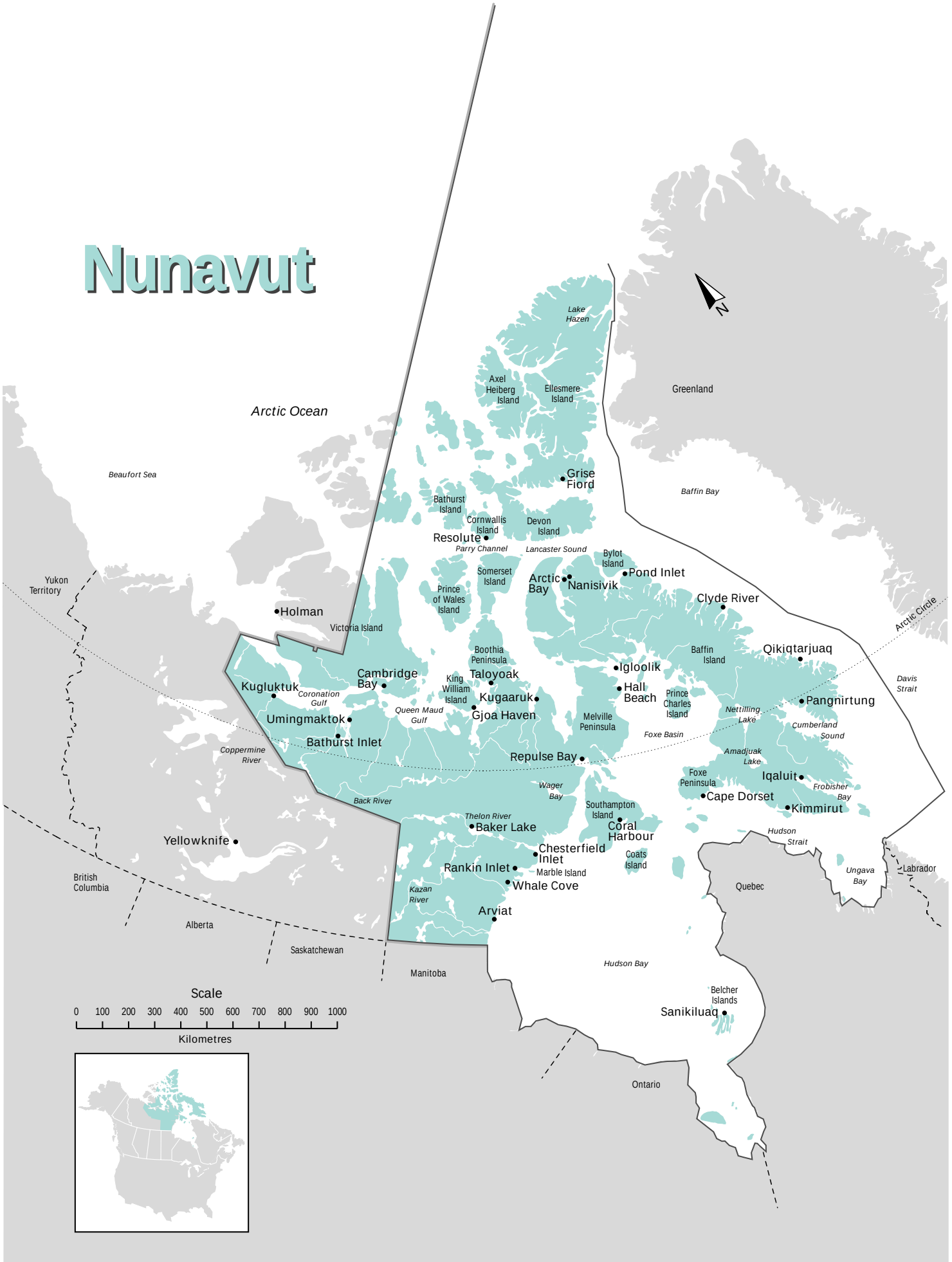
Its western boundary with the Northwest Territories runs north from the intersection of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border with the sixtieth parallel, roughly follows the tree-line (beyond which the climate is too harsh for trees) north-west to the Arctic Ocean, then cuts east and north through the western Arctic islands. The curious route of the northwestern part of the boundary, which bisects several large islands, reflects the boundaries established for the land claim of the Inuvialuit (the Inuit of the Mackenzie Delta). To the east, Nunavut's boundary is that of the pre-division Northwest Territories.

These boundaries illustrate that even as the creation of Nunavut represents increased Inuit control over their lives, it sets important limits on that control. Nunavut's boundaries derive from a 1993 land claim settlement (described in greater detail below) in which Inuit agreed to surrender significant aboriginal rights in exchange for (among other things) establishment of their long-sought after homeland. Moreover, Nunavut's artificial boundaries attest to the practical compromises Inuit have had to make. First, Nunavut does not include all the lands traditionally used by the people we can now call Nunavut Inuit, which extended into northern Manitoba and beyond Nunavut's western boundary.[8] Secondly, the Nunavut project is about enhancing the political autonomy of the Inuit in the eastern and central parts of the Northwest Territories, so that the substantial numbers of Inuit in Nunavik (northern Québec) and Labrador, many of whom share close ties with Nunavut Inuit, are excluded by virtue of turn-of-the-century judicial and political decisions, imposed on Inuit without their knowledge let alone consent. The Inuvialuit are also outside the boundaries of Nunavut.[9]

---

[8] Nunavut's boundaries also include areas that were historically used by Dene of northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan as well as of the Northwest Territories.

[9] The Inuit of Nunavik are a party to the 1975 James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA), which was negotiated in haste between the Government of Canada, the province of Québec, and the Cree and Inuit of northern Québec following the commencement of large-scale hydroelectric development by Hydro-Québec. The Inuvialuit negotiated the 1984 Inuvialuit Final Agreement in the face of similarly threatening oil and gas development. The Nunavut land claim was therefore the first modern land claim to have been negotiated in circumstances where the aboriginal people were not negotiating 'under the gun'.


Nunavut
N
Lake Hazen
Axel Heiberg Island
Ellesmere Island
Greenland
Arctic Ocean
Beaufort Sea
Baffin Bay
Grise Fiord
Bathurst Island
Cornwallis Island
Devon Island
Resolute
Parry Channel
Lancaster Sound
Bylot Island
Pond Inlet
Somerset Island
Arctic Bay
Nanisivik
Clyde River
Prince of Wales Island
Yukon Territory
Holman
Victoria Island
Arctic Circle
Boothia Peninsula
Baffin Island
Qikiqtarjuaq
Igloolik
Cambridge Bay
Taloyoak
King William Island
Kugluktuk
Coronation Gulf
Hall Beach
Prince Charles Island
Davis Strait
Kugaaruk
Pangnirtung
Queen Maud Gulf
Gjoa Haven
Melville Peninsula
Nettilling Lake
Umingmaktok
Foxe Basin
Cumberland Sound
Bathurst Inlet
Coppermine River
Repulse Bay
Amadjuak Lake
Iqaluit
Foxe Peninsula
Wager Bay
Frobisher Bay
Cape Dorset
Back River
Southampton Island
Kimmirut
Thelon River
Baker Lake
Coral Harbour
Hudson Strait
Yellowknife
Chesterfield Inlet
Coats Island
Ungava Bay
Labrador
Rankin Inlet
Marble Island
Quebec
British Columbia
Whale Cove
Kazan River
Arviat
Alberta
Saskatchewan
Hudson Bay
Manitoba
Belcher Islands
Sanikiluaq
Ontario
Scale
0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000
Kilometres

Nunavut's physical features vary substantially, from the essentially flat (but grievously misnamed) 'barrenlands' west of Hudson Bay to the soaring mountains and spectacular fiords of Baffin and Ellesmere Islands. Climatic variations also exist, though winters are everywhere long and severe; at best the ice in most of Nunavut's harbours and waterways does not break up until July, permitting only a limited period of shipping and navigation before fall freeze-up.

All Nunavut communities, with the single exception of Baker Lake, are located beside the sea – reflecting the importance of marine mammals in the traditional Inuit economy. By southern standards, communities are very isolated; Nunavut has virtually no roads so transportation is primarily by air, which is extremely expensive.[10] Bulk goods are usually shipped in from the south during the summer 'sea-lift'. Consequently, the small local markets, high cost of transportation and harsh conditions make for very high living costs. Residents in Nunavut may pay twice as much for groceries as people in the south, while construction costs are proportionately even higher.

Demography

Few parts of the globe are as sparsely populated as Nunavut, whose population was just 27,000 when it came into existence on April 1, 1999.[11] The population is spread out among 25 incorporated communities – one 'town' and 24 'hamlets'. The capital, Iqaluit, is by far the largest community with a population fast approaching 5,000; Rankin Inlet has 2,200 residents and eight other communities have populations over 1,000. Eight Nunavut communities have populations between 500 and 1,000, and seven more have populations below 500. There are also two tiny settlements in the western part of the territory, and in the Baffin region a few dozen people live in small 'outpost camps' distant from the communities.[12]

---

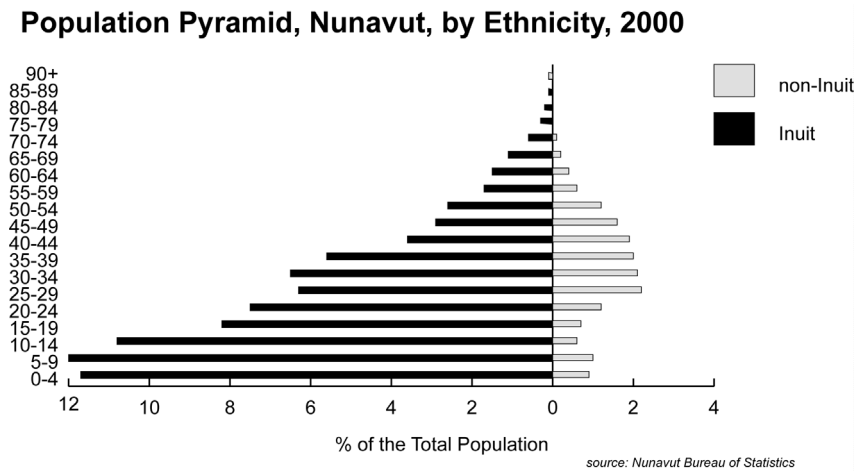
[10] At the time of writing a regular economy return airfare from Iqaluit to Ottawa costs $2,068, and a similar ticket from Iqaluit to Cambridge Bay return costs $3,865.

[11] If Denmark had the same population density as Nunavut, it would be home to just 561 people!

[12] Under the Government of the Northwest Territories, the area which is now Nunavut was organized into three administrative regions: Baffin, with roughly 50 per cent of the population; Keewatin (or Kivalliq), with roughly 30 per cent of the population; and Kitikmeot, with roughly 20 per cent of the population. The community of Holman was within the Kitikmeot administrative region, but because it is situated outside the Nunavut Settlement Area it remained part of the Northwest Territories when Nunavut was created. The population of Nanisivik, a mine with an adjacent town site, has no municipal government and is therefore not regarded as a 'community' – although its resident population of just under 300 is usually included in territorial totals. Temporary residents at the Lupin and Polaris 'fly-in/fly-out' mines are not counted as residents of the territory, nor are temporary residents at the Environment Canada meteorological station at Eureka or the Canadian Forces installation at Alert (both of which are on Ellesmere Island).

Roughly 85 per cent of Nunavut's people are Inuit. Non-Inuit are concentrated in the regional centres of Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay, and at the Nanisivik mine, so that many of the smaller communities are more than 95 per cent Inuit.

The Inuit population is significantly younger in composition than the non-Inuit population, which is largely made up of people between the ages of 25 and 50 who are working temporarily in Nunavut.

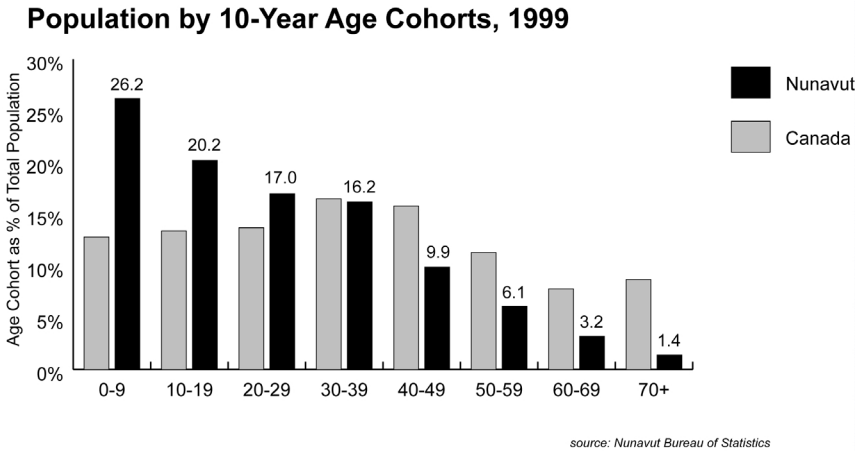


Nunavut's population growth rate is more than three times the national average. Between the Census years 1991 and 1996, the population of Nunavut grew by 16.4 per cent compared to 5.7 per cent nationally. Most of this growth is due to natural increase.

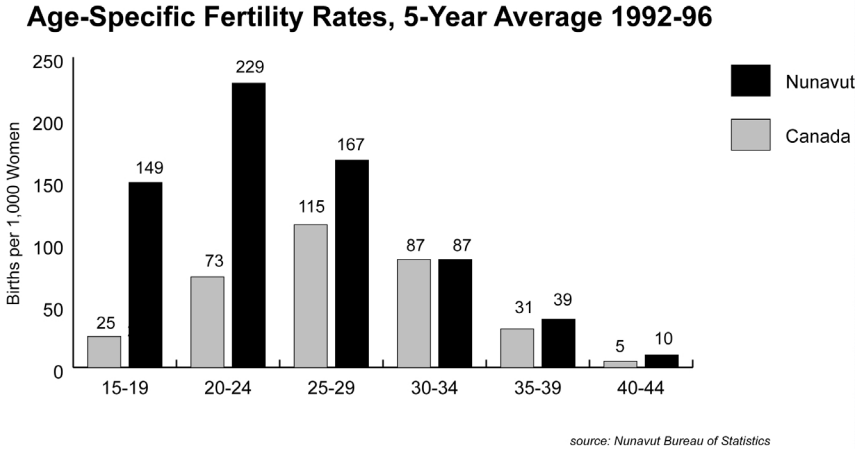
At 30 live births per 1,000 population (in 1996), birth rates among Nunavut Inuit reflect a population undergoing a historic demographic transition. Inuit were historically a society with both a high birth rate and a high mortality rate. The mortality rate fell sharply when medical care was made available in the communities, however the decline in the birth rate began later and has been more gradual.

As a result, Nunavut's age structure is dramatically different from the Canadian average. 41 per cent of Nunavut Inuit are under 15 years of age, compared to 20 per cent for the population of Canada as a whole; and 60 per cent of Nunavut Inuit are under 25 years of age, compared to 38 per cent for the population of Canada as a whole. Conversely, less than three per cent of Nunavut Inuit are 65 years of age and over, compared to 12 per cent nationally.[13]

[13] It is worth noting, however, that as the population ages in the next ten years the largest percentage growth in population is likely to occur among those 65 years of age and over. The population aged 10 to 24 years of age will also increase substantially, impacting high school and post-secondary education programs.



Young women in Nunavut have dramatically higher fertility rates than the Canadian population as a while – almost six times higher than the national average for women 15 to 19 years old.



Nunavut's overall birth rate has fallen steadily since 1986, however, and is now below the rate maintained by Canada as a whole during the 'baby boom' years of the 1950s.

Both the rapid population growth and the unusual age structure have enormous social and economic consequences. Simply maintaining existing levels of social services, housing, education and job creation in the face of such enormous population pressure is a huge challenge.

The formal educational attainment of Nunavut residents is significantly lower than the national average, but some of the difference is due to the age differences in the two populations. There is a very strong inverse relationship between age and education in Nunavut – older Inuit tend to have little formal

education, but as the present population ages Nunavut's overall level of formal education will rise. Already, between the 1986 and 1996 Census years the proportion of Nunavut adults with less than Grade 9 education declined by more than 40 per cent while the proportion with some post-secondary education more than doubled.

Economy

Nunavut can best be described as having a 'mixed economy', wherein households combine cash income from a variety of sources (wages, social transfers, arts and crafts production) with income in kind from the land, shifting their efforts from one sector to another as conditions dictate.

The 'mixed economy' of today is a culturally-appropriate adaptation to dynamic but uneven economic opportunities; the result of a long history of economic adaptation by Inuit – and other aboriginal peoples in Canada:

> Incomers relied on natives for information, for indigenous technology for survival and travel, and for labour, before oversees investors made continuous commitments of men, capital, and goods to remote regions. Such partnerships, whether equal or not, allowed aboriginal societies in contact with Euro-Americans to retain essential elements of their ideology, social structure, and way of life even when superficially subordinated to a nonindigenous system of production.[14]

Until as recently as the 1960s, most Nunavut Inuit lived in multifamily hunting groups, largely depending for food, fuel and shelter on marine mammals (especially seals) and caribou. Today most Inuit families continue to engage in considerable harvesting of the naturally occurring resources of the land and sea, in addition to earning wage income and receiving transfer payments from the state. Extended families pool and share food, cash and labour as required. Market and non-market activities are mutually supportive and operate simultaneously, with the household being the primary unit of production, distribution and consumption.

The continued economic importance of harvesting to Inuit has historically been downplayed by government policy makers, yet harvesting remains one of the most important economic activities in most Nunavut communities:

---

[14] Philip Goldring, "Inuit economic responses to Euro-American contacts: Southeast Baffin Island, 1824-1940", Historical Papers/*Communications Historiques* 1986, p. 252.

> Despite the changes in the domain of hunting following the integration of [Inuit] into the international market-economy and their transition to settlement life, hunting has not vanished. Although it is no longer a strict necessity for survival and although not all adult males are full-time engaged in hunting, some not even part of the time, hunting is still a characteristic aspect of [Inuit] life, not only in the outpost camps but also in the settlement. People … discuss hunting trips on the local radio, on the streets, in stores or at home. Hunters can be seen returning from or going on a hunt almost daily. People may gather around a hunter's booty at the beach or on the streets. Hunters invite relatives and others to come and get a share of their meat. Fish, seal, caribou or other chunks of meat are found on the floor of many houses. Skins are found everywhere in and around the settlement, drying in the sun and wind. The yearly migration to the hunting camps in the spring and summer are indicative of the fact that the [Inuit] have retained strong ties with the land. The attachment to hunting is also revealed by the fact that many who are employed mainly work to get money to buy hunting equipment.[15]

Detailed data on wildlife harvesting in Nunavut is being collected by the Nunavut Wildlife Harvest Survey undertaken by the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, but results from this survey will not be made public until the five-year data collection period wraps up in the summer of 2001.[16]

In terms of its dollar value, the traditional hunting, trapping and fishing economy is of limited significance. Commercial fisheries off the east coast of Baffin Island are increasing in importance,[17] and the harvesting of caribou for export and similar endeavours hold some promise for development,[18] but both are ultimately limited in scale (despite the often wildly optimistic expectations that some people have for this sector).

---

[15] Willem C.E. Rasing, "Hunting for identity: Thoughts on the practice of hunting and its significance for Iglulingmiut identity", in: Jarich G. Oosten and Cornelius H. W. Remie (eds.), Arctic Identities: Continuity and Change in Inuit and Saami Societies, (Leiden: School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, Universiteit Leiden, 1999), pp. 95-6.

[16] The purpose of the Nunavut Wildlife Harvest Survey is to establish current harvesting levels, establish the 'basic needs levels' required by Inuit communities, and contribute to the sound management and utilisation of wildlife resources. 6,250 harvesters are taking part in the survey, of whom 2,000 self-describe their harvesting activity as 'intensive' or 'active' (meaning that they regularly engage in all or some of the major harvesting activities over the course of a year, making more than just day-trips or the occasional weekend 'on the land') and 4,250 self-describe their harvesting activity as 'occasional'.

[17] The landed value of shrimp harvested in Nunavut waters is perhaps $20 million, with $2 million in direct economic benefits to Nunavut. Nunavut's offshore groundfish industry has been less successful, the primary barrier being the fact that Nunavut must share adjacent resources with other Canadians but is not allowed to compete on an equal or consistent basis with them. Other Canadian fishing enterprises have multi-species groundfish licences that allow them to balance their fishing plan in both adjacent and non-adjacent waters throughout the year, thus ensuring economic viability and self-sufficiency. For its offshore fisheries to succeed, Nunavut must have fair and equal access to shared Canadian resources. Many communities also have commercial Arctic char fisheries. Nunavut's inshore fisheries for char and turbot generate income for several hundred people, but these fisheries have limited growth potential.

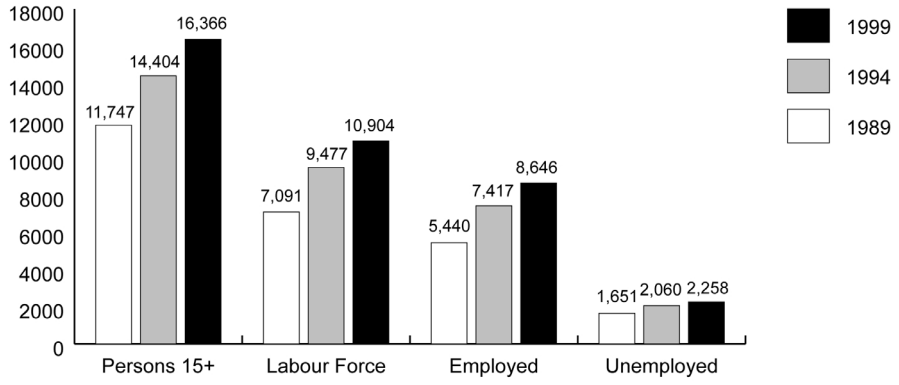
[18] Nunavut is home to perhaps 1.5 million caribou; more than 50 for every man, woman and child in the territory.

Yet measuring hunting and fishing activities simply in terms of wages paid or sales generated is highly misleading. Particularly in the smaller communities, a significant proportion of food comes directly from the land. This 'country food' is fresher and more nutritious than extremely expensive frozen meat flown in from Ottawa or Winnipeg. The 'replacement value' of country food harvested by Nunavut Inuit has been estimated at between $30 and $35 million per year.

Moreover, hunting and fishing have tremendous cultural importance – both for individual Inuit for whom going 'on the land' is crucial to their identity and for communities whose traditional values and social ties are reinforced by the hunt itself and the sharing of the harvest.[19]

Turning to the wage economy, the decade leading up to the creation of Nunavut saw significant growth not just in the size of the adult population, but also in the size of the labour force and especially in the numbers of persons employed.[20]

Change in Labour Force Counts, 1989/94/99



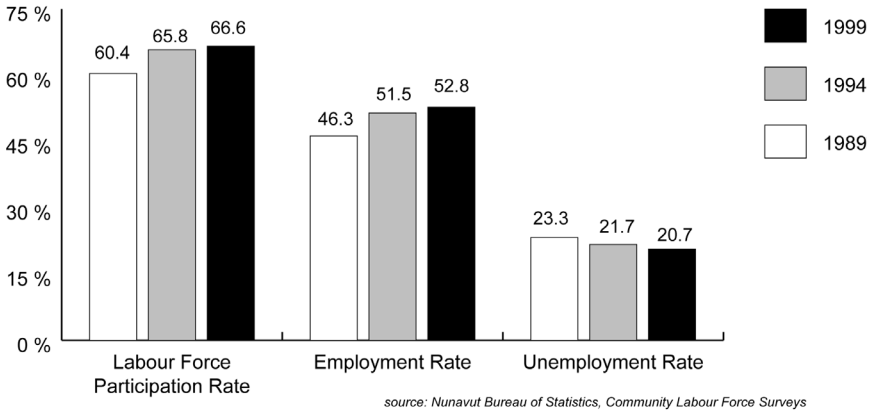
source: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, Community Labour Force Surveys

[19] See: Laurie-Anne White's unpublished 2000 M.A. thesis in Geography at Concordia University, "Economy and economic relations of an Inuit *ilagiit* (extended family) in Kangiqtugaapik (Clyde River) – A case study".

[20] Data from: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, 1999 Community Labour Force Survey: Overall Results and Basic Tables (Iqaluit, 1999). 'Labour force participation rate' is a measures of the extent to which residents of working age (age 15 and over) are either working or seeking work.

When it came into existence in 1999, Nunavut had an overall labour force participation rate 66.6 per cent and an overall unemployment rate of 20.7 per cent. (At that time Canada as a whole had a 64.5 per cent labour force participation rate and an 8.5 per cent unemployment rate.)

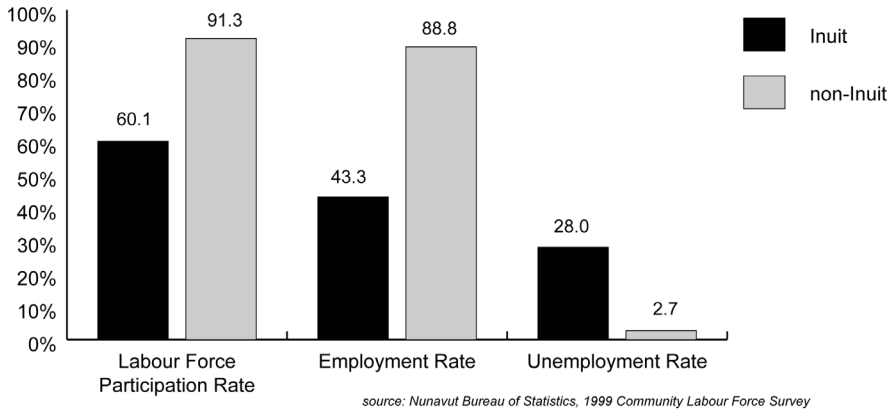
Change in Labour Force Measures, 1989/94/99



source: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, Community Labour Force Surveys

There is a dramatic difference in employment and unemployment rates by ethnicity. Nunavut Inuit had a 60.1 per cent labour force participation rate and a 28.0 per cent unemployment rate, while the non-Inuit population had 91.3 per cent participation and only 2.7 per cent unemployment rates. Simply put, most non-Inuit are in Nunavut to work – and when their work ends, for whatever the reason or case, they leave.

Labour Force Measures, by Ethnicity, 1999

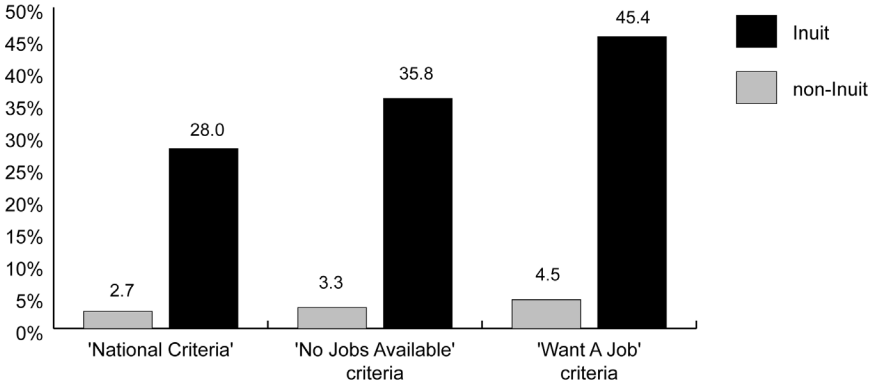


source: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, 1999 Community Labour Force Survey

These unemployment rates are based on Canada-wide criteria that are not very appropriate to small Inuit communities – people have to be without work and also have 'actively looked for work in the previous four weeks'. Using a more appropriate criteria – adding 'had not looked for work because they perceived

no jobs to be available' to the standard criteria, or simply asking people if they want a job – raises the Inuit unemployment rate significantly but leaves the non-Inuit unemployment rate almost unchanged.

Alternative Unemployment Rates, by Ethnicity, 1999



source: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, Community Labour Force Survey

There are also significant differences in employment and unemployment rates between the larger, medium-sized and smaller communities. More than 65 per cent of the adult population of the three regional centres had a job in 1999, while less than 35 per cent of the adult population of Clyde River and Gjoa Haven were employed. The regional centres experienced the greatest growth in employment in the 1990s, and ended the decade with a combined unemployment rate of 11.9 per cent. The fourteen small communities need to employ a significant percentage of their population simply to provide basic services but have limited other job prospects; they ended the decade with an unemployment rate twice that of the regional centres. The eight medium-sized communities, however, experienced the greatest growth in unemployment in the 1990s – and ended the decade with an unemployment rate of 29 per cent.[21]

Nunavut's economy depends to an extraordinary degree on government. Well over half the territory's jobs are in the public sector and many others, in service and construction for example, are (directly or indirectly) dependent on government activity. (Public sector employment involves far more than government bureaucrats; teachers and health care workers are important – and numerous – examples of para-public sector employees.) In some communities, only a handful of private sector jobs exist. Inuit hold a substantial number of public sector jobs, but far fewer than their proportion of the overall population warrants. Not only have no Nunavut Inuit become doctors, but there are no Inuit nurses in Nunavut either. Moreover, the higher-paying and professional jobs in the public sector have tended to be

[21] Igloolik had the highest unemployment rate, at 41 per cent. It was these realities which led the Nunavut Implementation Commission to recommend locating as many jobs as possible in the medium-sized communities.

occupied by non-Inuit – although this situation is changing significantly with the creation of the Government of Nunavut and the other bodies arising out of the land claim. A major goal of the Nunavut land claim and the creation of the Government of Nunavut is ensuring representative Inuit participation throughout the public sector.[22]

Government is a central economic force in another sense, the overall level of public subsidy of the economy. Precisely how this subsidy takes place is quite telling. The residents of Nunavut have the ***lowest*** economic dependency ratio – the standard measure of dependence on government – of any provincial/territorial jurisdiction in Canada. How can this be? Statistics Canada defines 'economic dependency' as being total transfer payments to individuals divided by their total income. While the overall level of Social Assistance payments grew rapidly during the 1980s and 1990s, especially in the Baffin region[23], they are still just a fraction of the region's wage income. The levels of other types of transfer payments to individuals are also lower than in the rest of the country. The result is that people who are without jobs in the wage economy exist on very limited amounts of cash – and rely heavily on the sharing of food and money within extended families and on highly subsidised housing provided by the territorial government. So while they may live in a highly subsidised society, as individual economic actors Nunavimmiut are very dependent on the wage income that they – and/or the other members of their families – earn.

Nunavut's economic realities – inextricably intertwined subsistence and cash sectors operating in a context of overwhelming dependence on spending by the national government – are thus similar to those of other Arctic jurisdictions:

> … three elements – resources, place, and public programs reflecting [national] social standards – combine in ways that make government the dominant force in the cash economy in rural-bush Alaska. It dominates by paying people to work, and by transferring cash in many other ways. Its dominance is permanent. The private sector will never create enough jobs for rural-bush residents because, except under special circumstances, the resources are not abundant enough, they are too costly to exploit, their world price is too low, the prospects for adding value locally are too limited, and the markets are too distant.[24]

---

[22] See: Article 23 ('Inuit Employment within Government') of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Iqaluit in particular is experiencing a dynamic which Nuuk, the capital of Greenland, experienced after the establishment of Home Rule in 1979 – the number of Inuit employed by government is increasing at the same time as the total number of non-Inuit employed by government is increasing as well. Self-government in both cases has resulted in an increase in the non-Inuit population.

[23] Between the 1990/91 and 1995/96 fiscal years, Social Assistance payments increased by 105 per cent in the Baffin region – compared to 52 per cent in the Keewatin region and 30 per cent in the Kitikmeot region.

[24] David L. Marshall, "The economy of rural-bush Alaska: Structure, issues and prospects", in: Alaska Public Policy Issues: Background and Perspectives (Juneau AK: The Denali Press, 1999), pp. 47-8.

Private sector economic activity in Nunavut today is dominated by resource extraction. At present Nunavut's three mines produce lead/zinc (Nanisivik and Polaris) and gold (Lupin); one diamond property (Jericho) and two more gold properties (West Meliadine and Boston) are on the cusp of development; and extensive exploration and development work is underway for other precious and base metals as well as for diamonds and uranium.[25] Vast reserves of oil and gas lie beneath the Arctic Ocean, but the tremendous logistical and environmental difficulties of extracting these resources and transporting them to southern markets have thus far prevented sustained efforts at developing them.

Mines in Nunavut – current and prospective – are owned and operated by large southern Canadian or foreign multinational firms. With the exception of the early North Rankin Nickel Mine,[26] Inuit have held relatively few of the often highly paid mining jobs in Nunavut. Indeed, many of the workers at the current mines do not live in Nunavut in any real sense – they fly in from southern centres like Montréal or Edmonton for two or three weeks of intense work and then fly home for their time off. Sections of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement are intended to remedy this situation somewhat for future mines.

Transportation, construction and retail trade are the next most important sectors of the Nunavut economy. Since the mines are largely self-contained, in important ways it is in these sectors that southern capital is most evident and exerts its most direct influence on Nunavut society. Companies in these sectors, both the larger firms headquartered in southern Canada and smaller, locally owned enterprises, have long been predominantly owned and operated by non-Inuit. Inuit-owned companies are becoming increasingly important players, however, as money from the land claim is channelled by Inuit organisations into long-term economic development projects. The Nunavut Construction Corporation (NCC), for example, is a consortium of Inuit-owned firms building and leasing many of the office buildings and other infrastructure needed by the Government of Nunavut.

The largest Inuit-owned companies are the 'birthright development corporations' collectively owned by all Nunavut Inuit through their land claims organisations. While these firms are especially concerned about hiring and training Inuit, they must still be understood as essentially capitalist enterprises, not least for their role in fostering economic divisions in Inuit society that are strongly linked to political power: "although the development corporations are becoming increasingly important as employers of Inuit, their

---

[25] See: Jack Hicks, "Mining the Canadian Arctic: Experiences relevant to potential developments in Greenland", in: *Udvalget om socioøkonomiske virkninger ad olie- og gasudvinding samt mineralindustri* (Committee on the Socioeconomic Impacts of Oil and Gas Exploitation and the Mining Industry) (eds.), *Socio-økonomiske Virkninger af Råstofudvinding: En Indledende Kortlægning og Forslag til Videre Arbejde* ('Socioeconomic Impacts of Resource Development: A Preliminary Overview and Proposals for Further Work') (Nuuk, 1997).

[26] See: Robert G. Williamson, Eskimo Underground: Sociocultural Change in the Canadian Arctic (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1974).

main significance is that they control the allocation of resources and wealth and that their economic control is combined with political control. ... the native development corporation has enabled a small group of Inuit to become both powerful and wealthy".[27] In Nunavut, at least, this wealth has come from hefty salaries – and not from the skimming of profits by enormous 'bonus' payments (as has occurred elsewhere).

Nunavut's tourism industry contributes to the economy in a number of ways. It contributes to the vitality and viability of several sectors, including arts and crafts, hospitality and transportation, and offers part-time and seasonal employment opportunities to people primarily engaged in the harvesting and arts and crafts sectors. Spectacular parks and protected areas are among Nunavut's biggest tourist destinations. Tourism is a growing sector, and is believed to have considerable potential for growth – but very high costs limit the number of visitors (most of whom are affluent and well-educated younger adults, primarily from southern Canada but also from the United States and overseas) and tourism remains a relatively small component of the economy.[28]

Similarly, although more than 2,000 families in Nunavut earn some of their income from the sale of their arts and crafts (primarily stone carving), for the vast majority this represents only a small supplement to their income from other sources. (Reliable statistics on arts and crafts are notoriously difficult to collect.)

Economic activity in arts and crafts has close ties to the extensive co-operative movement which is heavily involved in the production and marketing of Inuit art. Moreover, with most communities having only one or two large retail outlets, the community-owned Co-op stores are important economic institutions throughout Nunavut. As Marybelle Mitchell has observed, not only have the co-ops been the largest non-government employer of Inuit, "virtually all the Inuit population is involved in one way or another with a local co-operative".[29]

If the importance of the co-operative movement, with its local control and communal ethic, is noteworthy, the co-ops should not be seen as a fundamental challenge to capitalist values and economic processes in Nunavut. As Mitchell's exhaustive study of Inuit co-ops demonstrates, they are best understood as "the definitive link between the indigenous and capitalist modes of production... [they are]

---

[27] Marybelle Mitchell, From Talking Chiefs to a Native Corporate Elite: The Birth of Class and Nationalism among Canadian Inuit (Montréal QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), pp. 398 and 402.

[28] See: Gillian Corliss' unpublished 1999 M.A. thesis in Geography at McGill University, "Community-based tourism planning and policy: The case of the Baffin region, Nunavut".

[29] Marybelle Mitchell, op. cit., p. 167.

communal in name but capitalist in effect".[30] Building on the experience of prairie families working collectively to survive the bitter economic depression of the 1930s, the Canadian state played an unusual – indeed, a decisive – role in establishing co-ops in the north as a tool of community economic development. The success of this tool greatly facilitated the incorporation of the Inuit into the wage economy.

Only the three regional centres have bank branches, although automated banking machines are starting to appear in the larger settlements. And while the banks are involved in large economic development projects (and are extremely interested in Inuit land claim money), and Northern (formerly the Hudson's Bay Company) and Co-op stores partially fill the gap on a local basis, the historic role played by financial institutions has often been assumed by the state. As Peter Clancy has noted, "in frontier societies more than most, the core mechanisms of production and exchange are established and maintained only with state support".[31]

---

[30] Ibid., pp. 297 and 447.

[31] Peter Clancy, "Northwest Territories: Class politics on the northern frontier", in: Keith Brownsey and Michael Howlett (eds.), The Provincial State: Politics in Canada's Provinces and Territories (Mississauga ON: Copp Clark Pitman, 1992), p. 298.

3. INUIT AND THE STATE: FROM AUTONOMY TO SUBJUGATION (TO SELF-DETERMINATION?)

Contact and Colonisation

The central theme in the recent history of the eastern and central Canadian Arctic has been the effect of EuroCanadian contact on Inuit society and the resulting rapid social change within Inuit society. Accordingly, the creation of Nunavut, as well as the critical social, political and economic problems facing Nunavut, must be understood in terms of Inuit society's evolution in a context of colonial domination by southern Canadian economic and political interests.

In most fundamentals the Inuit experience replicates the history of other North American aboriginal peoples after contact with European society.[32] Overtaken by overwhelming social, economic and cultural changes, their status as an autonomous, self-governing people disappeared as they lost control of their land and resources to governments imposed on them without their consent.

Prior to the advent of air travel, the eastern and central Arctic was far less accessible to Europeans (and later, Canadians) than the Mackenzie Valley or the Yukon and it offered few of the resources that drew Europeans and southerners north, such as fur, gold and oil. Accordingly, EuroCanadian contact with the Inuit of what we know today as Nunavut came much later and was much less extensive than for other aboriginal peoples of the Canadian north – or for other Inuit societies.[33]

Significant interaction between Inuit and whalers from Europe and North America occurred in the nineteenth century, but most Inuit were not directly affected by this contact in fundamental ways. Only in the twentieth century did large-scale EuroCanadian influence begin to dramatically affect Inuit society, as fur-traders, missionaries, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers spread throughout the north; unlike the whalers, they came to live in the Arctic on a permanent basis. And while Inuit labour may have played a negligible role in the development of the Canadian economy as a whole, it was crucial

---

[32] For an authoritative survey of historical and modern Inuit societies, see: David J. Damas (ed.), Arctic (vol. 5 in the series *Handbook of North American Indians*) (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1984).

[33] For a comprehensive review of Inuit groups and their differing interactions with European societies, see: Hein van der Voort, "History of Eskimo interethnic contact and its linguistic consequences", in: Stephen A. Wurm et al. (eds.), Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication in the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), pp. 1043-94.

to the viability of most EuroCanadian ventures in the Arctic and it had a profound, transformative impact on Inuit society.[34]

Economic integration preceded political integration as the Hudson's Bay Company traders promoted the exploitation of local resources, most notably furs and skins. Traders offered Inuit strong material incentives – such as supplies, equipment and other goods – for items such as white fox pelts. Many Inuit significantly altered their hunting practices and indeed their whole lifestyle, to meet the traders' demands, thereby tying themselves to the vagaries of the international commodity market as well as to specific companies. For example, the following is the text of an indenture certificate that was found in the walls of a building in Kimmirut (formerly Lake Harbour) in 1999:

> I, ___, son of ___, do agree and promise on this ___ day of 1914, to serve the Hudson's Bay Company, faithfully, in the capacity of Hunter, and in such other capacity as the Hudson's Bay Company shall appoint, for the full term of five years, to be computed from the first day of June 1914. I do also hereby agree to obey all orders and commands given me by the said Company and that I will not be engaged in any other employment whatsoever, than that of the Hudson's Bay Company for the said term of five years, and that I will deliver my entire hunt of all foxes, bears, seals, walrus, wolf et cetera to the said company, for the said term of five years. In compensation for the above mentioned services, the Hudson's Bay Company agrees to pay me Thirty Netchik per year, and also pay me for my aforementioned entire hunt turned over to them at the usual prices allowed Eskimo Hunters by the said Company. In witness whereof, these presents have been executed at Lake Harbour on the ___ day of ___ 1914.

When major downturns in those markets occurred, as exemplified when the price for white fox collapsed following World War Two, the Inuit, who had come to depend on trade goods, were unable to purchase the goods to which they had become accustomed**.** Economically, by the second half of the century Inuit had become subservient to outside forces and economic agents over whom they exercised no control.

A similar dynamic reoccurred in the 1970s and 1980s the commercial market for sealskin, which had become a key pillar of the economy of the eastern and central Arctic, was destroyed by:

> … groups claiming to act in the interests of wildlife preservation and animal welfare [which] captured headlines in parts of Canada, the United Stated and western Europe [and] clamoured for an end to commercial sale of seal pelts and sealskin products. The fund-

---

[34] For a theoretical overview of this understudied aspect of aboriginal history, see: Martha Knack and Alice Littlefield, "Native American labor: Retrieving history, rethinking theory", in: Martha Knack and Alice Littlefield (eds.), Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives (Norman OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), pp. 3-44. Two Canadian case studies which are not included in this volume are David S. Blanchard, "High steel! The Kahnawake Mohawk and the high construction trade", Journal of Ethnic Studies 11:2, 1983, pp. 41-60; and Rolf Knight, Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930 (Vancouver BC: New Star Books, 1996). See also: Steven High, "Native wage labour and independent production during the 'era of irrelevance'", Labour/*Le Travail* 37, 1996, pp. 243-64.

> raising drives of the anti-sealing groups proved so lucrative that they persisted long after their factual basis was shown to be weak. Lacking evidence to indicate that any species of northern seal was endangered, they attempted, instead, to stir public outrage by pointing to hunting methods used in the harvest of harp seal pups in places far away from the Arctic. … Their clever manipulation let to a ban on sealskin imports in the United States and a selective ban in the European Union.[35]

These bans had devastating economic and social impacts on Nunavut communities.

Incorporation and Social Change

Politically, Inuit were largely ignored by Canada until quite recently. Inuit never signed treaties or agreements with either British or Canadian authorities, nor were they conquered militarily. And yet, Inuit ruefully discovered that although they had always governed themselves and exercised stewardship over their lands, a foreign and little understood entity called the Government of Canada was now, without their consent or agreement, to control their lives.

After the Second World War, the Canadian state's minimalist northern presence gave way to active intervention, replete with social engineering plans for aboriginal societies.[36] A variety of motives underlay this fundamental policy reversal: concern with the distress suffered by Inuit and other northern aboriginal peoples who, having become incorporated into (and somewhat dependent on) the global economy, found themselves largely excluded from it with the decline of the fur trade; recognition of the Canadian state's obligations to aboriginal people, coupled with a strongly assimilationist agenda to eliminate the distinctive elements of aboriginal society; interest in fostering large-scale exploitation of the north's mineral and other resources; and desire to solidify Canada's disputed claim to sovereignty over the islands of the Arctic archipelago.

A key element in realising these diverse goals was the creation of permanent settlements. Establishment of these communities symbolises how, even very recently, the Canadian state controlled Inuit life in fundamental ways. Until well into the twentieth century Inuit did not live in permanent settlements,

---

[35] Nunavut Arts & Crafts Association, Seals & Nunavut: Our Tradition, Our Future (Iqaluit NU, 1999), p. 14. See also: George W. Wenzel, Animal Rights, Human Rights: Ecology, Economy and Ideology in the Canadian Arctic (Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press, 1991); and "Inuit sealing and subsistence managing after the EU sealskin ban", *Geographische Zeitschrift* 32:2, 1996, pp. 130-42.

[36] See: Richard J. Diubaldo, The Government of Canada and the Inuit, 1900-67 (Ottawa ON: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1985). There were, however, no sweeping blueprints for the extensive modernisation of the Canadian north similar to the G-50 and G-60 reports in Greenland.

though they often gathered at traditional sites for hunting and fishing and for social purposes. Hence, all the communities in Nunavut are of recent origin (many dating only from the 1940s and 1950s, although often at or near places of historic Inuit habitation) having grown where Europeans and southern Canadians located their institutions: Hudson's Bay Company trading posts, Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachments, mission churches, military installations and the like. Even more tellingly, many Inuit did not settle in these communities entirely willingly; they were coerced by the government to move into central locations so as to facilitate the delivery of public services such as health and education and also so that they could be assimilated into southern Canadian ways.[37]

In some instances, Inuit were relocated great distances to serve the interests of the Canadian state; the most notorious example is that of the 'High Arctic Exiles' of the 1950s who were moved thousands of kilometres from northern Québec to Ellesmere and Cornwallis Islands in part to bolster Canadian claims to sovereignty over the far north.[38]

And as was the case with First Nations across Canada, government officials sent children away to boarding schools (run by the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in Chesterfield Inlet, Churchill and Inuvik). As Hugh Brody has noted:

> ... the word *ilira* ... is used to refer to the fear of ghosts, the awe a strong father inspires in his children, and fear of the *qadlunaat* [white man]. I often heard Inuit speak about their agreement to their children being taken away from their homes in camps, and being put in schools far away. This taking of children caused much heartache to Inuit parents, who are famous for their intense attachment to their children. Virtually every Inuit child embodies a much loved and respected older relative (in North Baffin, a recently deceased relative), the person who is the child's *atiq*. When a child is taken away, therefore, the families lose a loved (and potentially helpful) little person; the embodiment, almost the reincarnation, of an elder, the child's *atiq*, is also lost. Yet when this happened, Inuit seemed to accept the process. When older men and women told me about the grief the boarding school program caused them, I asked many times, "Why did you not complain? Why did you go along with it?" The answers repeatedly made use of *ilira*, fear, awe, a sense of intimidation. And when I explored these answers, asking more questions about the feelings and events that surrounded the taking of children out to school, I was told that all *qadlunaat* made Inuit feel *ilira*. Often elders

---

[37] See: R. Quinn Duffy, The Road to Nunavut: The Progress of the Eastern Arctic Inuit Since the Second World War (Kingston ON: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

[38] See: Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, The High Arctic Relocation: A Report on the 1953-55 Relocation (3 vols.) (Ottawa ON: Supply and Services Canada, 1994); Alan R. Marcus, Out in the Cold: The Legacy of Canada's Inuit Relocation Experiment in the High Arctic (Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 1992) and Relocating Eden: The Image and Politics of Inuit Exile in the Canadian Arctic (Dartmouth NH: University Press of New England, 1995); and Frank J. Tester and Peter Kulchyski, *Tammarniit* (Mistakes): Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic, 1939-63 (Vancouver BC: University of British Columbia Press, 1994).

> – both men and women – made the point in general terms: *iliranatualulautut*, "they were very *ilira*-making".[39]

It would be hard to underestimate the extent and the speed of social and cultural change experienced by the Inuit in recent decades. Most Inuit over the age of 40 were born on the land in snow houses or tents to nomadic families whose lives depended almost entirely on hunting, fishing and trapping, and who had almost no exposure to mainstream North American society. They now watch cable television in their living rooms while their children play video games or surf the Internet. Life in permanent communities built upon the wage economy, the welfare state and modern technology changed Inuit society fundamentally. Profound changes in economic activity were linked to other changes: traditional patterns of authority (for example, the respect accorded elders) were challenged by new forces, single-parent families (rare in traditional Inuit society) became common, and a range of traditional values and practices were weakened. The impaired capacity of Inuit to hunt was critical since hunting was not only the economic mainstay but also the cultural focus of traditional Inuit society.

State activism in the 1950s and 1960s brought Inuit important entitlements that other Canadians had long taken for granted, such as public health services, schooling and social welfare. These benefits, however, came at enormous social cost. Not all Inuit could follow traditional economic pursuits. Increased pressure on the wildlife close to the settled communities (some of which were located great distances from good hunting areas) meant that many hunters had to travel long distances, requiring mechanised equipment that was expensive to purchase and operate. Yet few paying jobs were available. Because of the cost of hunting, by the 1980s "only Inuit who do have a job, and hence an income, can afford to go hunting in the little spare time available. Inuit who do not have a job or a regular income cannot afford to go hunting, although they have plenty of time to do so".[40] (The Nunavut Harvester Support Program, created through the land claim, attempts to remedy this situation.)

> Older Inuit have said that the move into settlements deceived them into thinking their troubles were over. Life on the land had been a constant struggle just to survive, pitting mental and physical resources against an implacable environment. The new towns made the conditions of life much more pleasant; the houses were always heated, and no one lacked for food. In fact, the Inuit came to realize that the struggle for survival was to continue as a fight to maintain their identity and values.[41]

---

[39] Hugh Brody, "Some historical aspects of the High Arctic Exiles' experience". (Report prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1993.) Federal day schools were also established in some communities.

[40] Colin Irwin, "Future imperfect: A controversial report on the prospects for Inuit society strikes a nerve in the NWT", Northern Perspectives 17:1, 1989, p. 4.

[41] Ian Creery, The Inuit (Eskimo) of Canada (London: Minority Rights Group, 1993), p. 25. See also: Willem C.E. Rasing's 'Too Many People': Order and Nonconformity in Iglulingmiut Social Process (Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit, 1994), a superb analysis of social and economic change among the Inuit who now live in Igloolik.

The implicit presumption underpinning the government's reorganisation of Inuit life was rejection of traditional economic activities in favour of integration into the North American wage economy, yet even when jobs were open to Inuit they were typically unskilled, low-paying and often of only short duration. Unemployment and underemployment thus became chronic problems that combined with alienation from the land and from traditional culture to engender social pathologies: low self-esteem, alcohol and substance abuse, family violence, youth suicide and welfare dependency. In the words of one deeply pessimistic report about Inuit society, the "lords of the Arctic" had become "wards of the state".[42]

Although profoundly affected by government decisions, Inuit were permitted no role in politics or government. The Northwest Territories was ruled by Ottawa as a colony: for decades the Government of the Northwest Territories was in effect a committee of federal civil servants. Residents of Nunavut – both Inuit and non-Inuit – were unable to vote in federal elections until 1962 or in territorial elections until 1966.[43] When municipal governments were established in the settlements in the 1950s and 1960s they were allowed no significant powers. Until well into the 1980s, virtually no Inuk held a bureaucratic post of any influence in the territorial government.

Not only were Inuit systematically excluded from participating in decision-making, but government persistently treated the Inuit in ways that in hindsight seem astoundingly patronising and condescending. "The King is helping all the children in his lands", Inuit were told after World War II. "He is giving aid to the Eskimo children also and has instructed His servants the Police to proceed in this way.[44]

Perhaps the best illustration involves that most central element of identity: names. Government bureaucrats who had trouble understanding and keeping track of complex Inuit naming systems issued all Inuit with discs imprinted with identification numbers – known as 'Eskimo numbers', or 'E-numbers' – that were to be used in dealings with government in place of their names.[45] Inuit were instructed that "Every Eskimo should have a disc bearing his identification number. Do not lose your disc. You will need it to obtain the King's help".[46] To this day, many Inuit still know their 'E-numbers' by heart.

---

[42] Colin Irwin, op. cit.

[43] Technically, barriers to Inuit voting in territorial elections were eliminated in 1954, but since no constituencies existed in the eastern or central Arctic until 1966, this was not much of an advance.

[44] Canada, Department of Mines and Resources, The Book of Wisdom for Eskimo (Ottawa ON: 1947), p. 19. A similar but even more outrageous book had earlier been inflicted upon the Labrador Inuit: George Binney, The Eskimo Book of Knowledge (London: Hudson's Bay Company, 1931).

[45] See: Valerie Alia, Names, Numbers and Northern Policy: Inuit, Project Surname and the Politics of Identity (Halifax NS: Fernwood Publishing, 1994).

[46] Canada, Department of Mines and Resources, op. cit., p. 20.

Ethnic Mobilisation and Class Differentiation

> We very much dislike white people taking our land for granted. It seems they feel they can destroy our land any time they feel like it without even asking for permission. We want to have the freedom of conservation with the animals. They steal the raw materials without even consulting us or giving the Inuit a percentage of what they are taking. We need to get power to control the land. – Elijah Takkiapik, 1974[47]

Inuit would never have survived as a people without enormous resilience, patience and determination. These qualities were critical in the Inuit struggle to regain control of their lives and their land.

As well, compared to many other Canadian aboriginal peoples, the Inuit enjoy important advantages stemming from their relative isolation and the lack of readily exploitable resources on their lands. Their overwhelming numerical dominance in their homelands may have only recently taken on political importance but it has facilitated retention of key elements of Inuit culture. Most notably, Inuktitut continues to rank among the healthiest aboriginal languages in Canada; the overwhelming majority of Nunavut Inuit continue to speak it and in most Nunavut communities Inuktitut is heard far more often than English – except in federal and territorial government offices in the three regional centres.[48]

Inuit differ from the other aboriginal peoples of Canada not just in history, language and culture but also in legal status – Inuit are not subject to the federal government's infamous *Indian Act*.[49] This means that there have never been reserves established under the *Indian Act* for Inuit. It has also meant that some of the arbitrary, legalistic divisions that impede political action among other aboriginal peoples in Canada – between 'status Indians', 'non-status Indians' and Metis – do not exist among Inuit. In turn, this has made it easier to maintain Inuit unity, especially in terms of political direction.

---

47 As quoted by Peter Ittinuar, Canada's first Inuit Member of Parliament, in his maiden speech in the House of Commons. See: "First speech by an Inuk member of Parliament", Inuit Today Winter 1980, pp. 97-103.

48 According to Statistics Canada's 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 96 per cent of adult (defined as age 15 and over) Inuit in Nunavut speak Inuktitut. In the 1996 Census 71 per cent of people living in Nunavut reported Inuktitut as their 'mother tongue', and 60 per cent reported Inuktitut as their 'home language'. English is the 'home language' of 35 per cent of all residents, and the territory also has a small but vibrant Francophone community – most of which resides in Iqaluit. 15 per cent of the population speaks neither English nor French.

The language spoken by Inuit of Nunavut consists of seven dialects, which are essentially variations on a single language. Six of these dialects are collectively referred to as Inuktitut, and are written using a Syllabic writing system. The dialect spoken by the residents of the communities of Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay, in the western part of the Kitikmeot region, is called Inuinnaqtun – and is written in Roman orthography. (By contrast, the Dene of the Yukon and Northwest Territories comprise several different peoples each speaking a distinctive language.)

49 Although the 1939 Supreme Court ruling *Re: Eskimos* declared them in effect to be equivalent to Indians in that the federal government has a fiduciary responsibility to them. See: Richard J. Diubaldo, "The absurd little mouse: When Eskimos became Indians", Journal of Canadian Studies 16:2, 1981, pp. 34-40.

One paradoxical result of Inuit contact with – and subsequent domination by – EuroCanadian society has been the emergence of a group identity among Inuit. Prior to contact, Inuit identities and loyalties were rooted in local groups and the social organisation of extended families. The social and economic change wrought by contact served to differentiate Inuit from non-Inuit and to emphasize commonalities among Inuit, resulting in what has been termed "Inuit nationalism".[50] Thus, while regional divisions and antagonisms are certainly evident in contemporary Nunavut society and politics, they are generally subsumed into a larger Inuit identity and unity.

Life in the communities and (partial) integration into the wage economy also brought about economic differentiation among Inuit and development of a class system. Various forms and gradations of class groupings among Inuit can be discerned according to their role in productive practices, their participation in traditional or wage economies, their status as independent commodity producers, state workers, petty capitalists and the like.[51]

While such class divisions do have relevance to social and political developments, they do not yet represent the defining socioeconomic dynamic within Nunavut society. In part this is because the Inuit economic elite remains relatively small, as does the Inuit middle class, and in part it reflects disinclination among Inuit to think in terms of – or identify themselves with – class perspectives. For example, while some Inuit belong to trade unions, organised labour has so far developed only shallow roots in Nunavut.[52]

It is worth noting, however, that in 1982 – when the successful implementation of a Nunavut land claim and territorial government must have seemed like a distant dream – Inuit leader John Amagoalik (then President of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada) wrote to his Board of Directors that he had been "thinking about trying to start some sort of labour movement in the North for about 10 years".[53] An Inuit aide to Amagoalik wrote a memo to the Board which began by summing up the mounting socioeconomic woes in Inuit communities and concluded that organising Inuit labour might be a way to improve matters:

> Universal lack of resistance by Inuit is also compounding this depressing situation. This lack of resistance is not due to lack of interest and concern, but it exists because of the lack of access to voicing these concerns in a manner which would be noticed and responded to adequately by the governments and business community. It is demoralising and is eating

---

[50] See: Marybelle Mitchell, op. cit. chapters 20-21.

[51] See: Marybelle Mitchell, op. cit. chapters 6 and 16; and Peter Clancy, op. cit.

[52] This is in marked contrast to the situation in Greenland, where organized labour – largely Inuit labour – played a key role in the political agitation which led to Denmark granting the island Home Rule in 1979.

[53] Letter dated February 22, 1982.

> away at the emotional and mental well-being of too many Inuit. In the minds of many Inuit the promisingly bright future painted for years by the territorial and federal governments has been a big illusion and instead have betrayed and used them. The planning and promotion of the likes of the Arctic Pilot Project, which are being pushed rudely at us, only confirm the growing pessimism which is depressing our spirits and fermenting anger inside us. ... Inuit organisations in existence today are not geared towards meeting and taking real action on economic matters concerning Inuit. The only recourse, then, is to start organising Inuit labour so that the ordinary Inuit can renew their hopes and aspirations for the future.[54]

Most critical, however, is the conjunction between class and ethnicity. The economic elite of Nunavut has long been primarily non-Inuit. Ownership and control of private capital – be it large firms based in the south or smaller, locally owned enterprises – has been very much in the hands of non-Inuit. Similarly, non-Inuit have predominated in high-paying, influential public sector jobs, which carry unusual economic significance in a region as dependent on government as Nunavut.

Mitchell has described a process of dramatic and rapid social change among the Inuit, a "transformation of Inuit relationships from relatively egalitarian, apolitical family-based units to ethnoregional collectivities in which class distinctions are becoming an important line of affiliation".[55] Inuit are acutely aware of their subordinate economic status, but until recently they have seen the solution less in explicitly class terms than in enhanced political capacity as a people to run their own affairs. In short, culture not class has been the prime dynamic driving Inuit political activity. The rise of an Inuit economic elite, in large measure through the growth of the claims-funded development corporations, and the emergence of a strong Inuit political-administrative elite with the creation of Nunavut portends significant change in this dynamic.

As occurred in aboriginal societies elsewhere in Canada, an identifiable Inuit political elite emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s. Educated in non-Inuit ways yet rooted in a strong sense of Inuit identity, this political-administrative elite was not prepared to accept second-class status in their own land.

Reflecting on this period, Tagak Curley – who was elected President of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada at its founding meeting on August 24, 1971 – has noted that "The government's colonial system had a lot of power… When I was growing up my parents were afraid of the white man. The government people were

---

[54] Memo by Charlie Peter, dated February 16, 1982. 15 years later we can see that while this initiative went nowhere, the frustration which fuelled it was channeled into successful ethnopolitical activity. It remains to be seen to what degree to which the fruits of this ethnopolitical activity – the provisions of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement – actually improve socioeconomic conditions in the communities, and to what degree any disappointment is expressed in class terms.

[55] Marybelle Mitchell, op. cit., p. ix.

very intimidating to them. This was too much for me… I knew I had a mission… My mission was to create a voice for the Inuit people".[56]

Though less aggressive and confrontational than many other aboriginal leaders, as well as pragmatic as to means of reaching their goal, the leadership of the Inuit organisations never wavered in their determination to establish an Inuit homeland. The principal vehicle they chose to pursue their political goals was a sweeping land claim linked to a proposal for creation of an Inuit-dominated territory – Nunavut – in the eastern and central Arctic.

The pioneers of the land claim movement faced limited resistance from within Inuit society. Some Inuit thought that this might be the 'communism' they had been warned about by the priests, and the few who had been given supporting roles in the emerging Northwest Territories elite joined their non-Inuit peers in attacking the land claim movement as radical. Creating Nunavut would "really be quitting Canada because the principles of Canadian Confederation are against racial division", wrote one Inuit Member of the Legislative Assembly in Yellowknife, "… with the territorial government's continuing plan to turn over more and more control for local matters to the local people, the Inuit have a bright political future and don't need their own territory".[57]

Inuit leaders used public education campaigns, community meetings and radio phone-in shows to discuss the issues facing and the options available to Inuit, and quickly achieved overwhelming Inuit support for the Nunavut proposal. Peter Ittinuar summed up the political consensus when he wrote:

> The key to sustained and effective Inuit participation in politics does not lie in further elaboration and consolidation of existing structures, nor in tinkering with existing mechanisms for decision-making. It lies in the formal constitutional recognition of the Inuit's right to determine their own future and to develop the institutions and procedures most appropriate to the expression of their deepest concerns.[58]

---

[56] Quoted in: Jim Bell, "When Inuit began to talk back to the government", Nunatsiaq News, August 29, 1997.

[57] Quoted in: "Nunavut: Inuit Tapirisat's proposal to split the NWT", The Inuit North, January 1980, p. 4.

[58] Peter Ittinuar, "Inuit participation in politics", in: Morris Zaslow (ed.), A Century of Canada's Arctic Islands, 1880-1980 (Ottawa ON: The Royal Society of Canada, 1981), p. 298.

4. THE NUNAVUT LAND CLAIM

Negotiating the Claim

A land claim proposal for a Nunavut land claim was put to the federal government by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) in 1976.[59] Through a decade and a half of protracted negotiations, which often seemed to have encountered insurmountable obstacles, the Inuit never wavered on their fundamental principles. Foremost among these were settlement of a comprehensive land claim which would set out and enshrine Inuit use of their lands and would compensate them for past and future use of Inuit lands by non-Inuit as well as the creation of a new government in the eastern and central Arctic with capacity to protect and foster Inuit language, culture and social well-being.

A critical element in the Inuit position – which ultimately made it palatable to a reluctant federal government – was their willingness to accept in the new territory a 'public government' rather than 'aboriginal self-government'. Under this public government approach all residents could vote, run for office and otherwise participate in public affairs and the government's jurisdiction and activities would extend to all residents. In other words, Nunavut would in essence have a government like those of the provinces and territories, rather than following the 'aboriginal self-government' model (proposed by many First Nations, including those in the Mackenzie Valley) under which only aboriginal people would participate in government or be eligible for its programmes and services.

If the Inuit were open, both philosophically and as a negotiating strategy, to the notion of a public government, they were insistent that they did not wish to be part of the existing Northwest Territories (NWT)[60] – which by the time the Nunavut negotiations were completed had attained very close to full responsible government and, most important, province-like powers. Inuit were never more than a large minority in the Northwest Territories (they constituted approximately 38 per cent of the population at the time of division) and the centres of economic and political power in the Northwest Territories were simply too remote – both geographically and culturally – from Inuit communities (Yellowknife, the Northwest Territories capital, is as far from Baffin Island communities as Vancouver is from Thunder Bay). Thus although Inuit were vitally concerned with decisions, programmes and funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), their principal political focus was on creating

---

[59] This proposal was withdrawn shortly thereafter, and replaced by a second proposal which became the basis for the eventual land claim.

[60] Which had entered Confederation in 1870, and assumed its pre-division boundaries in 1912.

Nunavut. (Inuit leader John Amagoalik once observed that the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) elected to the territorial legislature in Yellowknife were the Inuit 'B Team'; the 'A Team' was working on the land claim.)[61]

The Inuit negotiators gave notice in 1980 that no final land claim agreement would be concluded without an enforceable commitment to create the territory. Efforts took place to promote the creation of Nunavut at federal/provincial First Ministers' Conferences, and in the context of politics within the existing Northwest Territories – especially after the election of a 'reform' Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories in 1979.

The political machinations and the events that culminated in the finalisation of the Inuit land claim are far too complex to be reviewed here.[62] Moreover, for our purposes, the processes by which the land claim was realised are less important than its provisions.

Suffice it to say that a slow, unspectacular process of negotiations unfolded throughout much of 1980s. Bit by bit, sub-agreement by sub-agreement, a comprehensive land claims settlement was put together. Progress was aided somewhat by the revision of federal land claims policy in the wake of the 1985 Coolican Task Force Report. Revisions sanctioning decision-making powers for joint management boards, resource revenue sharing, and inclusion of offshore areas, were particularly important for the Nunavut claim. Nunavut Inuit organisations played a significant part in the lobbying efforts needed to amend federal land claims policy to these ends.[63]

As John Merritt, one of the key players at the staff level for the Inuit organisations has noted,

> Moments of crisis and drama notwithstanding, the story of the twenty year old 'Nunavut project' is best described as a process of consistent effort, endless negotiation, and detailed text. Unlike other negotiations involving aboriginal peoples that have sometimes captured intensive but fleeting attention, the 'Nunavut project' ... followed a slow but comparatively steady course.[64]

---

[61] Northwest Territories Electoral District Boundaries Commission, Hearing Transcripts II (hearing in Iqaluit NT, October 10, 1989), p. 12.

[62] See: John Merritt, Terry Fenge, Randy Ames and Peter Jull, Nunavut: Political Choice and Manifest Destiny (Ottawa ON: Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, 1989), especially chapter 4.

[63] See: Terry Fenge and Joanne Barnaby, "From recommendations to policy: Battling inertia to obtain a land claim policy", Northern Perspectives 15:1, 1987, pp. 12-5.

[64] John Merritt, "Nunavut: Canada turns a new page in the Arctic", Canadian Parliamentary Review Summer 1993, p. 4.

By the early 1990s, most of the proprietary and resource management aspects of an agreement had been put together, and the moment of truth arrived: would Inuit accept the federal offer of a land claims agreement and drop their demand for a separate Nunavut territory, or would they insist on linking a land claims agreement with the establishment of an Inuit-controlled territorial government as they had done for twenty years?

Confident that the Inuit public would not accept a land claims agreement without an accompanying commitment on a Nunavut territory and a Government of Nunavut, Inuit negotiators stood firm on the demand that the Nunavut Agreement contain – within its four corners, not in some collateral undertaking – a commitment to create Nunavut. Government of Canada representatives understood the depth of Inuit resolve on this point and, to the credit of those Ministers of the Crown and public servants working on the file, agreed to include the commitment to Nunavut as part of a land claims agreement. The agreement was formalised in a document called the Nunavut Political Accord, signed by the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Inuit negotiating body Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN).

The Conservative government of the day, under the increasingly unpopular Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, was badly in need of a 'good news' story about its relationship with aboriginal peoples. The armed stand-off with the Mohawks at Oka, Québec, had made headlines and television newscasts around the world, and the country's political elites seemed unable to amend the Constitution to include (among other things) stronger guarantees of aboriginal peoples' self-government rights. In this context, even some politicians who had previously expressed reservations about Nunavut came to regard it as a positive, progressive initiative that the Canadian state could – and should – embrace.

The inclusion of a commitment to a Nunavut territory and a Government of Nunavut went well beyond the stated federal government land claims policy of the time. This reality, no doubt, created certain political and bureaucratic risks for those involved in the negotiations. Calculated risks were also run by the Inuit, most notably in agreeing to territory-wide plebiscites in 1982 and 1992; the first was on the principle of dividing the Northwest Territories, the second on the specific boundary between the two new territories. In both, voters in the western part of the Northwest Territories opposed division while an overwhelming majority in Nunavut supported it – the overall result being a slim majority in favour.

Agreement on the precise boundary was a serious sticking point. Aside from Baker Lake, no permanent settlements are to be found in the vast tract of land between Great Slave Lake and the Inuit communities on Hudson Bay. However, both Inuit leaders and their Dene and Metis counterparts of the Mackenzie Valley sought control over these lands, with both groups pointing to eons of nomadic occupation primarily for hunting. A boundary settlement was almost reached in the late 1980s but ultimately negotiations proved unsuccessful. Yet without a definite boundary the Nunavut project could not

proceed. In order to break the deadlock, the federal government appointed John Parker, the widely respected former Commissioner, to consult those affected and propose a boundary. It was his compromise – a compromise generally acceptable to Inuit, but strongly opposed by certain Dene-Metis groups for whom it encroached too far into their traditional lands – that was put to a vote in 1992. (Shortly after the boundary was settled, the disputed territory turned out to be focus of an intense diamond rush, but diamonds had not been a factor in the boundary conflict. Although promising sites exist in Nunavut, the first operating diamond mine is just to the west of the boundary.)

The land claim itself was ratified in November of 1992: 69 per cent of eligible Inuit voters supported the settlement.[65] Inuit and government representatives signed the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) in Iqaluit on May 25, 1993. Finally, in June 1993, Parliament enacted two separate pieces of legislation – the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act* (ratifying the Nunavut land claim settlement), and the *Nunavut Act* (creating a Nunavut territory and a Government of Nunavut). Taken together, these two measures constitute the terms of a new social contract – or terms of confederation – between the Inuit of Nunavut and the people and government of Canada.

The perspective of the Inuit leaders who first envisioned and articulated this new relationship and then negotiated it into reality is well expressed by one of their key legal counsel:

> ... it is remarkable to note how similar, in broad brush, the results of the 'Nunavut project' are to the initial negotiating demands put forward in 1976. After almost two decades of hard work, concentration on the essential, willingness to take calculated risks, and refusal to take no for an answer, the Inuit of Nunavut have secured the Crown's agreement to a package that provides the Inuit of Nunavut with both an impressive array of land rights and responsibilities in their ancestral homeland and a new Nunavut territory and government that will, on account of an overwhelming Inuit majority, provide Inuit with political power in the contemporary legislative and administrative context of Canadian federalism.[66]

Provisions of the Claim

As is the case with other comprehensive land claim settlements, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is a 'modern day treaty' that is entrenched under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982.*

---

[65] Of those who actually cast votes, 85 per cent voted in favour. To guard against ratification of an agreement with such profound consequences by a small percentage of the population, the federal government's threshold for ratification of the claim was based on the number of eligible voters – so a non-vote was in effect a 'no' vote.

[66] John Merritt, op. cit., p. 4.

The Preamble to the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement states four basic objectives shared by the parties to the Agreement:

- to provide for certainty and clarity of rights to ownership and use of lands and resources, and of rights for Inuit to participate in decision-making concerning the use, management and conservation of land, water and resources, including the offshore.
- to provide Inuit with wildlife harvesting rights and rights to participate in decision making concerning wildlife harvesting.
- to provide Inuit with financial compensation and means of participating in economic opportunities.
- to encourage self-reliance and social well being of Inuit.

At the heart of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is a fundamental exchange between the Inuit of Nunavut and the federal Crown. For their part, the Nunavut Inuit agreed to surrender "any claims, rights, title and interests based on their assertion of an aboriginal title" anywhere in Canada (including the Nunavut Settlement Area – the area to which the terms of the land claim apply). In return, the Agreement set out an array of constitutionally protected rights and benefits that the Inuit of Nunavut will exercise and enjoy in perpetuity.

The most important of these provisions for the Inuit beneficiaries are:

- collective title to approximately 350,000 square kilometres of land, of which roughly ten per cent include subsurface mineral rights.
- priority rights to harvest wildlife for domestic, sports and commercial purposes throughout lands and waters covered by the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.
- establishment of a series of comanagement boards (often referred to as institutions of public government – or, in the acronym-laden north, IPGs) that will work alongside the Government of Nunavut (GN) but will not be a part of it. The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB), for example, has equal numbers of Inuit-appointed and government-appointed members[67] to oversee wildlife harvesting and management, as well as specific wildlife harvesting rights and economic opportunities related to guiding, sports lodges and commercial marketing of wildlife products. Other Institutions of Public Government include the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC), with responsibility for land use planning; the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB),

[67] It should be noted that the members appointed by Inuit organisations need not be Inuit, and likewise the members appointed by government can be Inuit or non-Inuit.

which conducts environmental and socioeconomic reviews of development proposals; and the Nunavut Water Board (NWB). A Nunavut Social Development Council (NSDC) was also established.

- capital transfer payments of $1.148 billion to be paid over a 14 year period; these monies – which are to be administered by the Nunavut Trust on behalf of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI; the successor organisation to the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut), the Inuit organisation responsible for overseeing the claim – are not paid to individuals but are for the collective benefit of all Nunavut Inuit.
- a series of other provisions, such as commitments to increase Inuit employment in government and to give preference to Inuit-owned businesses in government contracting; a share in royalties on non-renewable resources; an obligation on the part of developers to conclude impact and benefit agreements in relation to certain types of development; a $13 million training trust fund; a federal commitment to establish three national parks in Nunavut; and others.
- last, but certainly not least: a commitment to create a Nunavut territory and a Government of Nunavut on April 1, 1999.

In effect, the Inuit of Nunavut surrendered their rights to lands and resources at common law – known as 'aboriginal title' – for the measures contained in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. This exchange did not involve any surrender of Inuit rights to self-government in existence at the time the land claim was agreed to, or which may be defined by future constitutional amendments.

Implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is proceeding within the framework provided by a formal *Contract Relating to the Implementation of the Nunavut Final Agreement*, which was signed on May 25, 1993 in Iqaluit by the Inuit negotiators and by representatives of the federal and territorial governments. It contains extensive details on the responsibilities of many parties involved in the implementation of the Agreement, the activities this will require, timeframes and guidelines for such activities, and the financial resources for implementation that will be allocated during the first ten-year period. A basic assumption running through the implementation contract is that successful implementation of the Agreement depends on the cooperation and commitment of many different parties, including Inuit organisations, departments of the federal and territorial governments, and the newly created Institutions of Public Government. A Nunavut Implementation Panel (NIP) was established, with membership from the federal and territorial governments and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., to oversee, provide direction, and monitor the implementation of the ongoing and time-limited obligations, specific activities and projects arising from the land claim and implementation contract.

Implications of the Claim

A key objective of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is to implement a new land and resource management system in the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA; the area to which the terms of the land claim apply – and almost coterminous with the boundaries of the Nunavut Territory) to replace an existing system which was perceived by Inuit negotiators to be "ad hoc, incremental and fragmented..."[68] This system is intended to be comprehensive, exercising authority over the entire Nunavut Settlement Area (including surface lands, waters, marine areas and the maximum limit of land fast ice). It is also intended to achieve integration, linking a number of different institutions and processes together in one unified management system with jurisdiction over both Crown and Inuit owned lands in Nunavut.

Of central importance in this system will be the linkages established between land/habitat and wildlife management. At the centre of this new set of power-sharing arrangements between Inuit and non-Inuit are four comanagement bodies. Comanagement arrangements between the state and an aboriginal people are regarded by many as an achievable way to "bring together the traditional Inuit system of knowledge and management with that of Canada's … blending … two systems of management in such a way that the advantages of both are optimised and the domination of one on the other is avoided".[69]

In a strict legal sense, the four comanagement bodies (the Institutions of Public Government). are 'advisory' bodies that will make recommendations to federal and territorial government Ministers, but in practice they are powerful institutions which are clearly intended to be decision makers with sufficient authorities and resources to function relatively independently from both government departments and Inuit organisations. The Inuit land claim negotiators 'went to the wall' at the negotiating table to overcome the strenuous objections of federal 'line departments' (such as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans) to ensure that these bodies would have those authorities and resources.

The powers and authorities of existing federal and territorial departments are neither replaced nor superseded by those of the Institutions of Public Government, but government departments are now required to share some of their powers and to include the comanagement bodies in their decision making processes. Depending on the issue, this power sharing will take various forms, ranging from 'rubber-stamping' the recommendation of an Institution of Public Government, to structured consultations, to a

---

[68] John Merritt and Terry Fenge, "The Nunavut land claims settlement: Emerging issues in law and public administration", Queen's Law Journal 15:2, 1990, p. 270.

[69] Chesley Andersen, former Vice-President of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, as quoted in: Thierry Rodon, "Co-management and self-determination in Nunavut", Polar Geography 22:2, 1998, p. 123.

department's need to secure the "approval" of an Institution of Public Government before proceeding with a decision or policy.

In the final analysis, the decisions of these institutions of public government are subject to Ministerial authority and discretion. Even so, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement spells out a number of conditions and circumstances under which this Ministerial authority will be exercised. Beyond this, most of the traditional responsibilities of government departments will continue.

Implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is thus creating a new political and administrative regime in the eastern Arctic; a 'regime' in the sense of 'a method or system of government'. Many types of important decisions are no longer made by unelected and/or unaccountable people in faraway boardrooms; they are made in Nunavut, largely by residents of Nunavut. And "while the Nunavut Agreement provides for a wide range of constitutionally protected rights and benefits to Inuit – and to Inuit alone – it also reforms fundamentally the structures and processes for making decisions about the use of natural resources owned by the Crown".[70]

A good example of the magnitude of the changes brought about by the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement was the 1996 harvest of a bowhead whale near Repulse Bay. The fact that the federal Minister of Fisheries signed a permit authorising the hunt made news in southern Canada. What was less clearly explained was that the authority to decide whether or not to harvest a bowhead now rests with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, and only the presentation of overwhelmingly contradictory data on the stocks – and the expenditure of significant political capital – could have prevented the federal Minister from rubber-stamping the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's decision.[71]

Similarly, the days of mining and other large projects planned in isolation from Inuit communities that would be affected are over. The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement requires that Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreements (IIBAs) be negotiated between the Inuit and the would-be developer. The first such IIBA, between the Kitikmeot Inuit Association and Echo Bay Mines Ltd. for development of the Ulu gold deposit, covers the full range of "matters considered appropriate for Inuit benefits" under Schedule 26-1 of the Agreement. It is a legally binding agreement which aboriginal communities threatened by large non-renewable resource development elsewhere in the world would find mind-boggling.

---

[70] See: Terry Fenge, "The Nunavut Agreement and sustainable development in the Canadian Arctic and the circumpolar world", in: Terje Brantenberg et al. (eds.), Becoming Visible: Indigenous Politics and Self-Government (Tromsø: Centre for Sámi Studies, University of Tromsø, 1995), pp. 171-86.

[71] A second bowhead was harvested near Pangnirtung in 1999, and a third bowhead harvest is scheduled for Coral Harbour in 2000.

One of the least recognised – yet farthest-reaching – implications of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is that government departments must "consult" Inuit organisations and Institutions of Public Government on most management decisions, policies, initiatives and activities applicable in Nunavut.

The fiduciary nature of government's obligation to undertake appropriate consultations was reinforced by a 1997 Federal Court decision on the 'turbot dispute' between Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.[72] In his ruling, Justice Campbell remarked that:

> I consider it very important to remember that the Agreement was struck within a context of acknowledgment of an Aboriginal right. The Agreement is, therefore, a solemn arrangement... In particular, with respect to these provisions regarding "consultation" and "consideration", I find that they must be fully enforced.[73]

A subsequent court ruling overturned the Federal Court decision, and the whole issue of consultation remains subject to legal action.[74] Nonetheless, regardless of how consultation requirements are ultimately defined, their significance lies not in constituting an Inuit veto over governments, but in requiring of governments an acute awareness of – and sensitivity to – Inuit concerns.

Finally, while many of the most talented Inuit managers have left the various levels of government to work for Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the regional Inuit associations and the Institutions of Public Government, implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement has also resulted in an important transformation of the ethnic framework: for the first time, there are now significant numbers of EuroCanadians working ***for*** Inuit (rather than ***with*** them, or ***on*** them...).

Reviewing the Implementation of the Claim

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement stipulates that an independent review of the implementation of the land claim will take place every five years, and the first such review – covering the period 1993 to 1998 –

---

[72] The Minister had ignored the provisions of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and unilaterally allocated quotas for turbot fishing in Davis Strait. The bulk of the quota was assigned to fishers from southern Canada (just before a federal election, when the governing Liberal Party was anxious to retain seats in Atlantic Canada) while the principle of 'adjacency' (which results in the bulk of quotas in waters off southern Canada being assigned to fishers in adjacent jurisdictions) should have seen at least a significant portion of the quota assigned to Nunavut fishers. The case is of such significance that it may ultimately be decided by the Supreme Court of Canada.

[73] *Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. v. Canada*, F.C.T.D., 1997

[74] See: Sonia Lawrence and Patrick Macklem, "From consultation to reconciliation: Aboriginal rights and the Crown's duty to consult", Canadian Bar Review 79: February 2000, no. 1, pp. 252-79.

was completed in late 1999. It examined each of the many obligations resulting from the land claim, and noted them as either 'substantially complete' (98), 'partially complete' (46) or 'largely unmet' (49).

> Overall, there has been a significant amount of success. It is important to recognize the commitment and effort it has taken to get this far, however, there are a large number of obligations that remain unsatisfied. … The best results tended to come from situations where front-line managers entered into productive discussions, or where the Implementation Panel was able to agree on a course of remedial action. The worst results tended to come in situations where the Parties failed to enter into constructive discussions, and opted instead for stating positions unilaterally.[75]

After paying special attention to the issues of Inuit employment in government, impact assessment, the implementation environment (especially the need for an 'active management model' with a more central role for the Nunavut Implementation Panel in managing the implementation effort) and compliance with the spirit and intent of the land claim, the consultants graded the progress achieved to date as "Fair".

> Considered from a 'standing start', the scope of the changes already implemented is impressive, and is both a compliment to those involved and a testament to what can be achieved.[76]

The report also contained the results of a Nunavut-wide public opinion survey which showed that:

- 57 per cent of Nunavut Inuit felt that the implementation of the land claim thus far had had a 'very positive' or 'positive' impact on their life;
- 86 per cent of Nunavut residents felt that "the creation of Nunavut will give the people a real opportunity to govern our lives better";
- 73 per cent of Nunavut residents agreed that "for financial reasons, the Nunavut government will have a difficult time maintaining existing programs and services; and.
- 79 per cent of Nunavut residents said that "generally speaking, [when] thinking about the future of Nunavut" they are 'very optimistic' or 'somewhat optimistic'.

---

[75] Louise Vertes, David Connelly, Bruce Knott, and Ile Royale Enterprises Ltd., Implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement: An Independent 5-Year Review, 1993 to 1998 (Iqaluit NU: Nortext Multimedia Inc., 2000)., pp. 4-5.

[76] Ibid, p. 10.

5. THE GOVERNMENT OF NUNAVUT

Designing the Government of Nunavut

To facilitate the creation of Nunavut, the *Nunavut Act* established a Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC). The Nunavut Implementation Commission was initially composed of nine Commissioners and a Chairman – veteran Inuit leader John Amagoalik – appointed by the three signatories to the Nunavut Political Accord. Of the original ten Commissioners, nine were Inuit, nine were resident in Nunavut, and eight were men.

The Nunavut Implementation Commission's mandate was to advise the three signatories on the political and administrative design of the Government of Nunavut, including such diverse matters as the location of the capital, the development of human resources training programs, the organisational structure of the new government, the timetable for the assumption of the Government of Nunavut (GN)'s responsibilities for the delivery of programs and services, and the division of assets and liabilities between Nunavut and the western territory.

Throughout the years from the passage of the *Nunavut Act* to the formal start-up of Nunavut in 1999, major policy decisions as to governmental structure, implementation strategy, scheduling and the like were made through a series of 'Nunavut Leaders' Summits'. These meetings took place two or three times a year in various Nunavut communities and brought together the elected leaders of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) and the Government of Canada, along with members of the Nunavut Implementation Commission. The atmosphere of these meetings ranged from amicable and cooperative to bitter and confrontational, but they were crucial in giving political direction to the officials working towards setting up the new government. They also symbolised the genuine partnership, albeit by times a stormy one, between the signatories to the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the Nunavut Political Accord.

In March 1995 the Nunavut Implementation Commission released its first comprehensive report, Footprints in New Snow. Over the following year and a half the Nunavut Implementation Commission published eight specialised supplementary reports and then a second comprehensive report, Footprints 2, in October 1996. The Nunavut Implementation Commission's political recommendations were contained in a supplementary report entitled Nunavut's Legislature, Premier and First Election, which was released in December 1996.

The Government of the Northwest Territories did not respond in writing to Footprints in New Snow, but did issue a written response to Footprints 2. Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. responded in writing to both of the Nunavut Implementation Commission's comprehensive reports, and their response to Footprints 2 also contained a response to the Nunavut Implementation Commission's political recommendations.

The Nunavut Implementation Commission recommended the creation of what John Amagoalik termed "a public government with a democratically elected Legislative Assembly [which] will respect individual and collective rights as defined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. It will be a government that respects and reflects Canada's political traditions and institutions, and it will be a territory that remains firmly entrenched within the bounds of Canadian confederation".[77] As John Amagoalik had promised years previously, "What we are proposing is not new; it will be a creature that Canadians will recognise".[78]

Initially, some thought it best for the Government of Nunavut to phase in the active control over its full range of powers over several years. On Nunavut Implementation Commission's recommendation, however, the Government of Nunavut assumed responsibility for the full range of its jurisdictional powers on April 1, 1999. Since only about a third of a projected 640 headquarters staff were in place as of formal start-up,[79] a number of services and activities were contracted back to the Government of the (post-division) Northwest Territories until the Government of Nunavut was ready to deliver them. (In other words, for the first few years many programs and services that the people of Nunavut receive from the territorial level of government will be provided by Government of the Northwest Territories staff – under contract to the Government of Nunavut.)[80] Examples include teacher certification and student records, health promotion services and tax collection. Even in areas contracted back to the Government of the Northwest Territories, however, the Government of Nunavut retains political control and policy direction.

---

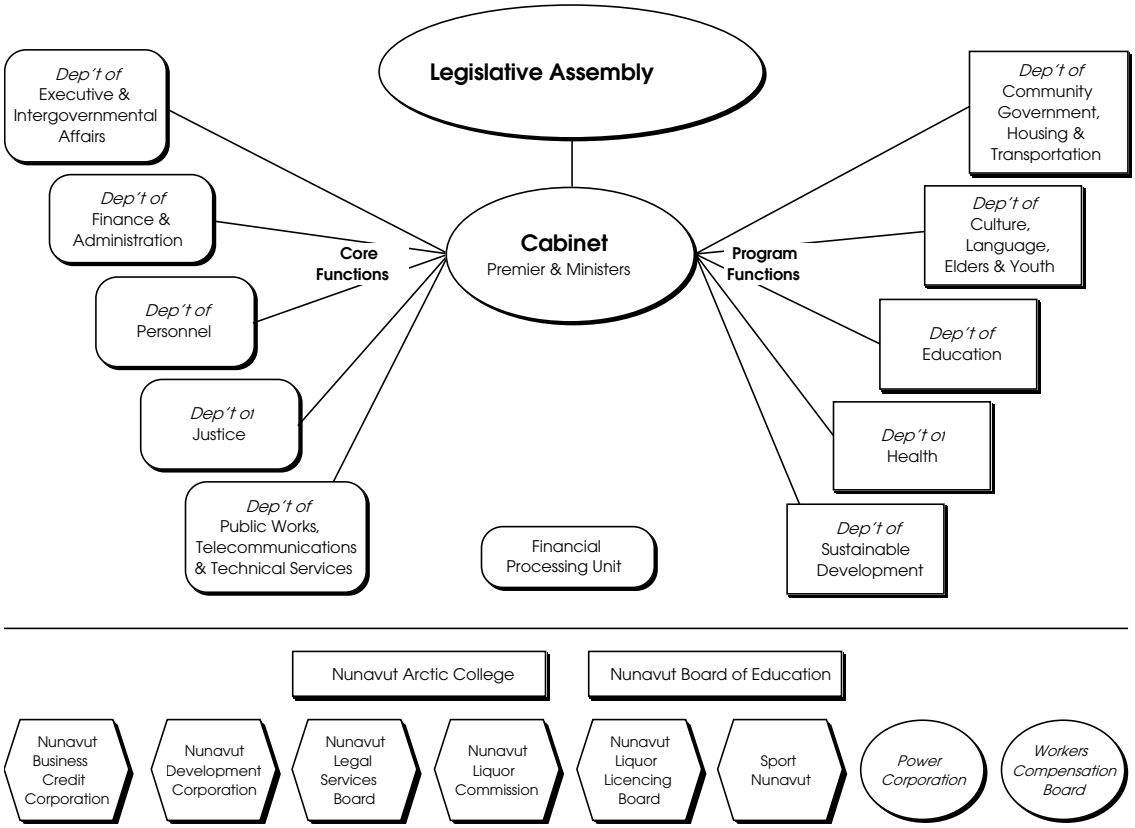
[77] John Amagoalik, speech to Japanese parliamentarians visiting Iqaluit, September 1, 1995.

[78] Quoted in: Richard Hamilton, "TFN, feds reach final agreement: Boundary plebiscite March 16, Nunavut accord by April 1", Nunatsiaq News, December 20, 1991.

[79] Most of the employees of the Government of Nunavut, especially those who delivered services directly to the public, were simply transferred from the Government of the Northwest Territories and continued to perform the same jobs in the same locations as they had prior to division. A nurse in Igloolik, for example, was an employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories on March 31 and an employee of the Government of Nunavut on April 1. T challenge facing the new government was to recruit virtually its entire 'headquarters' staff; the people who perform senior management, central coordination, policy development and similar 'headquarters' functions.

[80] This represents a significant departure from what the Nunavut Implementation Commission recommended: Footprints 2 called for the new government to be fully staffed and operational by the end of its first year of operation. However, delays in the appointment of an Interim Commissioner to oversee actual implementation – and the pace of progress once that position was finally occupied – made a quick start-up impossible.

The Nunavut Implementation Commission recommended that the Government of Nunavut should be a streamlined government – leaner and more effective than the Government of the Northwest Territories. Footprints in New Snow recommended a structure of just ten departments, no regional health boards, and a single, elected education board.[81] In addition to the community and regional level staff already employed by the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Nunavut Implementation Commission projected that just over 600 new 'headquarters' positions will be required – considerably fewer than previous estimates had assumed.



Organisational Design Model of the Government of Nunavut, as proposed by the Nunavut Implementation Commission in Footprints 2.[82]

[81] Under the Government of the Northwest Territories, each region had an education board and a health board which administered programs on behalf of the territorial government.

[82] As a result of discussions between the signatories to the Nunavut Political Accord, the model underwent further evolution after this design was proposed in October 1996. After April 1, 1999 the Members of the Legislative Assembly began making their own changes to the structure of the new government.

The Government of Nunavut administration will be highly decentralised. (All governments have networks of regional and local offices, but these are typically restricted to service delivery; the core functions of government administration, such as policy development, tend to be concentrated in the capital city.) For some it was important that the Government of Nunavut be decentralised so that as many communities as possible could share in the economic benefits arising from the stable, well-paid jobs that would come with the new government. Others believed that locating middle management and professional positions in communities would encourage Inuit participation in the bureaucracy. Still others saw a decentralised government as better suited to traditional Inuit political culture.

The Nunavut Implementation Commission felt that modern communication technologies would allow extensive decentralisation of the Government of Nunavut; however there was considerable debate both inside and outside the commission as to the best way to achieve decentralisation. One school of thought held that all the Deputy Ministers and their senior managers must be based in the capital, with decentralisation to occur by placing some divisions (organisational subsets of departments) and many boards and agencies in smaller communities. (There was general agreement that 'headquarters' jobs could not be spread across all of Nunavut's 25 communities, but that the ten largest communities – in addition to the capital – should have Government of Nunavut offices of some kind. All Nunavut communities have community-based territorial government workers such as teachers, nurses, etc.) Another school of thought held that the departments should be grouped by Executive/Central Agencies, Human Services and Technical Services, with each 'group' of departments (up to and including the Deputy Ministers) located in one of the three regional centres. This approach would have resulted in all 'headquarters' employees of each department being located in the same community, rather than scattered across a number of communities. The former school of thought won out, to the surprise and disappointment of those who had believed that popular support for the principle of 'not recreating Yellowknife' (i.e. not centralising government employment, economic benefits and political power as occurred in the capital of the Northwest Territories) would result in entire departments being located outside the capital and the entire headquarters of each department being located in the same community.

The decentralisation debate is reflective of two broader schools of thought on the Nunavut Implementation Commission's recommendations considered in their entirety. One school holds that the Nunavut Implementation Commission recommended an extremely conventional design, and thereby wasted an opportunity to radically rethink government from an Inuit perspective, while another school holds that the Nunavut Implementation Commission's recommendations, while well intentioned, are optimistic to the point of naiveté about how cumbersome and expensive it will be to establish and operate a decentralised government across a fifth of the land mass of Canada.

Given the need for extensive infrastructure construction (staff housing as well as office facilities) in the ten communities outside Iqaluit, and the complex implementation issues arising from large-scale transfer of jobs, it will be several years before the decentralised model is completely in place. To take one example of what decentralisation will mean, Footprints 2 recommended that the Department of Sustainable Development have its Deputy Minister, 'Policy, Planning and Human Resources', 'Finance and Administration', 'Income Support Programs' and 'Trade and Investment' divisions located in Iqaluit; an 'Environmental Protection' division located in Cambridge Bay; a 'Fisheries and Wildlife' division located in Igloolik; a 'Minerals, Oil and Gas' division located in Kugluktuk; and a 'Parks and Tourism' division located in Pangnirtung – in addition to regional offices located in Pangnirtung, Arviat and Kugluktuk.

The choice of a capital was one of the more 'political' aspects of the Nunavut Implementation Commission's mandate – and the commission therefore approached it with caution. The Commission developed a detailed analysis of how well the three leading contenders for the capital met the criteria it had established for the government as a whole – in particular, how well each of them fit in with the Nunavut Implementation Commission's model of a decentralised government. After completing this analysis, the Commission acknowledged that Iqaluit was the best choice under the most important criteria – but stopped short of actually recommending that it be named the capital. The Nunavut leadership was unable to achieve consensus on the matter, and the delay in selecting a capital was threatening other aspects of the planning process, so Ron Irwin, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, called for a public vote on the question. On December 11, 1995, 60 per cent of the voters chose Iqaluit over Rankin Inlet to be their capital.

Nunavut Inuit have always stressed that for the Government of Nunavut to serve their interests and to foster their culture, its staff must reflect the largely Inuit population and it must use Inuktitut as a working language. Article 23 of the land claim commits governments to "representative" levels of Inuit participation in the bureaucracy, but specifies no time frame. The Nunavut Implementation Commission recommended that 50 per cent of jobs at all levels of the Government of Nunavut be filled by Inuit at start-up in 1999, with representative levels by 2008.[83]

Recruitment, training and retention of Inuit for middle and senior management positions (which is closely tied in with the use of Inuktitut, since few non-Inuit speak or write it) looms as one of the more problematic areas in developing the Government of Nunavut. The federal and territorial governments,

[83] As of April 1, 2000 – one year after the Government of Nunavut formally came into being – 44 per cent of its employees were Inuit. As expected, the percentages were higher in the senior management, clerical and entry-level categories, and lower in the professional categories.

Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Nunavut Implementation Commission and the Nunavut Implementation Training Committee developed a comprehensive Unified Human Resources Development Strategy, with short- and long-term responses to the problem. Ottawa allocated $40 million to fund this initiative.

That $40 million was included in a $150 million allocation by the federal Cabinet to cover start-up costs associated with the creation of the new territory, including training costs, capital expenditures, operation and maintenance budgets and the Office of the Interim Commissioner. This was substantially less than previous estimates.[84]

Designing the Nunavut Political System

The most controversial of the Nunavut Implementation Commission's recommendations were those dealing with Nunavut's political system. Among the ironies of the creation of Nunavut was the federal government's establishment of the Nunavut Implementation Commission to advise on a political system for Nunavut when only 30 years before it had offered to Inuit such simple-minded explanations of democracy as the following:

> Several men in the community will have been nominated to each position on the Council. In order to decide which of the men should have those positions, an election was held. Each person was probably asked to write, on a slip of paper, the name of the man he or she wished to have on the Council. When the voting was completed, the votes were counted and the man who received the highest number of votes was declared elected. It is unlikely that everyone voted for the man who was elected. People do not all think the same way so they are not likely at all to want the same man in office. The man who won the election was elected by the majority of the voters. The minority of the voters had to accept the decision of the majority. This is what democracy means.[85]

Prior to division the residents of Nunavut elected ten of the 24 members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. The Northwest Territories legislature had no political parties; candidates present themselves to the voters as individuals. In keeping with the Canadian norm, each electoral district elected a single Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). Despite the absence of parties, government

---

[84] Three studies by consulting forms Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse had put the one-time start-up costs at between $230 million and $500 million.

[85] Canada, Northern Affairs and National Resources, Northern Administration Branch, Welfare Division, *Qaujivaallirutissat* (Ottawa ON: 1964), p. 38

followed the basic constitutional precepts of British-style 'responsible government' – with some uniquely northern modifications to the standard Westminster Cabinet-parliamentary system. For example, one Member of the Legislative Assembly was elected Premier by a secret ballot of all 24 Members of his or her peers. The Members of the Legislative Assembly also chose the other members of Cabinet by secret ballot. The Premier assigned ministers to portfolios and could discipline them – including firing them – as required. The Premier could be disciplined – and, if necessary, replaced – by the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The Nunavut Implementation Commission recommended that Nunavut's first Premier should be selected in the same manner as the Premier of the Northwest Territories was chosen. There is considerable public support for strengthening the role of the Premier by having that position directly elected by the voters, however the Nunavut Implementation Commission concluded that there are so many complex and unresolved problems with this concept that it should be deferred to a committee of the first Nunavut Legislative Assembly. (Essentially, direct election of the Premier involves grafting a new element onto the Westminster system of parliamentary government – an element that doesn't 'fit' well with the internal logic of that system and may in fact be constitutionally incompatible with it. For example, if the voters directly elect the Premier, how can he/she be disciplined by the Members of the Legislative Assembly? What is the relationship between the Premier, the rest of the Cabinet, and the rest of the Members of the Legislative Assembly? How would the Premier be replaced if he/she were removed from office, resigns or dies?) At a Nunavut Leaders Summit held in Cambridge Bay in February of 1997 the three parties to the Nunavut Political Accord agreed to an elected premiership for Nunavut "if practicable", but by the time of the January 1998 Nunavut Leaders Summit in Iqaluit they had agreed that the issue should be decided after division. Nunavut's first Premier was therefore selected in the same manner as the Premier of the Northwest Territories.

Concerned that a very small legislature might prove unworkable, the Nunavut Implementation Commission initially recommended that the Nunavut Legislative Assembly should consist of between 18 and 24 members and later narrowed its recommendation to either 20 or 22 members.[86] The three parties to the Nunavut Political Accord agreed with this recommendation. While the number of members may not have been surprising, the manner in which they might be selected was. The Nunavut Implementation Commission recommended that the Nunavut Legislative Assembly should consist of equal numbers of men and women, using a system of ten or eleven two-member constituencies each electing one male Member of the Legislative Assembly and one female Member of the Legislative Assembly.

---

[86] See: Nunavut Implementation Commission, Nunavut's Legislature, Premier and First Election (Iqaluit NU, 1996), pp. 13-6.

Encouraged by the commitment of Chief Commissioner John Amagoalik, the Commission had expressed a desire to do whatever it could to encourage the full participation of women in Nunavut's political life. After spirited internal debate, in December 1994 the Nunavut Implementation Commission released a discussion paper on the use of two-member constituencies with gender parity – an equal number of men and women – as a good way to achieve this. The Commission avoided making exaggerated claims for the merits of its proposal, and instead made a minimalist argument that the people of Nunavut would be best represented if the two abiding subsets of humanity were equally represented – especially in light of the disjunctive relations which exist between men and women in Nunavut today, and the magnitude of the social pathologies which the new government would be facing.[87]

Part of the beauty of such a proposal lies in its simplicity. When Nunavut's first election was called, the names of men wanting to run for a seat in the Legislative Assembly would have gone on one list and the names of women wanting to run for a seat in the Legislative Assembly would have gone on another list. On election day, each voter would be given two ballots – one for candidates on the list of male candidates and one for candidates on the list of female candidates. In each electoral district, both the man with the most votes ***and*** the woman with the most votes would be elected. Since one male Member of the Legislative Assembly and one female Member of the Legislative Assembly would represent each electoral district, the Nunavut Legislative Assembly would have been the first legislature in the world to have gender parity guaranteed by its very makeup. The proposal would also have functioned equally well with or without 'party politics' – an important point since many observers of Nunavut politics expect political parties to be formed at some point in the future.

Despite its simplicity, there were two popular misconceptions about this proposal. The first was that men would vote for male candidates and women would vote for female candidates, the implication being that the Nunavut Implementation Commission believed that only men can speak for men and only women can speak for women. In fact, each voter – male or female – would have cast two votes, one for a man and one for a woman. The second misconception was that gender parity would inflate the size of the legislature and increase the costs accordingly (News/North, a newspaper based in Yellowknife, erroneously estimated that the Nunavut Implementation Commission's proposal would have cost the taxpayers an additional $1.8 to $2.2 million per year). In fact, since Canada, the Government of the

---

[87] As Shireen Hassim has noted, "This [approach] is valuable because it sidesteps the controversial areas of normative judgments about fairness, as well as the essentialist arguments about women's differences. It does not assume that women are best able to represent women's interests, or that women's arguments are coherent across race, class or age. Rather, it is an argument posed at the most general and pragmatic level, and is relatively detached from assumptions about what kinds of policies are best for women, or what kinds of substantive changes are needed to empower women". "The dual politics of representation: Women and electoral politics in South Africa", Politikon 26:2, 1999, p. 203.

Northwest Territories and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. had agreed that there would be between 20 and 22 Members of the Legislative Assembly in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly, the question was only how those 20 to 22 Members of the Legislative Assembly will be selected, and there would have been no appreciable cost difference between electing 20 legislators from ten two-member constituencies and electing 20 legislators from 20 single-member constituencies.

The release of the discussion paper ignited a vigorous public debate on the issue of women in politics in general, and on the proposal for gender parity in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly in particular. After receiving more positive comment than negative comment, the Nunavut Implementation Commission formally recommended the proposal to the three parties to the Nunavut Political Accord in December 1996.[88] Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. also gave the proposal its endorsement,[89] and despite some initial misgivings, Ron Irwin – the federal Minister responsible for the creation of Nunavut – also came out in support. While some members of the Nunavut Caucus (the Members of the Legislative Assembly elected to represent Nunavut in the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories) endorsed the proposal, most did not – with the most vociferous opponent being Manitok Thompson, the only female member of the Nunavut Caucus and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories, whose role was to advise the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, strongly supported the proposal:

> Women have been struggling long and hard for political representation. After so many years of having the vote, by now we should see women being elected in equal numbers. It's not happening because of the systemic barriers in our society. … Those barriers include negative attitudes about women in leadership positions, expectations that women should stay home and care for children, lack of adequate, affordable child care, lack of confidence, lack of money, and lack of connection to the informal power structures by which candidates are chosen and supported through the election process. Equality is about equal opportunity to be represented in the political process. In a democratic society, we accept the principles of representation by geography and by population. Equal representation for women and men is just a more refined form of representation by population, since the electorate is divided almost equally between men and women. Democracy and equality are also about fairness. It is not fair that women's voices are so under-represented in our present electoral system. If we continue at the present rate of slow increases of women being represented in the electoral process, it could be several hundred years before we see equal numbers of women and men in our legislature. Our northern society, with our serious economic and social problems, needs women's voices in the Legislature now'.'[90]

---

[88] See: Nunavut Implementation Commission, Nunavut's Legislature, Premier and First Election, pp. 31-65.

[89] "Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. reaffirms support for gender parity", press release dated 1997 March 7.

[90] Press release dated 1997 February 25.

At the Nunavut Leaders Summit held in Cambridge Bay in February of 1997, the Government of the Northwest Territories surprised and angered the other parties around the table by peremptorily issuing a press release calling for a public vote on the matter. Since the three parties to the Nunavut Political Accord strove to reach agreement by consensus, and since the Nunavut Caucus refused to join the rest of the Nunavut leadership in support of the proposal, Minister Irwin agreed to hold a public vote on the question.

The campaigning in the weeks leading up to the vote generated rather more heat than light. The 'Yes' side – those who supported the proposal – was composed of Nunavut Implementation Commission Chief Commissioner John Amagoalik, most of the Board of Directors of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the President of Pauktuutit (the national Inuit women's association), and youth and elder representatives. With $75,000 in financial support from Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. they produced and distributed pamphlets, posters and buttons, and – in the style of the 'community tours' that had been used to inform Inuit of the contents of the land claim – chartered a small aircraft to visit a number of the communities for 'town hall' style meetings.

The 'No' side was less organised and largely unfunded. Manitok Thompson and other opponents of the proposal, the most vocal of whom resided in Rankin Inlet and Igloolik, joined the 'Yes' side in making their arguments on phone-in shows on both community radio stations and Nunavut-wide current affairs programs on both radio and television. The multiple lines of argument used by those opposing the proposal made it difficult for the 'Yes' side to respond effectively. Some opponents clearly did not understand the proposal – and argued that it would cost too much, or force men to be represented by men and women to be represented by women. Many opponents did understand the proposal, however, and argued that it would sow division between men and women where none currently existed, that women would be seen as 'affirmative action' Members of the Legislative Assembly whose opinions would be taken less seriously than that of male Members of the Legislative Assembly, and that women need to "beat" men in order to be taken seriously in politics.

Where supporters saw a unique opportunity to implement a vision of a more balanced political system, opponents saw a plan that insulted women's abilities to get elected if they chose to run. Where supporters saw a gender equal legislature as a return to the values of traditional Inuit society, in which families were built on an equal division of labour between men and women,[91] opponents dismissed this view as a romanticised retelling of history. Where supporters saw a way to achieve a new partnership between men

[91] The Nunavut Implementation Commission had chosen not to situate its proposal in a definitive explanation of historical gender relations in Inuit society or the impact of colonisation upon those relations, as any such analysis would have been at least as controversial as the gender parity proposal itself.

and women, opponents were insulted by a proposal that would "send women back to the stone age". Where supporters saw a way to recognise the differing perspectives that men and women sometimes have on particular issues, opponents argued that disproportionate gender representation in politics is not important – that "people think with what's between their ears, not with what's between their legs".[92] And finally, where supporters saw the proposal as reflecting the 'creative but within Canadian political norms' tone of the Nunavut project as a whole, opponents saw it as an unwelcome, unnecessary and unworkable scheme that the Nunavut leadership was trying to force on an unsuspecting electorate.[93]

A vocal minority went so far as to suggest – often on biblical grounds – that women have no business in politics, and widely held conservative religious beliefs appear to have been an important factor in the outcome. (While most people think of shamanism when they think of Inuit religious beliefs, the population of Nunavut today tends to adhere to what anthropologist Robert Williamson has called "a quasi-fundamentalist, low-church Anglicanism",[94] Roman Catholicism, or – increasingly – one of a number of fundamentalist churches.) Many Christians (including some clergy) supported the proposal,[95] but the great majority of people who publicly commented on it from a religious perspective – especially from a fundamentalist perspective – were strongly opposed to it.[96]

---

[92] In her 1997 book Speaking of Sex: The Denial of Gender Inequality (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press), Deborah L. Rhode examines what she terms the "no problem" problem. "When speaking of sex, we like to discuss sexual relationships, sexual deviance, and sexual difference; we prefer to avoid sexual inequality and the patterns that sustain it. … The dynamics of denial fall into three basic patterns. The first involves denials of gender equality: many individuals fail to recognise the extent of problems facing women. The second dynamic involves denials of injustice: people often rationalise women's inequality as the result of women's own choices and capabilities. The final pattern involves denials of responsibility: individuals frequently believe that whatever inequality exists, they personally are neither part of the problem nor part of the solution". (pp. 2-3.)

[93] This range of perspectives is similar to those expressed when Edna Maclean of Barrow, Alaska, introduced a resolution to the 1983 General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference calling for guaranteed equal representation for women at the organisation's General Assembly. After a prominent male Inuit leader from Alaska argued that such a move would be "discriminatory", the resolution was amended to read that women should have equal representation "whenever possible". See: Bill Hess, "Women see equal representation", Inuit Today February 1984, p. 46.

[94] Robert G. Williamson, "In the search for 'a people': The Inuit, their habitat, and economic politics", in: Donald Clark and Robert G. Williamson (eds.*),* Self-determination: International Perspectives (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 316.

[95] For a biblical case in support of gender equality, see: Rebecca M. Groothuis, Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books, 1997).

[96] For an interesting analysis of the role that religion – especially fundamentalist religion – has played in limiting the number of women elected to public office in the southern United States, see: Laura M. Moore's unpublished 1999 Ph.D. thesis in Sociology at the University of Maryland College Park, "A multi-level analysis of attitudes regarding women in politics: Why is the United States south different?" One of Moore's most interesting findings has to do with the impact that the emancipatory character of black fundamentalist churches appears to have – "As the proportion fundamentalist increases, whites' conservative political gender attitudes increase while blacks' decrease". In this regard, the fundamentalist churches in Nunavut are 'white churches', not 'black churches'.

The 'damn the elites and their agreements' mindset that had helped sink the Charlottetown Accord[97] resonated in a side debate that came to dominate public discussion in the closing days of the campaign. The Board of Directors of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. had voted a modest amount of money to be used to publicise their support of the proposal, as they had done on other issues previously. Opponents of the proposal complained that Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. had no business "telling people how to vote", and that at the very least they should receive equal funding for pamphlets, posters, buttons and community tours.

On May 26, 1997, the voters rejected the Nunavut Implementation Commission's proposal for a Nunavut Legislature with gender parity by a margin of 57 per cent to 43 per cent.[98]

In the absence of any polling data, one can only speculate as to the reasons for this result.

One explanation might be that while Nunavut residents expressed their desire for a government that would be "different" from the Government of the Northwest Territories, the existing government remained the reference point for discussion of how the new government should be structured and how it should operate. The 'one man, one vote' norm for electoral systems in Canada has been accepted and internalised as 'the way elections are done', even though the results tend to be 'one vote, one man' – indeed the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories had the lowest proportion of female members of any provincial or territorial legislature in Canada. The Nunavut Implementation Commission's suggestion to choose representatives in a slightly different manner was regarded by many people as just plain loopy.

Some may have voted against the proposal less because they objected to gender parity in the legislature than because they did not wish to see dual-member ridings. A system with twice as many single-member districts would enhance the prospects of individual communities having their 'own' Members of the Legislative Assembly.

---

[97] The Charlottetown Accord was a sweeping package of constitutional reforms which was negotiated and agreed to by the Government of Canada and the provinces, but rejected by the voters in a nation-wide referendum held in October 1992. It included a constitutional provision recognising the inherent right to self-government of Canada's indigenous peoples. Kent McNeil has suggested that, despite its rejection, by this recognition "the accord probably altered the relationship between the aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state in fundamental and irrevocable ways". ("The decolonisation of Canada: Moving toward recognition of aboriginal governments", Western Legal History 7:1, 1994, pp. 113-41.) See also: Kenneth McRoberts and Patrick Monahan (eds.), The Charlottetown Accord, the Referendum, and the Future of Canada (Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press, 1993), especially Mary Ellen Turpel's article "The Charlottetown discord and aboriginal peoples' struggle for fundamental political change".

[98] As a result, the new government has a Senior Advisor on Women's Issues and an advisory Status of Women Council (appointed by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women) – both of which were deliberately excluded from the Nunavut Implementation Commission's Footprints recommendations to emphasise its belief

Another factor worth considering is the very low voter turnout for the vote – just 39 per cent. Again, in the absence of polling data one can only speculate as to the reasons for this. The date of the vote, in late spring when many families had already left town for spring camping, may have been a factor. But it may also be the case that while gender parity in decision-making structures is an issue that some people are passionately supportive of, and while other people are hotly opposed to measures intended to achieve gender parity, many people either did not think the issue was worthy of all the attention it was receiving or were put off by the tone of the debate it had sparked. It is important to note that the gender parity question was the only aspect of the creation of Nunavut which resulted in open conflict between sections of the Inuit political leadership.

While the debate was playing itself out, a three-person Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission (NEBC) was touring Nunavut communities. The Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission had been established by the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories to make recommendations on the area, boundaries, names and representation of Nunavut's electoral districts. As the public vote had not yet decided the question of gender parity and two-member constituencies, the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission was directed to include options for both ten or eleven dual member and 20 to 22 single-member electoral districts.

The Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission's report contained models for those options, but the Commission recommended a third option – a system of 17 single-member electoral districts in which Iqaluit would have two electoral districts and the other 15 electoral districts would contain between one and four communities each. The reason given in the report was that during community consultations "many citizens expressed a genuine concern about the "expense" of having 20 to 22 Members of the Legislative Assembly in the Nunavut legislature..."[99] The Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission did not address the Nunavut Implementation Commission's rationale as to the need for at least 20 Members of the Legislative Assembly to ensure the effective operation of the legislature. The Legislative Assembly later endorsed the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission's recommendations with minor modifications, but Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. continued to push for a larger legislature. Finally, at the January 1998 Nunavut Leaders Summit, the three parties to the Nunavut Political Accord finally agreed that Nunavut's legislature would consist of 19 electoral districts.

---

that having gender parity in the legislature would be more effective than the conventional responses to the under-representation of women in decision-making structures.

[99] Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission, Report of the Nunavut Electoral Boundary Commission (Iqaluit NU, June 30, 1997), p. 16.

Building Core Capacity

The *Nunavut Act* had established the Nunavut Implementation Commission to advise the parties (the federal and territorial governments and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated) on crucial political and administrative design features for the territorial government. It also made provision for an Interim Commissioner of Nunavut, a federal public servant empowered to finalise the design for the government and to implement it. This key official was authorised to hire staff for the new government, enter into contracts and intergovernmental agreements on its behalf and generally take whatever administrative steps were required to ensure that the Government of Nunavut was fully up and running on April 1, 1999.

Initial expectations were that the Interim Commissioner would have to be in place no later than the end of 1995 if the necessary work was to be completed on time. For various political reasons, however, it was not until April 1997 that the federal government appointed Jack Anawak, who resigned as the region's Liberal Member of Parliament to serve as Interim Commissioner. Ottawa later placed a senior bureaucrat (with a reputation as a back-room 'fixer') in the Office of the Interim Commissioner (OIC).

In January 1998, the Office of the Interim Commissioner's detailed plans for the Government of Nunavut, based closely on the Footprints 2 model, were approved by the three parties. Shortly thereafter, following a Canada-wide competition, the first set of Deputy Ministers[100] was appointed. Only three of the eleven Deputy Ministers were Inuit; six more were veteran Government of the Northwest Territories bureaucrats, mostly based in Nunavut. Criticism of the low proportion of Inuit in this top management cadre was somewhat muted by the hiring of 14 Assistant Deputy Ministers (the next level down in the administrative hierarchy) all of whom were Inuit.

The new Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers began the task of staffing their departments, working up budgets and sorting out myriad administrative matters. With an enormous amount of work, facilitated by extensive give and take on the part of the three parties, the logistical details of creating the new government were addressed. Because of time pressures and other difficulties, a substantial number of operational and service delivery functions (such as electronic data processing and teacher certification) were contracted back to the post-division Government of the Northwest Territories, to be taken over by the Government of Nunavut as its capacity developed. Similarly, the commitment to a decentralised government remained, but construction of the necessary infrastructure and the actual transfer of jobs to the communities had not progressed very far by April 1. A very few important matters, such as the future of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, remained to be resolved after division.

---

[100] 'Deputy Minister' is the term used in Canada to denote the chief civil servant in a given department; the same position is called 'Permanent Secretary' in some other countries.

Nunavut's First Election

Nunavut's first election took place on February 15, 1999. 71 candidates, including eleven Inuit women and seven non-Inuit men, put their names forward for the 19 seats; all ran as independents, following the 'consensus' model which had developed in the Northwest Territories. A very high proportion — 88 per cent — of those eligible to vote cast ballots.

The voters returned some former Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories who had extensive political experience but rejected others (including former Northwest Territories Deputy Premier Goo Arlooktoo, who had been widely tabbed in both the northern and southern media as a likely Premier) in favour of candidates with minimal political seasoning. Similarly, the new legislature contained both Inuit with limited facility in English and fluently bilingual Inuit with professional training and experience.

A total of fourteen Inuit men were elected (including Jack Anawak, who had resigned as Interim Commissioner in order to run for election to the first Legislative Assembly), as well as four non-Inuit men. Just one woman was elected — Manitok Thompson, the former Northwest Territories minister who had campaigned against a gender-equal legislature. With just one female Member of the Legislative Assembly out of 19, Nunavut now has the lowest proportion of female representation in Canada.

When the Members of the Legislative Assembly gathered in Iqaluit in March, they chose as Premier not Jack Anawak, the apparent front-runner, but 34-year-old Paul Okalik, who had won the riding of Iqaluit West. Okalik seemed to symbolise the hopes of many for the new territory – overcoming brushes with the law in his youth, he became a senior negotiator on the land claim and later Nunavut's first Inuit lawyer.

> Mr. Okalik, who is the father of two, could be a poster child for Nunavut and a role model for the next generation. Like many young Inuit, he had a troublesome adolescence. He struggled through difficulties with alcohol and the suicide of his brother. He was kicked out of high school and wandered aimlessly without direction. When his first daughter was born, he began to turn his life around. He learned about his roots, cocooning himself with his family in Pangnirtung, a community just outside Iqaluit. He did an undergraduate degree in political science and Canadian studies at Carleton University in Ottawa. He enrolled in law school at the University of Ottawa and then began articling at a law firm in Iqaluit. He was called to the bar days before Nunavut's first election, on February 15.[101]

After choosing Paul Okalik as their Premier, the Members of the Legislative Assembly then chose the balance of Nunavut's first Cabinet. Both Jack Anawak and Manitok Thompson were included, as was veteran Inuit politician James Arvaluk, two non-Inuit men who had served in the Northwest Territories

legislature (Kelvin Ng, who had served in the NWT Cabinet, and Ed Picco) and two Inuit newcomers to territorial politics (Peter Kilabuk and Donald Havioyak).

Several days after his election Premier Okalik assigned portfolios to his fellow Cabinet members, and the new government quickly got down to work. On the one hand they found themselves with little room to manoeuvre, given the relentless pressures for spending on education, health, housing and social services; yet on the other hand, they set themselves lofty goals in a comprehensive (if somewhat imprecise) document they — Ministers and 'regular' Members of the Legislative Assembly alike — developed during the summer of 1999, entitled 'The Bathurst Mandate'.[102]

By and large, the first year of the Government of Nunavut was characterised by a 'stay the course' approach. With some notable exceptions, such as an early decision to eliminate the regional health and education boards in 2000 and a controversial decision to establish a single time zone for Nunavut (in place of the three that had previously existed), the government's efforts were principally consumed with the difficult task of building governance capacity while maintaining and improving delivery of public services.

[101] Anne Marie Owens, "Nunavut's 'new man' beats favourite to become Premier", National Post, March 6, 1999.

[102] Government of Nunavut, The Bathurst Mandate: *Pinasuaqtavut:* That Which We've Set Out To Do: Our Hopes and Plans for Nunavut (Iqaluit NU, 1999).

6. APRIL 1999 AND AFTER: CELEBRATION AND CRITICISM

It was quite a party. The celebrations marking the creation of Nunavut on April 1, 1999 were centred in the capital, Iqaluit, but community feasts and dances were held across the new territory. The formal ceremonies were attended by the Governor General and Prime Minister of Canada, and were broadcast live on television from sea to sea to sea – and around the world. "The thrill of victory is quickly replaced by the awesome amount of work that must be done", Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, himself a former federal minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, said at the first sitting of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly – an event rich in Inuit tradition and music. "As Nunavut takes flight, you are dealing with immense challenges. Whether it is educating your fast-growing population, alleviating poverty and social breakdown, or building the capacity within your own government to address these challenges, you have your work cut out for you".

The long-awaited creation of Nunavut also focused unprecedented media attention on the eastern and central Arctic. Not only did all major Canadian news organisations send reporters and camera crews to Nunavut in the days leading up to April 1, but so too did literally dozens of American, European and even Asian newspapers and television networks. Most of the coverage was positive and supportive, albeit with references to the magnitude of the task ahead:

The Manchester Guardian, for example, noted:

> The emergence of Nunavut is unequivocally good news. While large tracts of the world are mired in war and insurgency, an ethnic minority has quietly negotiated an equitable deal with a central government that gives them the freedom to run their own affairs.[103]

The Globe and Mail proclaimed:

> Canada has done something of huge symbolic value … Nunavut is a powerful and worthy experiment [which] deserves to succeed.[104]

TIME magazine wrote:

> Canada's first de facto experiment with native self-government – and only the second of its kind in the world. [It is] a socio-political experiment on an epic scale.[105]

---

[103] John Ryle, "What country are we in?" Manchester Guardian, February 22, 1999.

[104] "Charting new territory" (editorial), Globe and Mail, April 3, 1999.

[105] Andrew Purvis, "Nunavut gets ready: The hoopla is about to start for the launch of Canada's huge, largely Inuit-run, self-governing Arctic territory. But how prepared is everyone?", TIME, March 29, 1999.

And the Baltimore Sun called Nunavut:

> … a bold and risky experiment in native self-government, one that has fired the hopes of aboriginal people around the world, from the Maori of New Zealand to the Mohawks of New York.[106]

The Baltimore Sun went on to note that while:

> Nunavut might be a symbol of hope, … it is also a stronghold of despair. On the instant of its birth, it becomes the poorest territory, by far, in Canada – a welfare basket case where desperate social conditions are made worse by physical isolation and a brutal climate.[107]

A small but vocal media contingent reacted very negatively to Nunavut. From the political right, especially from commentators and publications openly hostile to aboriginal self-government aspirations, came volleys of condemnation and misinformation:

A columnist in Alberta Report, a regional magazine owned by the Byfield family – whose politics mimic those of far-right politico-religious groups in the United States – wrote:

> The 25,000 people who live in the new territory … mostly speak a foreign language. … the Inuit will (likely) have to put up with decades of corruption and political oppression from their own leaders. … Perhaps we should be toasting the birth of Nunavut with a chunk of raw seal meat (and) a glass of narwhal blood… the day will live in infamy, as a huge step towards the race-based partitioning of Canada. … Giving away Nunavut was easy compared to what is happening in British Columbia… man the boats, Eurotrash, and set a course for pre-Columbia.[108]

A columnist in Report Newsmagazine, the Byfield's attempt to reach a national audience, suggested:

> With little likelihood of solving Nunavut's problems any time soon, federal taxpayers could be forgiven for wondering if it might be wiser to ship its entire population south. Housing and feeding an Inuit family of four in Orlando, Florida, where a decent two-bedroom apartment rents for under $1,000 per month, would be far cheaper than the $100,000-plus in transfers the same family requires in Nunavut. Even if the family opted for a two-bedroom, two-bathroom air-conditioned suite with full kitchen facilities at the Sea World Ramada, the annual room charge of $62,800 and a $2,500 monthly allowance would still save Canadians almost $10,000 a year.[109]

---

[106] Colin Nickerson, "Inuit land born amid hope, fear; Nunavut: The new territory in Canada's Arctic will be the nation's poorest, but natives are overjoyed at the opportunity for self-rule", Baltimore Sun, March 31, 1999.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Paul Bunner, "Birth of a Nunavut: The racial partitioning of Canada begins", Alberta Report, April 12, 1999.

[109] Tom McFeely, "Move them to Florida", Report Newsmagazine, November 22, 1999.

Neo-liberal columnist David Frum seemed to take considerable pleasure in informing the readership of the National Post (owned by media magnate Conrad Black) that:

> The new territory of Nunavut is shaping up to be a mess of corruption and maladministration that will prove catastrophic both for the Inuit and the Canadian taxpayer … Look at the system of government Nunavut is adopting … it is carefully arranging to eliminate any organised locus of opposition to the government. The Nunavut legislature will have no political parties. The leaders of Nunavut explain this with a lot of 'Dances With Wolves' hooey about confrontation and criticism being alien to native ways of life, etc... But the real purpose of the exclusion of any mechanism for opposition is to ensure that nobody in the legislature will have the resources and incentive to scrutinise the doings of the Nunavut territorial government.[110]

According to Mel Smith, a British Columbia-based opponent of native land claims, Nunavut is a case study in interest group liberalism run amok … "proposed by aggressive bureaucrats, prodded by the most powerful lobby in the country and acceded to by compliant politicians",[111] while a columnist in the Ottawa Citizen (also owned by Conrad Black) called Nunavut Canada's "first Bantustan, an apartheid-style ethnic homeland".[112]

The Wall Street Journal paraphrased Owen Lippert, a spokesperson for the Fraser Institute (a British Columbia-based right-wing think tank), as saying "They [Inuit] … can't sell the land unless they want to sell it back to the Crown; and … they can't build anything deemed offensive: no strip malls, no parking lots. In other words, they are not allowed to do the things that makes owning private property a worthwhile investment".[113] "Whatever the motives of this and similar attempts to offer retroactive justice to indigenous people", the article's author concluded, " it always ends up tangled in interest group politics, social engineering and bigger government. Canada's latest debacle is perhaps the triumph of hope over experience. But when all the noisemakers and confetti have left the new territory, the Inuit may not be any better off than they were when they started".

While some of these articles reflect general hostility to aboriginal peoples' aspirations, many of them were really targeted at another land claim altogether – that of the Nisga'a First Nation in British Columbia. Most of Nunavut's more strident critics have no history of interest in Nunavut, and no track record of research and writing on Nunavut. Few if any have even bothered to visit Nunavut. What they

---

[110] "Nunavut needs protection from itself", National Post, April 3, 1999.

[111] Quoted in: Colin Levey, "Canada gives the Inuits a homeland, but no malls please", Wall Street Journal, April 2, 1999.

[112] Dan Gardner, "It's just like South Africa, but without the beaches", Ottawa Citizen, March 8, 1999.

[113] Colin Levey, op. cit. One can only wonder how the Wall Street Journal's fact-checkers allowed such nonsense to appear in print…

are interested in, however, is using Nunavut as a vehicle with which to scaremonger about what the settlement of First Nations' land claims will mean for British Columbia. When a director of the Canadian Taxpayers' Federation says that "southern Canadians should have been consulted before the Inuit-dominated territory split from the Northwest Territories in April",[114] what he really means is that the non-native majority in British Columbia should have veto powers over First Nations land claims there.

Not all the vociferous critics are journalists, politicians and lobbyists. While the vast majority of informed academic commentary on Nunavut has been positive, the Toronto-based duo of Albert Howard and Frances Widdowson purport to bring academic analysis to northern issues – but their criticism seems no less driven by an odious sense of cultural superiority. Howard and Widdowson, who make much of the fact that they lived for several years in Yellowknife before returning to the south, argued in an article entitled "The disaster of Nunavut" that Nunavut is "fundamentally unviable", [115] and "will not enable the Inuit to assert more control over their lives and thereby improve social conditions in their communities".[116] They further assert that "Nunavut cannot be the answer to Inuit social problems because it is economically and culturally unviable. The racially defined territory's existence will depend almost entirely on federal transfers, and attempting to artificially retain Inuit culture will isolate Inuit people further from the modern world".[117] Writing in a style that would have been extreme even in the assimilationist 1950s and 1960s (but without a trace of the humanism that characterised that period) they urge Inuit to discard the "attitudes and values arising from a subsistence lifestyle [which] are … a barrier to the social and political development of Inuit people".[118] "The Inuit have as much capacity to become producers of economic value as anyone else",[119] they conclude, if only Inuit would, well, be just like the rest of us.

Their certainty that Nunavut will prove to be an anthropological theme park where Inuit can (or must) forego the "disciplines of industrialisation"[120] in favour of an "artificial retention of Inuit culture"[121] and

---

[114] Quoted in: Shawn Ohler, "Nunavut to release first budget with 90% of it federal money", National Post, May 14, 1999.

[115] Albert Howard and Frances Widdowson, "The disaster of Nunavut ", Policy Options July/August 1999, p. 58.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid, p. 60.

[119] Ibid, p. 61.

[120] Ibid, p. 60.

[121] Ibid.

"free money for all Inuit and no obligations to humanity as a whole"[122] might be dispelled by a visit to Greenland, Nunavut's neighbour across the Davis Strait. Far from being a polity determined to "warehouse the Inuit and … [institutionalise] Inuit separation from the modern world",[123] thereby maintaining Inuit culture "in the Neolithic period, preserving it as a museum piece for the rest of the world to observe",[124] the development of the Home Rule Government has rapidly increased the speed of Greenland's integration into the world around it – including the world market for the products which Greenlanders produce. The Home Rule Government has, in effect, been the vehicle through which Greenlanders have sought to negotiate the terms of their increased integration into the wider world.[125]

Howard and Widdowson have attracted media attention not because of the acuity of their 'insights' or the power of their analyses – and certainly not because they offer any viable alternative strategies – but because so few other academics and policy analysts are studying and writing about Nunavut. The resulting intellectual (and publishing) vacuum is filled by people who, at the end of the day, find themselves in bed with the reactionary Canadian Alliance Party, columnists in the employ of Ted Byfield and Conrad Black, and others who really could not care less about Nunavut – and whose real agenda is hostility to aboriginal self-government aspirations elsewhere.

---

[122] Ibid, p. 61.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid, p. 60.

[125] In his 1986 article "Greenland: Political structure of self-government" (Arctic Anthropology 23:1/2) Danish social anthropologist Jens Dahl noted the crucial role played by the Home Rule Government, and the fact that it is "overdeveloped compared to its social basis inside Greenland. The character of the Home Rule 'state', its power, its scope, and area of function are primarily products of the Danish presence in the country for more than 250 years, and not a product of national economic and social development". The Government of Nunavut has a similar, although less extreme, "overdeveloped" relationship to its social basis inside the new territory.

Other recommended writings on Greenland in English include: Jens Dahl, Saqqaq: An Inuit Hunting Community in the Modern World (Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Søren Forchhammer, "Gathered or dispersed? Four decades of development policy debate in Greenland", Ph.D. Thesis in the Department of Eskimology, University of Copenhagen, 1997; Jack Hicks, "Greenland: Home Rule at the crossroads", Arctic Circle Fall 1994; Finn Breinholt Larsen, "The quiet life of a revolution: Greenlandic Home Rule 1979-1992", Études/Inuit/Studies 16:1/2, 1992; Philip Lauritzen, Highlights of an Arctic Revolution: The First 120 Months of Greenlandic Home Rule (Nuuk: Atuakkiorfik, 1989); Ole Marquardt et al., From Sealing to Fishing: Social and Economic Change in Greenland, 1850-1940 (Esbjerg: North Atlantic Fisheries History Association, 1999); Mark Nuttall, Arctic Homeland: Kinship, Community and Development in Northwest Greenland (London: Belhaven Press, 1992), and "Greenland: Emergence of an Inuit homeland", in: Minority Rights Group (eds.) Polar Peoples: Self-Determination and Development (London, 1994); Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Greenland's Economy: Building a Strategy for the Future (Nuuk: Greenland Home Rule Government, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Trade, 1999); Birger Poppel, "Greenland's road to recovery and the pattern of settlement", Nordic Journal of Regional Development and Territorial Policy 8:2, 1997; and Axel Kjær Sørensen, "Greenland: From colony to Home Rule", in: Sven Tagil (ed.) Ethnicity and Nation Building in the Nordic World (Carbondale IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995).

To be sure, there may be serious and valid criticisms to be made of the Nunavut project. As we await critiques of the Nunavut 'package' that are more knowledgeable and thoughtful than those that have been published to date, it may be useful to summarise the weaknesses of the current crop of critics:

- they fall into and perpetuate major factual errors; for example, Nunavut is not a race-based government, it is a public government in which all residents can participate. 20 per cent of all Members of Legislative Assembly and 25 per cent of the Cabinet are non-Inuit;
- the fleeting and/or politically motivated nature of their interest in Nunavut tends to result in shallow coverage that offers little of substance to those involved in building Nunavut;
- they apparently wish to deny to the people of Nunavut what all other Canadians take for granted: the ability of people to run their own affairs as they wish, through local and regional democratically elected institutions;
- obsessed as they are with the magnitude of transfer payments from Ottawa, they rarely acknowledge facts well-known to federal decision-makers: that having sovereignty over the eastern and central was costing Ottawa a bundle long before Nunavut came into being, and that the incremental cost of dividing the Northwest Territories in order to accommodate Inuit self-government interests – $95 million – is just a fraction of the overall cost of providing province-like programs and services etc. to northern residents. As a public government, the Government of Nunavut is responsible for delivering health care, education, social services, etc. to all who live there. With a presently limited capacity to raise revenue through taxation, transfer payments from Ottawa are essential to sustain the same basic level of service enjoyed by all Canadians – regardless of where they live;
- they fail to mention that other regions of the country were also highly dependent on the federal government before they achieved a level of economic development that allowed them to cover more of their own costs of government services;
- they tend to caricature the Inuit leaders who negotiated the Nunavut land claim as being rather naïve and/or oblivious to the social problems in their communities, rather than recognising them for what they were and are – pragmatic politicians who assessed the options which the Canadian political system offered them and their people, envisioned a new form of accommodating aboriginal self-government aspirations without threatening the territorial integrity of the state within which they found themselves, helped change the government policies which stood in their way, and thereby earned the respect of their negotiating partners during the 20 long years it took to make their dream a reality; and,
- they offer no alternatives other than depopulating the Arctic and destroying the Inuit as a distinct people – which would be an obscene violation of their human rights.

7. POLITICS, PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS

Robert Williamson, one of the first Members of the Legislative Assembly elected to represent an eastern Arctic constituency in the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, has written that Inuit must be understood as being:

> ... a people within their habitat – interrelated socially, physically and metaphysically with their ancestral environment. The cosmology, prehistory and oral history give meaning, depth and predictability to the present and future. The language carries cultural meaning into the present and the future. The social organisation is integrated with the economy, the value system, and the acquisition, holding and deployment of power. The adaptability and learning capacity of the people in changing circumstances depend on confidence in themselves as bearers of a valued and respected contemporary identity, based on their own expression of culture. All of these are related to self-determination in the contemporary era.[126]

Indeed they are. What is less clear, however, is the degree to which the self-government and public government institutions created by the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement can sustain and foster that confidence, and result in meaningful self-determination for the Inuit of Nunavut.

Many of today's Inuit leaders are veterans of the struggle for Nunavut, and they take care to articulate a vision of a better future while they manage their enormous day-to-day responsibilities. Behind them is rising a thin layer of younger leaders, men and women who have worked their way up through government and elsewhere, acquiring the skills that effective self-government requires. Behind ***them*** is a somewhat larger but even younger layer, often fresh out of school or not having gone as far in school as they might have, yet destined to be fast-tracked into management positions in the new structures.

This is one face of Nunavut, a new face of opportunity. The other face of Nunavut is one of mounting despair. "We live in the most violent jurisdiction in Canada", a woman writes in a weekly newspaper. "... Ignoring the statistics is condoning violence. It is saying it is okay for our women to be beaten. Shelters don't cause the break-up of families or suicide; violence does".[127]

As if in response, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. First Vice-President James Eetoolook acknowledged:

> As in other societies, problems of domestic violence are a symptom of deeper economic and social problems in Inuit society that are aggravated by such things as: unemployment, underemployment, inadequate and poorly designed government social policies and programs, and the rapid rate of technological change.[128]

---

[126] Robert G. Williamson, op. cit., p. 322.

[127] Rebecca Kudloo, Eastern Arctic Vice-President of the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories, "We are living in an epidemic of violence", letter to Nunatsiaq News, February 11, 1994.

[128] Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. press release issued 4 February, 1994.

Much of the responsibility for the development and implementation of policies and programs that can begin to address these problems now rests with the Government of Nunavut. The challenges and contradictions inherent in the Nunavut project will make the initial years of the new government a critical time for all residents of the new territory.

Relationships Between the Bodies Created by the Land Claim

In addition to the politics of the web of relationships between Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the regional Inuit associations and the Institutions of Public Government, the year 1999 saw the beginning of a complex relationship between a public government and an organisation that can legitimately claim to represent the interests of 85 per cent of the public. Indeed, the Presidents of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. will almost certainly be elected by more voters than the Premiers of Nunavut.

Like the Makivik Corporation in Nunavik and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in the Mackenzie Delta, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. wields a unique blend of political and economic power as it promotes the rights of – and manages the responsibilities of – its Inuit beneficiaries. Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. differs from Makivik and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in that where they represent a small minority of the total population of the province and territory in which they find themselves, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. represents the overwhelming majority. Indeed, nowhere in Canada does a non-governmental organisation exist with anything that even begins to approximate the clout and legitimacy that Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. carries in Nunavut.

The actions of the new government will be monitored carefully by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, which became so frustrated with the Government of the Northwest Territories that it formed an Inuit 'shadow Cabinet' – a "watchdog structure to safeguard Inuit rights".[129] How will Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. react should the fledgling Government of Nunavut not adequately meet the Inuit population's demand for rapid, appropriate and effective changes in the public government policies? The 'shadow Cabinet' could possibly be reconstituted, but the initial effort actually accomplished little other than making public the organisations' degree of frustration with the previous territorial government.

A high priority for both the new Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. was, therefore, the establishment of principles to guide their unique and crucial relationship. In the Fall of 1999, the Premier of Nunavut and the President of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. signed the 'Clyde River Protocol' – an

agreement outlining in broad terms the two organisations' understanding of their respective spheres of influence, the importance of respecting and consulting one another on areas of mutual concern and the communications processes to achieve cooperation. The signing ceremony had all the solemnity and formality one would expect of the signing of an intergovernmental agreement. While Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. is not a government, the ceremony demonstrated the respect which the Premier of Nunavut accords Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Nunavut land claim – which he had played a key role in negotiating.

Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. can be expected to give particular attention to how the Government of Nunavut addresses Articles 23 ('Inuit employment within government') and 24 ('Government contracts'), and also to how the Government of Nunavut addresses incorporating *Inuit qaujimajatuqangit* ('Inuit traditional knowledge', literally 'that which is long known by Inuit') into its *modus operandi.*

The actions of the entire Nunavut leadership – the public Government of Nunavut, the Inuit organisations (Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the regional Inuit organisations) and the Institutions of Public Government – are coming under increasing scrutiny at the community level. "We are hoping for action", women teacher trainees wrote the President of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. after describing the social crisis in grim detail. "We are expecting to see a plan, with goals and a timetable. We are expecting our leaders to stand up and speak out continuously against violence, addiction and abuse in our communities".[130]

It remains to be seen if and/or how the public at large will hold the leadership accountable should serious problems arise with the organisations and the organisational structure created by the land claim.

An Emerging Political Elite

One of the key aspects of recent Northwest Territories political history was the gradual maturing of the Government of the Northwest Territories as a territorial state, with its own political elite, its own bureaucratic hierarchy and its own institutional self-interests. If or how the Government of Nunavut may differ in this regard remains to be seen, but the fact that the creation of a new political regime is resulting in the formation of a new political elite is beyond dispute.

---

[129] Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. press release issued 31 October 1997.

[130] "State of health of the population of Nunavut", letter from Nunavut Arctic College Northern Teacher Education Program students to Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. President Jose Kusugak, dated 4 July 1995.

And as Peter Clancy has noted in the most insightful discussion of class structures and accumulation strategies in the Northwest Territories to date:

> ... class power in the north as elsewhere does not derive automatically from economic position, but is politically mediated. It is in this political realm that class interests are organised, alliances and coalitions are formed, and programs are forged. In the north, these interests have been pursued through many channels: political parties and electoral mobilisation, associational lobbying, litigation, or through negotiation at the aboriginal claims table.[131]

Successful negotiation at the aboriginal claims table is resulting in many profound changes in Nunavut society; a deepening of social differentiation – i.e. the more complete development of a class system among Nunavut Inuit – is one of them. Political and economic forces that have been set in motion which will result in even more profound social change in the years to come.[132]

Financial Realities

One of those forces may be a growing realisation among the Canadian body politic of the cost of maintaining Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic. Perhaps because the cost of maintaining and developing Nunavut had previously been hidden in a maze of departmental budgets and interjursidictional funding agreements, the size of the first budget of the Government of Nunavut – $610 million, for a jurisdiction of 27,000 people – came as a shock to many people in the south, even though the amount is scarcely a rounding error in terms of the overall federal budget.

Both the Nunavut and federal governments may find it necessary to arm Canadians with information about the cost of delivering government programs and services in the Arctic, and arguments as to why

---

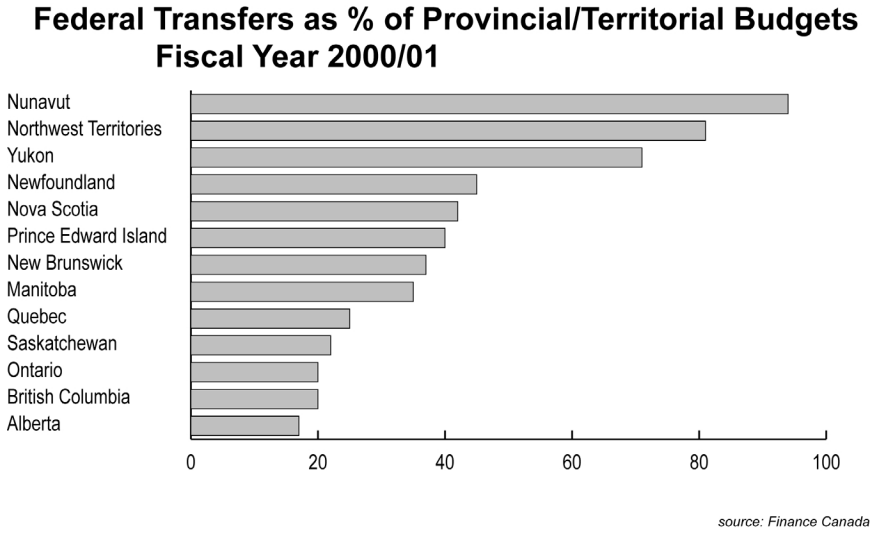
[131] Peter Clancy, op. cit., p. 298.

[132] In "The theory of neotribal capitalism" (Review 22:3, 1999, pp. 231-88) and A Political Economy of Neotribal Capitalism (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2000) Elizabeth Rata has developed a path-breaking analysis of the impact of the politics of an aboriginal rights movement on class relations within an aboriginal people (the Maori of New Zealand) – and of the impact of class relations within an aboriginal people on the politics of their aboriginal rights movement – which may shed light on similar developments in Nunavut and elsewhere. Commenting on Rata's work, which he called "very important", sociologist Jonathon Friedman commented that "it is, of course, to be expected that intelligentsia should emerge within such movements and that they should become increasingly established as the movements become institutionalised. They are, after all, the focal points for political unity and often political action as well, pivots in the competition for funding and rights. It would be a sign of incomprehension … to critique such developments on the grounds that they deviate from [our] conception of traditional culture. Even the class aspect of this development is quite logical in terms of the process of integration itself. On the other hand, such divisions are bound to be sources of potential conflict within the emerging larger political community". (Jonathon Friedman, "Indigenous struggles and the discreet charm of the bourgeoisie", Australian Journal of Anthropology 10:1, 1999, pp. 1-14).

investments in Nunavut today should mean both healthier communities and reduced costs in the future – precisely the kind of argument which has gone out of favour during the lifetime of the current federal government.

Similarly, Canadians will need to be reminded that in their early days many parts of the country enjoyed massive federal government infrastructure spending on railways, canals and other facilities necessary for economic development. In contrast, the money Nunavut gets from Ottawa covers only costs of running the government; Nunavut has yet to see anything like the massive federal spending on economic development that many provinces enjoyed for decades.

In the 2000/01 fiscal year the Government of Nunavut will receive $21,327 per capita in federal funding, compared to $1,277 per capita for the provinces (with Newfoundland being the most dependent province at $2,751 per capita).[133] In the Government of Nunavut's first budget, more than 90 per cent of territorial revenue came from the federal government – most of it through a five-year formula funding agreement. The basic grant from Canada amounted to $498.9 million, with another $53.7 flowing from Ottawa to Iqaluit through other federal programs. By fiscal year 2003/04 – Nunavut's fifth budget – annual federal transfers to Nunavut are projected to reach $666 million.



Because the private sector is less developed in Nunavut than in the other territories and provinces, with a correspondingly weaker tax base, Nunavut is the most fiscally dependent jurisdiction in Canada as

[133] Data in this section is from the Government of Nunavut's budgets of May 1999 and May 2000 and the federal budget of February 2000.

measured by reliance on federal funding. 94 per cent of the Government of Nunavut's revenue comes from Ottawa; in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon the figures are 81 and 71 per cent respectively. Newfoundland, the province most dependent on federal transfers, receives 45 per cent of its revenue from Ottawa. The average among 'have-not' provinces is 34 per cent; for all provinces it is 29 per cent.

Without the high level of federal transfers currently underwriting territorial government programs and services, few people could afford to live in the Arctic – at least not with a standard of living anywhere close to Canadian norms. For example, the elderly and the unemployed pay as little as $32 a month to live in public housing units which cost the government as much as $1,000 per month to build and maintain. At the same time, during the 1990s the Government of the Northwest Territories dramatically raised rents for employed persons who live in government-owned housing to encourage them to move out of public housing and build or purchase their own homes. Many Nunavut communities have very limited private housing markets, so that government-owned housing is essential. In the larger communities, limited amounts of expensive privately owned rental housing are becoming available.

Because federal funding is critical if the Government of Nunavut is to provide essential services to its residents, the degree of Nunavut's fiscal dependence on the federal treasury renders the territory highly vulnerable to unilateral cutbacks in transfer payments.[134]

[134] For example, in the final year before division the Government of the Northwest Territories spent $1.25 billion on programs and services. Compared to the 1995/96 fiscal year, this is a decrease of roughly 11 per cent on a per capita basis. Deep spending cuts were necessitated after the federal government, in the 1995 budget, announced changes to the formula funding agreement. These charges are estimated to have cost the Government of the Northwest Territories a further $160 million over three years. Subsequent forecasts of a key component of the funding formula – the Provincial-Local Government Spending Escalator – were revised downward, costing the Government of the Northwest Territories a further $160 million over three years. The revised forecasts result primarily from provincial governments cutting their spending. (In other words, the policies of the right-wing Harris government in Ontario have caused spending cuts in Nunavut communities by impacting on the elements of the funding formula which reflect spending by the provincial governments.) The total impact of these cuts is that the Government of the Northwest Territories received roughly $400 million less over the five-year life of the final pre-division formula financing agreement than was forecast when the agreement was concluded in December 1994 – more than twice the amount expected by the federal government when it announced the cuts. This was in addition to a $100 million reduction in federal funding for housing in the Northwest Territories.

Social Realities

> Nunavut to be a welfare case: Sweeping social, economic problems face Canada's newest territory.
>
> – front-page headline in The Globe and Mail, June 5, 1998

Southern Canadians may be in for another kind of shock as the realities of life (and death) in the new territorial jurisdiction become better publicised – the realisation that living conditions in a region comprising a fifth of the country are far below national standards, to they point that they are often described by local politicians and international media alike as 'Third World'.[135] As a former Chief Medical Officer of the Northwest Territories (NWT) noted before Nunavut came into existence:

> Division will consolidate not only the Inuit, but also their problems, [statistics on which] now are diluted by the presence of a substantial NWT non-aboriginal population, and to a lesser extent by the non-Inuit aboriginal population, whose health status is better than that of Inuit. Thus, the health status profile for Nunavut may come as a shock to many who may have become inured even to the depressing aspects of the overall NWT profile.[136]

When mortality data for Nunavut was first published by Statistics Canada, many Nunavimmiut were shocked to learn that the life expectancy at birth for a baby born in Nunavut in 1996 was almost ten years lower than for Canada as a whole. Nunavut's infant mortality rate has been halved over the last fifteen years, but is still more than three times the national rate. Mortality due to lung cancer among women in Nunavut is almost five times the national rate, and women in Nunavut were about seven times more likely to die of respiratory disease than Canadian women as a whole.[137]

To the outside observer it must seem like there is no end to the depressing statistics: over two-thirds of Nunavut residents 12 years of age and older smoke (compared to less than 30 per cent nationally), almost three-quarters of all Nunavut mothers smoke during their pregnancies, Nunavut's rate of tuberculosis during the 1990s was more than eight times the national average, sexually transmitted disease rates are 15 to 20 times the national rate, and Nunavut's suicide rate is six times the national average.[138]

---

[135] This analogy may be powerful rhetoric, but it is quite inaccurate. As T. Kue Young has pointed out, "… the principal causes of death and disability are actually very different, as also is the nutritional status and the supply of health services". (T. Kue Young, "The Canadian North and the Third World: Is the analogy appropriate?" Canadian Journal of Public Health 74, 1983, pp. 239-41.)

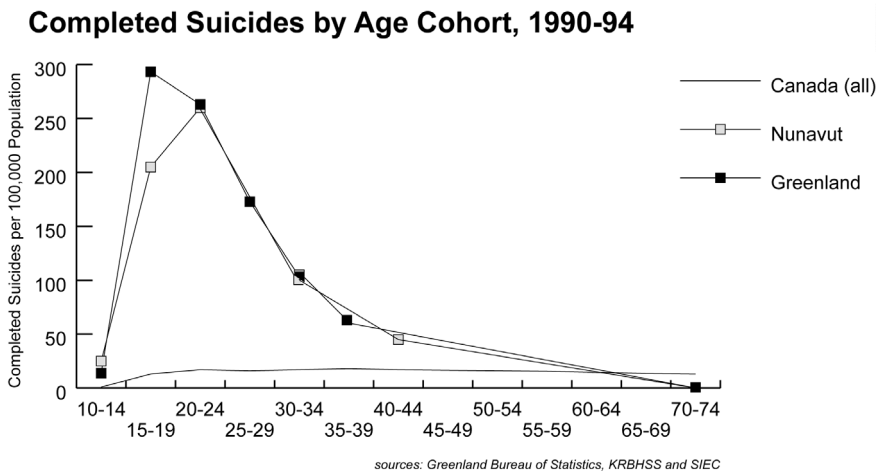
[136] David Kinloch, "Health and health services in the NWT: A review of policies and programs, " unpublished report dated March 21, 1996, p. 72.

[137] Data in this paragraph is from: "How healthy are Canadians?" A special issue (11:3) of Health Reports, 1999.

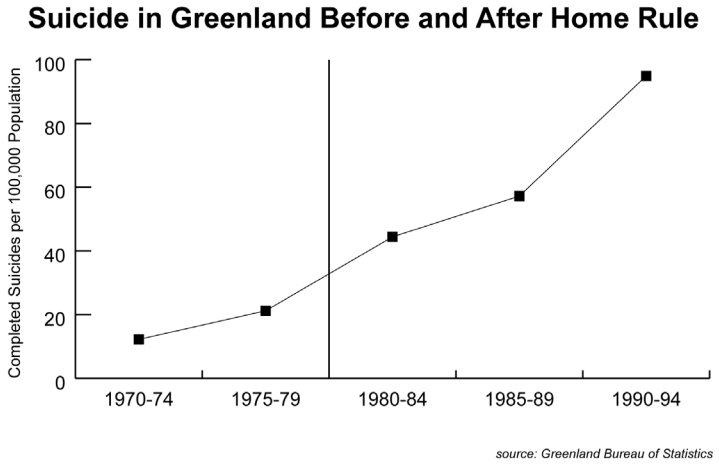
[138] Data in this paragraph is from: Government of the Northwest Territories, Dep't of Health and Social Services.

This latter statistic is perhaps the most disturbing. For the period 1986 to 1996, Nunavut's crude suicide rate was 77.9 per 100,000 – and rising – compared to a national rate of 13.2 per 100,000.[139] The suicide rate was far higher among those between 15 to 29 years of age, much higher among than males than among females, and higher in the Baffin region than in the Kitikmeot or Kivalliq regions.

If we look eastwards to Greenland, not only do we find that the suicide profile there is almost identical to that of Nunavut – very high rates among young Inuit men…



… but we also find that the suicide rate continued to rise after the establishment of Home Rule in 1979:



[139] Data in this paragraph is from: Sandy Isaacs, Susan Keogh, Cathy Menard and Jamie Hickin, "Suicide in the Northwest Territories: A descriptive review", Chronic Diseases in Canada 19:4, 1998.

Similarly, suicide rates in the eastern and central Arctic were also rising sharply before the creation of Nunavut in 1999. The suicide rate for the period 1992 to 1996 was almost double what it had been a decade before. And during the first 16 months of Nunavut's existence (April 1999 thru July 2000), at least 34 Nunavimmiut took their own lives. Of the 21 suicides which occurred in the Baffin region, all but two were Inuit males. 12 of those 21 were from Iqaluit.

If suicide is "almost always an effort to escape intense frustration, grief, and psychic pain",[140] what do Nunavut's tragically high rates of youth suicide tell us? After making the case that "a self-alienation of native peoples … has contributed to exorbitant suicide rates, increasing levels of addiction, high rates of interpersonal violence and high teenage pregnancy" in Alaska, researchers termed the situation there one of "sociocultural oppression".[141]

Another researcher has concluded that:

> Unresolved historical traumas (both at the individual and the collective levels) compounding present-day traumas are likely to have significantly contributed to the distressed conditions we see … today. The benefits of economic and political development are less likely to be reaped when individuals and their communities are still struggling with underlying issues of unresolved trauma. Indeed, collective trauma is associated with the breakdown of … the sociocultural foundations of economic growth and effective governance.[142]

---

[140] Edwin S. Shneidman, "Suicide as psychache", Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease 181-3, 1993, as quoted in: Laurence J. Kirmayer et al., "Suicide among the Inuit of Canada", in: Antoon A. Leenaars et al., (eds.), Suicide in Canada (Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 189-211. See also : Laurence J. Kirmayer, "Suicide among Canadian aboriginal peoples", Transcultural Psychiatric Research Review 31, 1994, pp. 3-58.

[141] Alice Sullivan and Christiane Brems, "The psychological repercussions of the sociocultural oppression of Alaska native peoples", Journal: Genetic Social and General Psychology Monographs 123:4, 1997, pp. 411-40.

[142] Sousan Abadian, "From wasteland to homeland: Trauma and the renewal of indigenous peoples and their communities", unpublished 1999 Ph.D. thesis in Political Economy and Government at Harvard University, p. 452. See also: Peter D. Elias, "Worklessness and social pathologies in aboriginal communities", Human Organization 55:1, 1996, pp. 13-24.

8. CONCLUSION: PIJARNIRNIARNIRAQTAULAUNGIMMAT[143]

"The days of the Inuit are numbered", wrote the American explorer Charles Francis Hall after visiting the Frobisher Bay area in 1861. "Fifty years may find them all passed away, without leaving one to tell that such a people ever lived". Hall's prediction proved far too bleak, and the Inuit of Nunavut survived both contact and colonisation. While the last century has been tremendously difficult, they have endured.

Looking to the future, it is possible to be both optimistic and alarmed for the Inuit of Nunavut – optimistic about the opportunities created by the Nunavut land claim and the Government of Nunavut, yet alarmed about the future of Nunavut itself. On the one hand, as Mary Simon – an Inuk from Nunavik who is a former member of the Nunavut Implementation Commission, and is now Canada's Ambassador to Denmark and the Circumpolar Arctic – said in a speech at Queen's University:

> ... the very scale of the Nunavut undertaking means it cannot be overlooked. Nunavut will constitute some 20 per cent of the land mass of Canada. Its boundaries will extend over a larger marine area than the boundaries of any Canadian province. For the first time in Canadian history, with the partial exception of the creation of Manitoba in 1870, a member of the federal-provincial-territorial club is being admitted for the precise purpose of supplying a specific aboriginal people with an enhanced opportunity for self-determination. This is ground-breaking stuff.

For a small, aboriginal society like the Inuit, the creation of Nunavut is an enormous achievement. Nunavut follows Greenland as an example of a regional Inuit population equipping itself with political tools intended to counterbalance the power of the nation-states in which they reside. And their achievement may be of benefit to other aboriginal peoples who live in ethnically homogenous areas with a significant land base. Self-government by way of public government, which is the basis of both Greenlandic Home Rule and the Government of Nunavut, may be a way to meet the needs and aspirations of some other aboriginal peoples without threatening the territorial integrity of the states within which they exist. The degree of legislative and administrative autonomy that the Government of Nunavut will exercise may permit the development and implementation of a modern form of governance that reflects the customs and traditions of its citizens, with the flexibility to evolve at a pace they desire.

It is too soon to know whether the Government of Nunavut will live up to the expectations that many people have of it, but from its first date of operation it has managed to deliver services, pay its bills and balance its budgets in much the same manner as the government it succeeded. In other words, the fact that there are no high-level crisis meetings in Ottawa to determine 'what to do about Nunavut' is no small achievement for the new government.

---

[143] 'No one said it was going to be easy'

Still, the territory's new government, Inuit organisations and Institutions of Public Government face enormous challenges: a young work force with high levels of unemployment and dependence on social assistance, low (but rising) educational levels, high costs for goods and public services, inadequate public housing, poor health conditions, and escalating rates of substance abuse, violence and incarceration. Indeed, a study commissioned by the federal government in 1988[144] predicted that Nunavut communities may become Arctic ghettos plagued by increasing rates of crime – with more in common with urban slums than with the independent, resourceful society that survived for thousands of years.

Is it unrealistic to hope that the creation of Nunavut can prove this grim prediction wrong?

The visionaries who gave birth to the Nunavut project and then negotiated it into existence did so in the belief that it would facilitate meaningful self-government, sustainable economic development and healthy communities. The challenge of overcoming Nunavut's economic and social problems, however, may well dwarf the considerable challenge of negotiating and implementing the aboriginal rights and 'self-government through public government' arrangements which make up the Nunavut project. And while the creation of Nunavut is undeniably a significant innovation within Canadian federalism, there is no guarantee that it will result in, for example, the kinds of community-based interventions needed to curb social pathologies such as suicides by young Inuit males.

Nunavut is, of course, home to many happy and healthy people, and most of Nunavut's children grow up in stable and loving families. For young people with the skills and life-skills needed to seize the opportunities available to them, Nunavut offers a bright future indeed. The new suburbs of comfortable middle-class houses springing up in Iqaluit and elsewhere are proof of this.

And as John Amagoalik – often referred to as 'The father of Nunavut' – has stated many times, Nunavut "won't solve all of our problems overnight. … But people will have a government they can relate to – a government that speaks and understands their language and understands their culture and priorities".[145] "We cannot expect miracles. Sitting over a hole in the ice for hours, not moving, waiting for a seal, takes patience. It took a lot of patience to get self-government. Now it will take more patience to solve our many problems".[146]

---

[144] Colin Irwin, op. cit.

[145] Quoted in: Darcy Henton, "Inuit's dream of home rule coming true", Toronto Star, March 5, 1998.

[146] Quoted in: Philip Broughton, "Inuit look to a new homeland to solve old problems", Daily Telegraph, February 23, 1999.

Ultimately, however, the test of Nunavut's "success" will be the degree to which its many benefits and opportunities are shared by ***all*** its residents – and the rate at which its social pathologies decrease over time.

Nunavut's first Premier, Paul Okalik, clearly recognised this when he was asked what he would place in a time capsule to mark the new millennium:

> A pair of kamiks[147] [to] remind people … that they must walk in the footsteps of the past – not doomed to repeat mistakes, but to be aware of past experiences and learn from them.
>
> I would include a journal – a personal account of an Inuk living in Nunavut at the turn of the century.
>
> I would also include a statistical profile of Nunavut in comparison to other jurisdictions throughout the country. I would hope that people [in the future] would use this document as a concrete guide to measure the progress, or lack thereof, from now until then".[148]

[147] The waterproof skin boots for which Inuit women are justly famous. See: Jill E. Oakes and Roderick R. Riewe, Our Boots: An Inuit Women's Art (Vancouver BC: Douglas & McIntyre, 1995).

[148] Quoted in: "Time capsule", National Post, December 30, 1999.

9. Appendix: Nunavut – A Chronology

4,500 BC to 1,000 AD	Successive waves of Inuit enter and move throughout what is now the Canadian Arctic
1670	King Charles II of England grants the Hudson's Bay Charter, giving the Hudson's Bay Company a trading monopoly of much of what is now the Canadian north. This area is named Rupert's Land.
1870	The Government of Canada acquires Rupert's Land.
1880	The British government transfers the Arctic islands to the Government of Canada.
1973	The Government of Canada establishes a Comprehensive Land Claims Policy under which undefined 'aboriginal rights' can be exchanged for a clearly defined package of rights and benefits set out in a land claim settlement agreement. Also that year, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada begins a study of Inuit land use and occupancy which documents the extent of Inuit land use in the eastern and central Arctic.
1976	The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada proposes the creation of a Nunavut territory as part of a comprehensive settlement of Inuit land claims in the Northwest Territories. The Nunavut proposal calls for the Beaufort Sea and Yukon North Slope areas used by the Inuvialuit to be included in the Nunavut territory. Later that year, due to development pressure in the Beaufort Sea area, the Inuvialuit split from the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada to negotiate a separate land claim agreement. Also that same year, a federal electoral boundaries commission recommends dividing the Northwest Territories into two electoral districts: Nunatsiaq and Western Arctic. This recommendation is put into effect for the 1979 federal election.
1980	Delegates at the annual general meeting of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada unanimously pass a resolution calling for the creation of Nunavut, and the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories votes in favour of dividing the territory.
1990 April	The Tungavik Federation of Nunavut and the federal and Northwest Territories governments sign a Nunavut land claims agreement-in-principle.
1992 January	Tungavik Federation of Nunavut and government negotiators come to an agreement on the substantive portions of a final land claims agreement. The agreement contains commitments for the creation of a Nunavut territory and government, subject to a boundary plebiscite and the conclusion of a Nunavut Political Accord which would detail the timetable and process for establishing Nunavut.

1992 May	An overall majority of voters in the Northwest Territories approve the proposed boundary for division.
1992 October	Tungavik Federation of Nunavut and government representatives sign the Nunavut Political Accord, setting the date for creation of Nunavut as April 1, 1999.
1992 November	In a Nunavut-wide vote, the Inuit of Nunavut ratify the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.
1993 May	The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is signed.
1993 November	The *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act* and the *Nunavut Act* are adopted by Parliament, and receive Royal Assent.
1994	The Nunavut Implementation Commission is established to advise the three parties to the Nunavut Political Accord on aspects of creating Nunavut.
1995 March 31	The Nunavut Implementation Commission releases Footprints in New Snow, a detailed plan for the design and implementation of the Government of Nunavut.
1995 December 11	In a public vote, 60 per cent of Nunavut voters choose Iqaluit over Rankin Inlet as their capital.
1996 October 21	After reviewing feedback received re: Footprints in New Snow, the Nunavut Implementation Commission releases Footprints 2, a revised plan for the design and implementation of the Government of Nunavut.
1997 May 26	Nunavut voters reject the Nunavut Implementation Commission's proposal for a Nunavut Legislature with gender parity.
1997	The Office of the Interim Commissioner of Nunavut is established, and work begins on implementing the recommendations of the Nunavut Implementation Commission and recruiting a public service for the new government.
1998	Amendments to the *Nunavut Act* are adopted by Parliament, and receive Royal Assent.
1999 February 15	Residents of Nunavut hold their first election for members of their Legislative Assembly.
1999 March 5	34 year-old Paul Okalik is selected by his fellow Members of the Legislative Assembly to serve as Nunavut's first Premier.
1999 April 1	The Nunavut territory and the Government of Nunavut are inaugurated; and the Nunavut flag and coat of arms are unveiled.

10. A Nunavut Bibliography

Abele, Frances. (1999) "A time to celebrate", Arctic 52:1, p. iii.

___, and Mark O. Dickerson. (1985) "The 1982 plebiscite on division of the Northwest Territories: Regional government and federal policy", Canadian Public Policy 9:1, pp. 1-15.

___, Katherine A. Graham, and Allan M. Maslove. (1999) "Negotiating Canada: Changes in aboriginal policy over the last thirty years", in: How Ottawa Spends 1999-2000. (ed.) Leslie A. Pal. Ottawa ON: Carleton University Press. pp. 251-92.

Alia, Valerie. (1994) Names, Numbers and Northern Policy: Inuit, Project Surname and the Politics of Identity. Halifax NS: Fernwood Publishing. 118 pp.

Amagoalik, John. (1992) "The land claim and Nunavut: One without the other isn't enough", Arctic Circle January/February, p. 20.

___. (1993) "The road to Nunavut", Arctic Circle Winter, p. 13.

___. (1994) "Canada's Nunavut: An indigenous northern territory", in: Surviving Columbus: Indigenous Peoples, Political Reform and Environmental Management in North Australia, (eds.) Peter Jull, et al. Darwin: North Australia Research Unit, Australian National University. pp. 23-5.

Ames, Randy, Don Axford, Peter J. Usher, Ed Weick, George Wenzel, and John Merritt. (1989) Keeping on the Land: A Study of the Feasibility of a Comprehensive Wildlife Harvest Support Programme in the Northwest Territories. Ottawa ON: Canadian Arctic Resources Committee. 308 pp.

l'Association des francophones du Nunavut. (October 1999-) *Le toit du monde: Le magazine virtuelle.* ('The top of the world: Virtual magazine') Iqaluit NU.

___. (1999-) *Le toit du monde: Actualité nordiques.* ('The top of the world: Northern news'; magazine) Iqaluit NU.

Bell, Jim. (1992) "Nunavut: The quiet revolution", Arctic Circle January/February, pp. 12-21.

___. (2000) "Nunavut, after the party", Saturday Night February, pp. 22-23.

Boundary and Constitutional Agreement for the Implementation of Division of the Northwest Territories Between the Western Constitutional Forum and the Nunavut Constitutional Forum. (1987) Ottawa ON: Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, in co-operation with the Nunavut Constitutional Forum and Western Constitutional Forum. 17 pp.

Brody, Hugh. (1991) The People's Land: Inuit, Whites and the Eastern Arctic. Vancouver BC: Douglas & McIntyre. 240 pp. [originally published in 1975 as: The People's Land: Eskimos and Whites in the Eastern Arctic]

___. (1993) "Some historical aspects of the High Arctic Exiles' experience". Report prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

Cameron, Kirk, and Graham White. (1995) Northern Governments in Transition: Political and Constitutional Development in the Yukon, Nunavut and the Western Northwest Territories. Montréal QC: Institute for Research on Public Policy. 149 pp.

Canada, Northwest Territories, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Nunavut Implementation Commission, and Nunavut Implementation Training Committee. (1996 September) Nunavut: Unified Human Resources Development Strategy. 38 pp.

Canada, Indian Affairs and Northern Development. www.inac.gc.ca/nunavut Website, with links to many on-line resources.

Canada, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and Tungavik Federation of Nunavut. (1993) Agreement Between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada. ('the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement ') 282 pp. [available on-line from the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada website at: www.inac.gc.ca/pr/agr/nunavut/index_e.html]

Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1994) The High Arctic Relocation: A Report on the 1953-55 Relocation. (3 vols.) Ottawa ON: Supply and Services Canada.

Canadian Geographic. (1999) "Nunavut: Canada's youngest population prepares to govern a vast Arctic region". "Special report on the new territory", January/February.

Clancy, Peter. (1987) "The making of Eskimo policy in Canada, 1952-62: The life and times of the Eskimo Affairs Committee", Arctic 40:3, pp. 191-7.

___. (1992) "Northwest Territories: Class politics on the northern frontier", in: The Provincial State: Politics in Canada's Provinces and Territories, (eds.) Keith Brownsey and Michael Howlett. Mississauga ON: Copp Clark Pitman. pp. 297-322.

Coates, Kenneth S. (1985) Canada's Colonies: A History of the Yukon and Northwest Territories. Toronto ON: James Lorimer. 251 pp.

Coates, Kenneth S., and Judith Powell. (1989) The Modern North: People, Politics and the Rejection of Colonialism. Toronto ON: James Lorimer. 168 pp.

Coleman, Greg. (1993) "The inherited dream", Arctic Circle Spring, pp. 14-9.

Creery, Ian. (1993) The Inuit of Canada. (rev. ed.) London: Minority Rights Group. 30 pp. [reprinted 1994 in: Polar Peoples: Self-Determination and Development, (eds.) Minority Rights Group, London]

Crowe, Keith. (1990) "Claims on the land 1", Arctic Circle November/December, pp. 14-23.

___. (1991) "Claims on the land 2", Arctic Circle January/February, pp. 31-5.

___. (1991) A History of the Original Peoples of Northern Canada. (rev. ed.) Montréal QC: McGill-Queen's University Press. 240 pp.

Dacks, Gurston. (1993) "Nunavut: Aboriginal self-determination through public government". Report prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

Dahl, Jens. (1994*) "Nunavut-aftalerne", Tidsskriftet Grønland* 1994:1, pp. 7-18. ('The Nunavut agreements')

___. (1997) "Gender parity in Nunavut?", Indigenous Affairs July/December, pp. 42-7.

___. (1998*) "Kønskvotering i Nunavut", Tidsskriftet Grønland* 1998:1/2, pp. 51-61. ('Gender parity in Nunavut')

Damas, David J. (ed.) (1984) Arctic. (vol. 5 in the series *Handbook of North American Indians*) Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution.

Dickerson, Mark O. (1992) Whose North? Political Change, Political Development, and Self-Government in the Northwest Territories. Vancouver BC: University of British Columbia Press, and the Arctic Institute of North America, University of Calgary. 233 pp.

Diubaldo, Richard. (1985) The Government of Canada and the Inuit, 1900-67. Ottawa ON: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. 194 pp.

Duffy, R. Quinn. (1988) The Road to Nunavut: The Progress of the Eastern Arctic Inuit Since the Second World War. Kingston ON: McGill-Queen's University Press. 308 pp.

Ernerk, Peter, et al. (1990) "Nunavut: Vision or illusion?" Canadian Parliamentary Review Spring, pp. 6-10.

Fenge, Terry. (1992) "Political development and environmental management in northern Canada: The case of the Nunavut Agreement", Études/Inuit/Studies 16:1/2, pp. 115-41.

___. (1993) "National parks in the Canadian Arctic: The case of the Nunavut Agreement", Environments 23:1, pp. 21-36.

___. (1994) "The Nunavut Agreement: The environment, land and sea use and indigenous rights", in: Surviving Columbus: Indigenous Peoples, Political Reform and Environmental Management in North Australia, (eds.) Peter Jull, et al. Darwin: North Australia Research Unit, Australian National University. pp. 31-7.

___. (1995) "The Nunavut Agreement and sustainable development in the Canadian Arctic and circumpolar world", in: Becoming Visible: Indigenous Politics and Self-Government. (eds.) O. Terje Brantenberg, et al. Tromsø: Centre for Sámi Studies, University of Tromsø. pp. 171-86.

Flumian, Maryantonett. (1999) "Redesigning government around the citizen: The creation of Nunavut", in: Collaborative Government: Is There a Canadian Way?. (eds.) Susan Delacourt and Donald G. Lenihan. Toronto ON: Institute for Public Administration of Canada. pp. 92-8.

Fortier, Marcel, and Francine Gauthier Jones. (1998) "Engineering public service excellence for Nunavut: The Nunavut Unified Human Resources Development Strategy", Arctic June, pp. 191-4.

Gombay, Nicole. (2000) "The politics of culture: Gender parity in the legislative assembly of Nunavut", Études/Inuit/Studies 24:1, pp. 125-48.

Grant, Shelagh. (1989) Sovereignty or Security? Government Policy in the Canadian North, 1936-50. Vancouver BC: University of British Columbia Press. 385 pp.

Hamley, William. (1995) "The Nunavut settlement: A critical appraisal", International Journal of Canadian Studies Fall, pp. 221-34.

Hardin, Michael J., and John Donihee. (1998) Mineral Exploration and Mine Development in Nunavut. Calgary AB: Canadian Institute of Resources Law. 102 pp.

Hicks, Jack. (1997) "Mining the Canadian Arctic: Experiences relevant to potential developments in Greenland", in: *Socio-økonomiske Virkninger af Råstofudvinding: En Indledende Kortlægning og Forslag til Videre Arbejde* ('Socioeconomic Impacts of Resource Development: A Preliminary Overview and Proposals for Further Work'), (eds.) *Udvalget om socioøkonomiske virkninger ad olie- og gasudvinding samt mineralindustri* (Committee on the Socioeconomic Impacts of Oil and Gas Exploitation and the Mining Industry). Nuuk.

___. (1999) "The Nunavut land claim and the Nunavut government: Political structures of self-government in Canada's Eastern Arctic", in: Dependency, Autonomy, Sustainability in the Arctic. (eds.) Hanne K. Petersen and Birger Poppel. Aldershot and Brookfield VT: Ashgate. pp. 21-53.

Howard, Albert, and Frances Widdowson. (1999) "The disaster of Nunavut", Policy Options Politiques July/August, pp. 58-61.

Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. (1976) Nunavut: Agreement-in-Principle as to the Settlement of Inuit Land Claims in the Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory between the Government of Canada and the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. Ottawa ON. 61 pp.

Irwin, Colin. (1988) "Lords of the Arctic, wards of the state: The growing Inuit population, Arctic resettlement and their effects on social and economic change". [report prepared for the Review of Demography and its Implications for Economic and Social Policy, Health and Welfare Canada; reprinted as: "Future imperfect: A controversial report on the prospects for Inuit society strikes a nerve in the NWT", Northern Perspectives 17:1, 1989]

Jull, Peter. (1982) Nunavut. Special issue of Northern Perspectives (10:2). Ottawa ON: Canadian Arctic Resources Committee. 8 pp.

___. (1983) Nunavut. Yellowknife NT: Government of the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut Constitutional Forum. 64 pp.

___. (1985) "Dividing the north", Policy Options Politiques May, pp. 10-3.

___. (1988) "Building Nunavut: A story of Inuit self-government", Northern Review (The) 1, pp. 59-72.

___. (1991) "Redefining aboriginal-white relations: Canada's Inuit", International Journal of Canadian Studies 3:Spring, pp. 11-25.

___. (1992) An Aboriginal Northern Territory: Creating Canada's Nunavut. North Australia Research Unit, Australian National University. 39 pp.

___. (1994) "Emerging northern territory constitutions in Canada: National policy, settler hegemony, aboriginal ethno-politics, and systems of governance", in: Constitutional Change in the 1990s, (eds.) Rick Gray, David A. Lea and Sally Roberts. Darwin: Northern Territory Legislative Assembly Sessional Committee on Constitutional Development, and Australian National University Research Unit. pp. 94-116.

___. (1995) "Politics and process: The real world of regional agreements in the northern hemisphere", in: ASTIC Regional Agreements Seminar, Cairns, 29-31 May 1995, Proceedings. Canberra: Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Commission (ASTIC). pp. 17-47.

___. (1997) ""Them Eskimo mob": International implications of Nunavut". Revised 2nd ed. Report prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

___. (1998) "Indigenous autonomy in Nunavut: Canada's present and Australia's possibilities". Discussion paper prepared for the Centre for Democracy, Department of Government, University of Queensland. 34 pp.

___. (2000) "Resource management agreements with aboriginal communities in Canada: Regional agreements", in: Integrated Water and Land Management: Essays on Comparative Approaches to the Integration of Water and Land Management, (ed.) D.E. Fisher and N. McNamara. Brisbane: Faculty of Law, Queensland University of Technology. pp. 453-85.

Légaré, André. (1996) "The process leading to a land claims agreement and its implementation: The case of the Nunavut land claims settlement", Canadian Journal of Native Studies 16:1, pp. 139-63.

___. (1997) "The Government of Nunavut (1999): A prospective analysis", in: First Nations in Canada: Perspectives on Opportunity, Empowerment, and Self-Determination, (ed.) J. Rick Ponting. Toronto ON: McGraw-Hill Ryerson. pp. 404-31.

___. (1998) The Evolution of the Government of the Northwest Territories (1967-95): The Debate Over its Legitimacy and the Emergence of Nunavut and Denendeh. Québec QC: GÉTIC, Université Laval. 50 pp.

___. (1998) "An assessment of recent political development in Nunavut: The challenges and dilemmas of Inuit self-government", Canadian Journal of Native Studies 18:2, pp. 271-99.

___. (1999) Nunavut: A Bibliography (1976-99). Québec QC: GÉTIC, Université Laval. 22 pp.

___. (2000) *"La Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.: Un examen de ses activités et de sa structure administrative",* Études/ Inuit/Studies 24:1, pp. 97-124. ('Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.: An examination of its activities and organisational structure')

Marcus, Alan R. (1992) Out in the Cold: The Legacy of Canada's Inuit Relocation Experiment in the High Arctic. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. 117 pp.

___. (1995) Relocating Eden: The Image and Politics of Inuit Exile in the Canadian Arctic. Dartmouth NH: University Press of New England. 272 pp.

Merritt, John. (1993) "Nunavut: Preparing for self-government", Northern Perspectives 21:1, pp. 3-6.

___. (1993) "Nunavut: Canada turns a new page in the Arctic", Canadian Parliamentary Review Summer, pp. 2-6.

Merritt, John, Randy Ames, Terry Fenge, and Peter Jull. (1989) Nunavut: Political Choices and Manifest Destiny. Ottawa ON: Canadian Arctic Resources Committee. 126 pp.

Merritt, John, and Terry Fenge. (1990) "The Nunavut land claims settlement: Emerging issues in law and public administration", Queen's Law Journal 15:2, pp. 255-77.

Mitchell, Marybelle. (1996) From Talking Chiefs to a Native Corporate Elite: The Birth of Class and Nationalism among Canadian Inuit. Montréal QC: McGill-Queen's University Press. 533 pp.

___, and Pat Tobin. (1999) "Nunavut: The newest member of Confederation", Inuit Art Quarterly 14:2, pp. 18-23.

Myers, Heather. (2000) "Options for appropriate development in Nunavut communities", Études/Inuit/Studies 24:1, pp. 25-40.

___, and Scott Forrest. (2000) "Making change: Economic development in Pond Inlet, 1987 to 1997", Arctic 53:2, pp. 134-45.

Nortext. www.nunavut.com Website, with links to many on-line resources.

Northern Representatives Committee. (1999) Division of Assets and Liabilities of the Government of the Northwest Territories as at March 31, 1999: Report and Recommendations. (The committee was composed of representatives of the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Office of the Interim Commissioner of Nunavut, the Western Coalition, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated)

Northwest Territories, Government of the. (1996 December) Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Footprints 2: A Second Comprehensive Report of the Nunavut Implementation Commission. Yellowknife NT.

___. (1997 September) Creation of Two New Territories: Transition Action Plan. Yellowknife NT.

Nunatsiaq News. Weekly newspaper published in Iqaluit NU by Nortext. [available on-line at: www.nunatsiaq.com]

Northwest Territories, Legislative Assembly – Nunavut Caucus. (1998 February 24) "Creating Nunavut – The Nunavut Caucus action plan".

Nunavut, Government of. (1999 May) Main Estimates 1999-2000. Iqaluit NU.

___. (2000 March) Main Estimates 2000-2001. Iqaluit NU.

___. (1999 August) The Bathurst Mandate: *Pinasuaqtavut:* That Which We've Set Out To Do: Our Hopes and Plans for Nunavut. Iqaluit NU. 8 pp. [available on-line from the Government of Nunavut website at: www.gov.nu.ca]

___, Bureau of Statistics. (1999 September) 1999 Community Labour Force Survey: Overall Results and Basic Tables. Iqaluit NU. [available on-line from the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics website at: www.stats.gov.nu.ca]

___, Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. (2000) Report from the September *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* Workshop: Niaqunngnut, Nunavut, September 29-30, 1999. Iqaluit NU. 21 pp.

___, Human Resources. (2000 January) Inuit Employment Plan. Iqaluit NU. 111 pp.

___, Minister of Finance and Administration. (1999 May 14) Budget Address 1999-2000. Iqaluit NU. 27 pp.

___. (2000 March 23) Budget Address 2000-2001. Iqaluit NU.

Nunavut Arts & Crafts Association. (1999) Seals & Nunavut: Our Tradition, Our Future. Iqaluit NU. 56 pp.

Nunavut Constitutional Forum. (1985) Building Nunavut: Today and Tomorrow. Ottawa ON. 38 pp.

Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission. (1997 June 30) Report of the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission. Iqaluit NU. 34 pp.

Nunavut Implementation Commission. (1994 June 23) "Discussion paper concerning the development of principles to govern the design and operation of the Nunavut government". Iqaluit NU. 22 pp.

___. (1994 December 6) "Two-member constituencies and gender equality: A 'made in Nunavut' solution for an effective and representative legislature". Iqaluit NU. [discussion paper] 19 pp.

___. (1995 March 31) Footprints in New Snow: A Comprehensive Report from the Nunavut Implementation Commission to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Government of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. Concerning the Establishment of the Nunavut Government. Iqaluit NU. 263 pp.

___. (1995 June 30) Choosing a Capital: A Supplementary Report of the Nunavut Implementation Commission. Iqaluit NU. 93 pp.

___. (1995 August 18) An Interim Commissioner for Nunavut. Iqaluit NU. 14 pp.

___. (1995 August 18) Nunavut telecommunication Needs: Community Teleservice Centres: A Supplementary Report of the Nunavut Implementation Commission. Iqaluit NU. 45 pp.

___. (1995 August 30) Education and Training: A Supplementary Report of the Nunavut Implementation Commission. Iqaluit NU. 28 pp.

___. (1995 September 8) Infrastructure Requirements of the Nunavut Government: A Supplementary Report of the Nunavut Implementation Commission. Iqaluit NU.

___. (1995 September 14) Staff Housing: Nunavut Government: A Supplementary Report of the Nunavut Implementation Commission. Iqaluit NU.

___. (1996 July 10) Selection of a Premier in Nunavut: A Report of the Nunavut Implementation Commission. Iqaluit NU. 70 pp.

___. (1996 October 21) Footprints 2: A Second Comprehensive Report from the Nunavut Implementation Commission to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Government of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. Concerning the Establishment of the Nunavut Government. Iqaluit NU. 256 pp.

___. (1996 December 23) Nunavut's Legislature, Premier and First Election. Iqaluit NU. 132 pp.

___. (1997 October 17) Integrating Inuit Rights and Public Law in Nunavut: A draft *Nunavut Wildlife Act*. Iqaluit NU.

___. (1998 October 15) Direct Election of the Nunavut Premier: Schemes for Legislative Enactment. Iqaluit NU.

Nunavut Planning Commission. Annual Report. Taloyoak NU. (see: www.npc.nunavut.ca)

___. (1991) Keewatin Regional Land Use Plan. Taloyoak NU.

___. (1997) Revised North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan. Taloyoak NU.

___. (1998) Draft West Kitikmeot Regional Land Use Plan. Taloyoak NU.

Nunavut Social Development Council. Annual Report. Igloolik NU.

___. (1998) "Report of the Nunavut Traditional Knowledge Conference, Igloolik, March 20-24, 1998". Igloolik NU.

___. (1998) Towards Justice That Brings Peace: Nunavut Social Development Council Justice Retreat and Conference, Rankin Inlet, September 1-3, 1998. Igloolik NU. 32 pp.

Nunavut Trust. Annual Report. Ottawa ON.

Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. Annual Report. Iqaluit NU. (see: www.tunngavik.com)

___. (1997 February) Response to the Recommendations of the Nunavut Implementation Commission on Establishment of the Nunavut Government Presented in 'Footprints 2' and in 'Nunavut's Legislature, Premier and First Election'. Iqaluit NU.

___. (1999 October) Taking Stock: A Review of the First Five Years of Implementing the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Iqaluit NU. 199 pp.

Nunavut Water Board. Annual Report. Gjoa Haven NU.

Nunavut Wildlife Management Board. Annual Report. Iqaluit NU. (see: www.nunanet.com/~nwmb)

___. (2000 March) Final Report of the Inuit Bowhead Knowledge Study, Nunavut, Canada. Iqaluit NU. 90 pp.

Purich, Donald J. (1992) The Inuit and their Land: The Story of Nunavut. Toronto ON: James Lorimer. 176 pp.

Rasing, Willem C.E. (1994) "Too Many People": Order and Nonconformity in Iglulingmiut Social Process. Nijmegen: Faculteit der Rechtsgeleerdheid, Katholieke Universiteit. 312 pp.

___. (1999) "Hunting for identity: Thoughts on the practice of hunting and its significance for Iglulingmiut identity", in: Arctic Identities: Continuity and Change in Inuit and Saami Societies, (eds.) Jarich G. Oosten and Cornelius H. W. Remie. Leiden: Research School CNWS, School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, Universiteit Leiden.

Riewe, Roderick R. (ed.) (1992) Nunavut Atlas. Edmonton AB: Canadian Circumpolar Institute, and the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut. 259 pp.

Rodon, Thierry. (1998) "Co-management and self-determination in Nunavut", Polar Geography 22:2, pp. 119-35.

Savard, Jean-François. (1998) "A theoretical debate on the social and political implications of Internet implementation for the Inuit of Nunavut", Wicazo Sa Review Fall, pp. 83-97.

Simpson, Elaine L., Linda N. Seale, and Robin Minion. (1994) Nunavut: An Annotated Bibliography. Edmonton AB: Canadian Circumpolar Institute and the University of Alberta Library. 168 pp.

Smith, Melvin H. (1995) Our Home or Native Land? What Governments' Aboriginal Policy is Doing to Canada. Victoria BC: Crown Western. 285 pp. [specifically chapter 2, "Sacrificing our northern inheritance"] (popularised in Robert Nielsen, "Giving Canada away claim by claim: Our timid response to aboriginal militancy is doing the country great harm, a best-selling book argues", Readers Digest March 1997, pp. 67-71)

Soubliere, Marion. (man. ed.) (1998) The Nunavut Handbook: 1999 Commemorative Edition. Iqaluit NU: Nortext Multimedia Inc. 413 pp.

___, and Greg Coleman (eds.). (1999) Nunavut '99: Changing the Map of Canada. Iqaluit NU: Nortext Multimedia Inc. , and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. 132 pp.

Stevenson, Marc G. (1993) "Traditional Inuit decision-making structures and the administration of Nunavut". Report prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

___. (1996) "Inuit, Nunavut, and government". Report prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

___. (1997) Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence in Cumberland Sound and Central Inuit Social Organisation. Toronto ON: Oxford University Press. 400 pp.

Tester, Frank J., and Peter Kulchyski. (1994) *Tammarniit* (Mistakes): Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic, 1939-63. Vancouver BC: University of British Columbia Press. 421 pp.

Tungavik Federation of Nunavut. (1992) The Nunavut Land Claim Agreement in Plain Language. Ottawa ON. 119 pp.

Usher, Peter J., Frank J. Tough, and Robert M. Galois. (1992) "Reclaiming the land: Aboriginal title, treaty rights, and land claims in Canada", Applied Geography 12:2, pp. 109-32.

Vertes, Louise, David Connelly, Bruce Knott, and Ile Royale Enterprises Ltd. (2000) Implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement: An Independent 5-Year Review, 1993 to 1998. Iqaluit NU: Nortext Multimedia Inc. [available on-line from the Indian and Northern Affairs website at: www.inac.gc.ca/nunavut/imp/index_e.html]

Wachowich, Nancy (in collaboration with Apphia Agalakti Awa, Rhoda Kaukjak Katsak and Sandra Pikujak Katsak). (1999) *Saqiyuq:* Stories from the Lives of Three Inuit Women. Montréal QC: McGill-Queen's University press. 301 pp.

Wenzel, George W. (1991) Animal Rights, Human Rights: Ecology, Economy and Ideology in the Canadian Arctic. Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press. 206 pp.

___. (1995) "*Niniqtuq:* Resource sharing and generalised reciprocity in Clyde River, Nunavut", Arctic Anthropology 84:3/4, pp. 130-42.

___. (1996) "Inuit sealing and subsistence managing after the EU sealskin ban", *Geographische Zeitschrift* 32:2, pp. 130-42.

White, Graham. (1991) "Westminster in the Arctic: The adaptation of British parliamentarism in the Northwest Territories", Canadian Journal of Political Science 14:3, pp. 499-523.

___. (1993) "Structure and culture in a non-partisan Westminster parliament: Canada's Northwest Territories", Australian Journal of Political Science 28:2, pp. 322-39.

___. (1993) "Northern distinctiveness, representation by population and the Charter: The politics of redistribution in the Northwest Territories", Journal of Canadian Studies 28:3, pp. 322-39.

___. (1998) Breaking the Trail to Northern Community Empowerment: The Community Transfer Initiative in Cape Dorset. Toronto ON: Research Paper no. 194, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto. 77 pp.

___. (1999) "Nunavut: Challenges and opportunities of creating a new government", Public Sector Management 9:3, pp. 3-7.

___. (2000) "Public service in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories: Challenges of the northern frontier", in: Government Restructuring and Career Public Service. (ed.) Evert A. Lindquist. Toronto ON: Institute for Public Administration of Canada. pp. 112-47.

Young, Lisa. (1997) "Gender equal legislatures: Evaluating the proposed Nunavut electoral system", Canadian Public Policy 23:3, pp. 306-15.

NOTE: This bibliography is maintained on-line at: www.nunanet.com/~jhicks/nunabib.html. A similar bibliography on Greenland is available on-line at: www.nunanet.com/~jhicks/greenbib.html, and a bibliography of social science theses on the circumpolar Arctic is available on-line at: www.nunanet.com/~jhicks/arctictheses.html.