

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF NUNAVUT
THE IMPACT OF THE NUNAVUT PROJECT ON INUIT
IDENTITY, GOVERNANCE, AND SOCIETY**

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Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Geography and Planning
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By
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the impact of the 'Nunavut Project' on Inuit identity, governance, and society. This is illustrated through three manuscripts, where I demonstrate the effects that the establishment of Nunavut has had on the Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. The first manuscript (Chapter 2) presents a critical literature review of scholarly works on Nunavut. It also proposes a theoretical model based on boundaries and symbols to help comprehend the impact of Nunavut on the changing Inuit collective identity. The model shows that political elites and leaders in Nunavut are promoting the idea of a civic/regional form of collective identity for the Inuit pulling them away from a more cultural/traditional form of sub-regional groups of collective identities. The establishment of Nunavut also has had an effect on Inuit governance through the creation of the government of Nunavut and through the establishment of the Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the organization representing the interests of the Inuit beneficiaries of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and managing the implementation of the Agreement. In my second manuscript (Chapter 3), I examine the mode of operation and the activities of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. I demonstrate that the Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. is based on a Euro-Canadian corporate model foreign to a traditional Inuit model of governance. Today, the Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. is the most important political player in Nunavut. The government of Nunavut regularly consults with the Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. before taking any decision that may impact the Inuit beneficiaries of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. The 'Nunavut Project' seems to not only have changed the Inuit modes of identity and governance; it has also had some effects on Inuit socio-economic conditions in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. My third manuscript (Chapter 4) recounts the events that led to the creation of Nunavut (1999); but more importantly it argues that although Nunavut has reinforced the sense of pride and collective regional identity of Inuit, Nunavut's political institutions have not helped to improve the socio-economic conditions that plague Inuit society. I note, however, that Nunavut has provided Inuit with all the necessary jurisdictional powers to help improve their socio-economic conditions. I remain optimistic that in time, with additional financial contribution from the Canadian government, the Nunavut experiment may prove to be a success in alleviating some of the Inuit socio-economic challenges. Results from this thesis have demonstrated that the 'Nunavut Project' has had an impact on Inuit identity, governance, and society.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGM	Annual General Assembly Meeting
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEP	Capital Equipment Program
DIAND	Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Development
GN	Government of Nunavut
HTO	Hunters' and Trappers' Organization
IHAP	Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Program
IHTSP	Inuit Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Support Program
IHT	Inuit Heritage Trust
IIBA	Inuit Impact Benefits Agreement
INAC	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
ITC	Inuit Tapirisat of Canada
JBNQA	James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
NCF	Nunavut Constitutional Forum
NHSP	Nunavut Harvester Support Program
NIC	Nunavut Implementation Commission
NLCA	Nunavut Land Claims Agreement
NNI	Nunavumi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti
NSDC	Nunavut Social Development Council
NTI	Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
NWT	Northwest Territories

RIA	Regional Inuit Association
SEP	Small Equipment Program
TFN	Tungavik Federation of Nunavut

1. INTRODUCTION: THE CONSTRUCTION OF NUNAVUT

Nunavut was first proposed in 1971 by the Inuit national organization Inuit Tapiristat of Canada (ITC), the institution representing the political interests of the Canadian Inuit. The 'Nunavut Project' (ITC 1976) was aimed at settling the outstanding land and political claims of the Inuit of the Northwest Territories (NWT). It was put forth as part of Canada's Aboriginal Comprehensive Land Claims Policy (INAC 1973, 1987).

The reasons behind the Inuit desires, in the 1970s, to push for their own political unit were three-fold. First, there was the absence of any land cession treaty with the Canadian government. Second, the Inuit possessed a demographic majority and cultural homogeneity in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. Third, the Inuit wanted to control their own political, social, economic agendas.

Therefore, the basic idea behind the 'Nunavut Project' was to create a territory where the vast majority of people would be Inuit. As such, Inuit leaders believed that Nunavut would better protect, and promote Inuit cultural values and identity; it would empower the Inuit with political institutions that would reinforce Inuit decision-making over lands and resources; it would also give Inuit the essential political tools to better cope with contemporary Inuit socio-economic challenges (ITC 1976).

In May 1993, after seventeen years of arduous negotiations, Inuit representatives and Canadian government officials signed the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (INAC 1993). The agreement obtained Canada's parliamentary approval on June 10, 1993. The land and resources component of the Agreement became effective on July 9, 1993, while the political autonomy component (i.e., Government of Nunavut) became reality on April 1, 1999.

My objective in this thesis is to understand some of the benefits and challenges faced by the Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic following the signing of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1993) and the creation of the Government of Nunavut (1999). To do so, I intend to explore the effects that the 'Nunavut Project' has had on Inuit collective identity, on Inuit governance (Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.), and on Inuit socio-economic autonomy. This dissertation hopes to advance our knowledge on Nunavut and in particular on the impact that Nunavut has had on Inuit society.

Through three distinct manuscripts, two of which have been published in academic journals, I attempt to answer the following questions: how the establishment of Nunavut has impacted on Inuit collective identity in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic; what form of governance Inuit have acquired through the creation of the Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI); and what has been the effect of Nunavut on Inuit cultural, social and economic autonomy.

In this introduction, I first provide a literature review on regional geography and on scholarly works pertaining to Nunavut. I then explain the methodology used to compile the data found in the manuscripts. Finally, I provide an overview of my three manuscripts.

Contributing to regional geography

The intellectual context of this research is mainly shaped by the writings and traditions found in scholarly works pertaining to new regional geography (O'Loughlin 1988; Gilbert 1988; Murphy 1991; Reynolds 1992, 1994), focusing specifically on the concept of regions and regional identities (Bhabba 1990; Jackson and Penrose 1993; Häkli and Paasi 2003). Johnston and Sidaway (2004: 48) noted that regional geography occupied a pivotal position within geography from the 1910s to the 1950s. In fact, it dominated the discipline. Its main focus was on areal differentiation, on the varying character of the earth's surface. Wood (2001: 1) argued that early regional geographers (Herbertson 1905; Davis 1915) viewed the world as a mosaic of unique, particular, singular "natural" regions whose limits were based on the physical environment (climate, vegetation, physiography).

The regional integration promoted by regional geography studies was regarded as the ultimate goal of geographical synthesis between the human and physical sciences. Although not alone in promoting this form of geography (Platt 1935; James and Jones 1954), Hartshorne remained the central proponent of regional geography throughout his life. He argued (Hartshorne 1939, 1959) that it presented a clear vision of how human and physical components were interlinked. In regional studies a standard presentational sequence was widely used: landforms, climate, soil, vegetation, population, political

systems, etc. Wood (2001: 2) pointed out that regional geography gave unity and exclusivity to early modern geography by integrating physical and human sciences together in the analysis of specific regions.

Chorology¹ or the study of areal differentiation was at the centre of Hartshorne's regional geography (1939, 1959). The goal of chorology was to know the character of regions. It was largely descriptive. Hartshorne's chorology centred on the synthesis of particularities or uniqueness of regions (idiographic). This brought Entrikin and Brunn (1989) to describe Hartshorne's methodological approach as "chorographic-idiographic".

Philo and Soderstrom (2004: 114) demonstrated that for Hartshorne the great geographical project was all about identifying how areas of the earth differed from one another. In "Hartshornian regional geography", dubbed by today's geographers (Pudup 1988, Gilbert 1988, Murphy 1991) "traditional" regional geography, regions were studied as absolute pre-existing entities where a region could be understood in its essence! The region became the stage upon which human events unfolded. Although traditional regional geography is still practiced today (Paterson 1974; Steel 1982) and has been called by Hart "The highest form of the geographer's art..." (Hart 1982: 2), it has had since the 1950s, very limited methodological development.

In the 1980s and 1990s, under the influence of Marxist geography (Clark 1980, Cosgrove 1984, Taylor 1984, Massey 1984, Harvey 1985) and more importantly of humanistic geography (Thrift 1983, Pred 1984, Gregory 1985, Pudup 1988), regional geography made a comeback as a central perspective for human geography. But this form of regional geography was different from the one practiced by earlier regional geographers. Dubbed the "new" regional geography by Thrift (1983) it was distinct from "traditional" regional geography by its intent. In traditional regional geography the primary intention was to understand a region through its description (Whittlesey 1954; Hartshorne 1959). In the new regional geography the primary intention was to understand how people have shaped a region and how a region has shaped the minds of people (Paasi 1986; Gilbert 1988; Bradshaw 1990; Thrift 1990; Holmen 1995; Agnew 1999). In this

¹ Chorology, the study of the areal differentiation of the earth's surface, represents the oldest methodological geographical tradition. It was first set forth by the Greek geographer Strabo in his 17 volume geographic encyclopedia written between 8 and 18 AD (Strabo 1917).

thesis the concept of Nunavut as a region should be understood through a new regional geography perspective.

In order to transcend the descriptive form of earlier regional geography, new regional geography involved an engagement with critical social theory centred on human agency (Giddens 1983, 1984, 1985; Pred 1984; Gregory and Urry 1985; Sayer 1989). This theoretical movement focused on the capacity of humans to influence society through narratives and to be influenced by narratives² (Burr 1995: 90). New regional geographers (Paasi 1996; MacLeod and Jones 2001; Terlouw 2001) rejected the sole focus on regional description and analysis, instead they argued for an analysis of people's opinions and views (narratives) of a region: how people portray their region and how their region shapes their views of the world. They examined the process by which political leaders and activists construct regions and regional identity through their narratives (Bell 2001; Häkli 2001; Mamadouh 2001; Fondahl and Sirina 2003; Herb 2004; Antonsich 2009).

New regional geography became popular by virtue of a review by Gilbert (1988), who brought together various perspectives on the concept of region. Gilbert identified three main directions in the new regional geography: (1) economic; (2) social; (3) cultural (Gilbert 1988: 209-212). The first approach, influenced by Marxist geographers, treated a region as a focal point of capitalist processes (Taylor and Flint 2000; Summerville and Poelzer 2005). The second approach considered the region as the spatial habitat of social interactions (Häkli 1994; Paasi 1996). The third approach regarded the region as the cradle of cultural identification (Claval 1998; Duncan and Ley 1993). The later two approaches rested in humanistic geography.

However, all three methodological approaches outlined by Gilbert neglected the natural environment. Holmen (1995) and Wood (2001) noted that the physical environment seems to have been largely forgotten by the present day advocates of regional geography (Paasi 1986; Pudup 1988; Murphy 1991; Thrift 1993) and called for a new approach. Like Wood and Holmen, I also believe that new regional geography

² We can think of narratives as systems of communicating meanings, ways of representing ourselves and our social worlds (Burr 1995: 85). Narratives can be seen as having the potential to be deployed ideologically in the interests of political leaders and activists, but at the same time, allow room for the general population to exercise some degree of choice in the narratives they select and use.

should not just highlight the relations between people and their social relations or between people and their culture, but also between people and nature. The task of new regional geographers should be to reintroduce the environment into regional studies. As Stoddart suggested (1987: 333), a regional geography study divorced from its physical environment is meaningless.

In this context, I attempt in this dissertation to answer the calls of Wood, Holmen, and Stoddart for a renewed approach. I therefore propose a fourth direction to new regional geography which would encompass the two approaches influenced by humanistic geography (social and cultural) to which I add the concept of the natural environment. This socio-cultural-environmental approach to new regional geography, which I call the “regional geographies of identity”, is concerned with the interrelationships between regions and groups’ collective identities. Regions in this sense are spatially constituted by political leaders and activists (i.e., actors), who attempt to promote a common collective consciousness largely based on the key socio-cultural features of a region.

Region

Early analyses of regions were closely bound up with the evolution of geography as a discipline concerned with the study of areal differentiation known as “chorology”. This view on regions was largely connected to the chorographic-idiographic method reflected in the works of Hartshorne (1939, 1959).

The region as interpreted by new regional geographers (Johnston 1991; Macleod and Jones 2001; Terluuw 2001) is not a region produced for the sole purpose of providing a synthesis over a particular area; rather, it is an area in which social processes occur. Indeed, it became clear to a number of new regional geographers (Agnew 1999; Paasi 2003) that simply producing generalizations about spatial patterns, as practiced by traditional regional geographers, was a very limiting exercise. In new regional geography, a region is not merely an analytical product (an object), but rather a product of human agency and history (a subject) produced by actors (Pudup 1988; Thrift 1990, 1991, 1993).

Such a region is seen as in constant evolution. It is a socially produced category which once established is continually re-produced (Niemi 2007).

Paasi (1986; 1991; 1996; 1999; 2003; 2005) showed that socio-political processes embedded in actors' narratives shape and structure a region. So, contrary to traditional regional geography, regions here are not conceived as eternal entities, but as transitory entities in an ongoing socio-political process (Terlouw 2001: 82). Actors' narratives attempt to create a regional identity, a sense of belonging, or as Bone (2008) puts it "a sense of place", where residents living in a region are defined as "us" while those living outside the region are defined as "them". So the significance of a region, as practiced by new regional geographers, is in its role as a spatial marker of identity for a collective, not in its specific geographic descriptive character (Shields 2003).

Regional Identity

Along with region, regional identity composes the second key tenet of the regional geographies of identity. It is of interest at this point to explore the meaning of "identity" before we embark on further discussions in regards to regional identity. Scholars (Barth 1969; Roosens 1989; Hall 1990; Brah 1996) argued that identity is a concept that is hard to define. They observed that identity should not be treated as neutral, naturally given, or fixed, but should rather be interpreted as fluid and multiple; it is a social construct. I approach identity from a social constructionist perspective³. I understand identity as a dynamic process: one's own conscious identity is a product of one's meeting with different forms of others' identities.

Hall et al. (1992: 287) noted that identity always remains incomplete, it is always in process, and it is always being constructed and reconstructed. They considered identity as something formed unconsciously over time, rather than being innate in consciousness

³ Social constructionism, or social constructivism, may be usefully understood as being about the way knowledge is constructed through narratives by, for, and between humans (Hruby 2001: 51). Social constructionists reject the essentialist explanation that concepts are natural and pre-given (Burr 1995; Bryman 2001). Throughout this dissertation I adopt a constructionist position that acknowledges the existence of objective realities to the components of concepts. Thus, concepts (such as identity) have socially constructed meanings but their components exist whether we construct them or not: i.e., the physical environment through which one's identity is constructed.. I call this "realist social constructionism": concepts rest on some realist approach and should not be interpreted as wholly relativist.

at birth. Thus, one should observe that the identity of a person or a group not only changes over time but may also vary according to the specific context in which a person or a group finds itself at some point in time (Smith and Wistrich 2007; Penrose and Mole 2008). Rasing (1999: 82) and Dorais (2005: 8) have shown that identity is relational and context-dependent; it is enacted and re-enacted every time one has to relate to someone else: one's identity arises out of one's interactions with other people. Therefore, the notions of "us" and "them" are inherent to the use of the concept.

Dorais (2005: 3) best summarizes the three fundamental characteristics of identity. First, it is a relational concept rather than an intrinsic quality that would exist by itself; it is a way of representing the self in relation to context. Second, it is not given once and for all, but it is socially constructed; this process of construction continues all through one's life. Third, identity is constructed according to one's own socio-cultural traits; this means that the geographical features of the land (e.g., plants, climate, animals, etc) and the cultural characteristics of a society (e.g., language, customs, values, etc) are crucial components of one's identity.

Breton (1984) and Driedger (1989) have identified at least two forms of collective identity: 1) cultural or ethnic identity, which refers to a person's attachment towards a particular cultural group e.g., the Inuit; 2) political or civic identity, which refers to a person's attachment to a political unit e.g., Nunavut. It is understood that there may be several levels of political identity in one's repertoire (local, regional, national, international). However, this dissertation focuses on collective identity at a regional level. Such regional identity should be understood as encompassing both cultural and political components of collective identity, since any forms of political identity also possesses some degree of cultural referents (Knight 1994).

Constructing Regions and Regional Identities: A Model

The development of a conceptual model aimed at explaining the construction of regions and the formation of regional identities constitutes a central contribution to this thesis. My proposed model builds upon Paasi's institutionalization, or regionalization, theoretical framework (Paasi 1986, 2002, 2005).

However, Paasi's framework focused mainly on people's social interactions in space and did not highlight the importance of people's socio-cultural traits, largely resting on the local environment, as key features of identity construction. I use the construction of symbols and boundaries born out of a people's socio-cultural traits and mediated by actors' narratives operating through communication institutions (e.g., media), as the preferred approach to explain the construction of a region and the simultaneous formation of a regional identity.

The regionalization model proposed in my dissertation (Figure 2.3) illustrates the process leading towards region building and regional identity formation. In order to understand how this regionalization model operates, I will first review each of its components: (1) collective identity; (2) symbols; (3) boundaries; (4) actors; and (5) communication institutions.

Claval (1998) revealed that the culture of a dominant regional group, along with the regional natural environment, are the main sources of the socio-cultural traits upon which a group of people draw their collective identity. The environment is an important factor for cementing a group's self-image. I argue that the environment in which people live is not a mere physical container; it actually carries a value-loaded meaning that help people grasp the uniqueness of their collective identity. The environment does not determine the nature of the people; however it provides a context within which people construct and reconstruct their identities. So the nature of a group's responses to its environment is important, because it provides some of the cultural resources upon which a society develops its identity (Johnston 1991: 75).

The second dominant source of collective identity is culture. Searles (2006) contended that culture rests largely on a group's distinct ethnicity, language, religion, customs and values. Language is probably the most important component of culture. It is an obvious sign of distinctiveness in the construction of identities (Kolossoff 1999: 75). A shared language (e.g., Inuit language) is something which helps to give a group a common collective identity. Another powerful force of cultural meanings are customs and traditions, which are often linked with to the environment (e.g., Inuit harvesting activities).

Symbols canonize the uniqueness of the region from all others (Jones and Merriman 2009). They constitute the frame of reference upon which the socio-cultural uniqueness of the people and the region are grounded. They constitute expressions of group solidarity. Only the socio-cultural features of a region that are distinct from those of neighbouring regions, are employed as symbols so as to distinguish the people living in that region from others (Paasi 1986: 130).

Although symbols are social constructs, they are not without factual foundation. Roosens (1989) and Driedger (1989) observed that they are borrowed from constituent elements of a group's culture and natural environment. Thus, certain aspects that distinguish a people and a region from all others, its natural environment, its history, its economy, its culture, its political structure, become potential symbols that are used by actors to instil a sense of distinctiveness with neighbouring groups.

In his study, Paasi (2001: 17) found that symbols rest upon three forms of manifestations: (1) naming (place-names); (2) pictorial iconography (flags, coats of arms, monuments); (3) rituals (parades, ceremonies, festivals). In sum, symbols include: (a) discursively constructed elements such as naming; (b) fixed symbols such as flags, coats of arms, monuments; (c) social practices in which these elements come together such as parades, independence days, flag days, etc.

Although the profound meaning that a group of people may attach to various symbols may differ among the group's individuals who live within the same region, they still share similar symbols. In time, people develop an attachment to the symbols of a region. They create feelings of togetherness, transmit ideal criteria for collective identity, and maintain as well as promote the cultural uniqueness of a region (Paasi 1986: 129). Since the symbols are the same for all individuals living in the region, they help to create a regional bonding among all regional residents that may possess a diverse cultural background. In sum, symbols are simplifying devices used by actors to communicate complex sets of ideas; they are something that people can easily grasp and understand.

Boundaries⁴ are used by actors through their narratives to distinguish between one areal domain of social collectivity ("us") from another ("them"). Anderson and

⁴ Barth (2000: 17) suggested that the concept of "boundaries" should embrace two categories: First "literally", where physical boundaries (borders) divide territories on the ground; Second "abstractly",

O'Dowd (1999) explained that once boundaries are drawn, they generate a dynamic for internal homogenization among residents located within the boundaries. Boundaries both shape collective identity and are shaped by collective identity.

The construction of boundaries is based on actors' narratives – the narrative of integration and the narrative of difference, the former aims at homogenizing the contents of spatial experience while the latter strives to distinguish this homogenized experience from other neighbouring regional groupings (Häkli 2008: 473-474). Thus, boundaries have a dual role. First, they work to establish insiders: those who belong to the region. Second, they establish outsiders: those who do not live within the region. They simultaneously unify and divide, include and exclude.

Boundaries determined the space through which a group of people act as common citizens within a politico-territorial jurisdiction (Palmeiro Pinheiro 2009). They provide a spatial framework for experiences through which a group of people learns who and what they are in society. They determined the area through which a group of people are affected by common laws and act as common citizens. Boundaries therefore penetrate society and reinforce a common collective identity.

Collective identity, symbols and boundaries are important components in the reconstruction of identities, but what is also needed are actors and communication institutions that are capable of (re)producing a region and of (re)producing a regional identity (Henderson and McEwen 2005: 174). I propose that the construction and reconstruction of a region and of a regional identity is mediated and invented by various actors who subjectively use socio-cultural traits embedded within a group's collective identity, as symbols and as boundaries, in their narratives in order to highlight the differences between one's group from other neighbouring groups.

Actors use the communication institutions to spread their narratives. Paasi (2001) showed that the key communication institutions that carry the actors' messages are the national and regional media represented in various forms (print, television, radio, internet), and the education system (elementary and high school curriculum), as well as the various institutions of government. In the case of Nunavut, the print media (actors'

where social boundaries living in the minds of people set limits that mark social groups from each other. In this dissertation, the concept of "boundaries" should be understood as embracing both categories.

newsletters and information pamphlets, as well as regional newspapers) were the most important communication institutions in the building of the region and of the regional identity (Alia 1999).

The media's role in the process of symbolic diffusion and identity formation is crucial. They transmit a sense of bounded territories (Madianou 2005). The wide circulation of regional print media is crucial on account that it helps spread actors' narratives to a wide audience. Newspapers are acutely aware of their readers' interests and tend to report only on those subjects that correspond to the community's desires and concerns. The print media correlate highly with community awareness and identity. They serve to strengthen the significance of regional symbols and in this way influence the identity of the region and the potential feeling of togetherness amongst its inhabitants (Paasi 1986: 126). In sum, they provide a basis for projecting, or representing a certain "imagined community", a sense of place. It is mainly through the media that people, who are strangers to each other, can perceive themselves as "we" possessing a common past, present and future (Anderson 1991: 11).

My proposed regionalization model (Figure 2.3) posits, through the experience of the 'Nunavut Project', that before the start of the regionalization process Inuit people identified themselves through small cultural groups (e.g. Ahlarmiut, Iglulingmiut, etc.)⁵ living within small-scale cultural spaces⁶. The regionalization process initiated the reconstruction of collective identities from cultural identities toward a single regional identity, while in conjunction with identity construction spatial cohesiveness increased from small-scale cultural spaces toward a single large-scale region.

I argue that the reconstruction of identities is done through the interaction between collective identity, symbols, and boundaries (Figure 2.3). Symbols used by actors to construct boundaries, and originating from socio-cultural traits resting in people's collective identity, are used to reinforce a single form of collective identity at a regional level. One should see the construction of symbols, boundaries, and collective

⁵ The word Inuit would rarely be used in traditional times except when in contact with Euro-Canadians explorers and whalers (Mitchell 1996). In the Central and Eastern Arctic, anthropologists (Guemple 1976; Ross 1976; Creery 1993) estimated that there were about 50 such small cultural groups with a population average of 100, each with slight peculiarities in dialect.

⁶ The lands, or cultural spaces used and occupied by each of these small cultural groups was utilized mainly for harvesting activities. Each of these cultural spaces extended on average over areas of about 10,000 km² (Usher, Tough, Galois 1992; Muller-Wille 2001).

identity as being interconnected and occurring simultaneously. They are promoted by actors and manifest themselves in the field of communication institutions (e.g., media). I argue, through the Nunavut case, that the end result of the reconstruction of identities produces a region (Nunavut) and a new form of regional identity (Nunavummiut or Inuit of Nunavut) replacing, in time, the many different forms of cultural identities originating from small scale cultural spaces (Figure 2.3).

Contributing to the scholarly works on Nunavut

In Nunavut research on identity has been conducted mainly by anthropologists and sociologists (Dybbroe 1996; Briggs 1997; Searles 2001; Dorais 2001, 2005; 2006). They have focused on Inuit individual and social forms of identity. They have explored particularly the themes of language (Dorais and Sammons 2000; Shearwood 2001), religion (Laugrand 2002), and harvesting (Searles 1998; Rasing 1999; Wenzel 2001; Doubleday 2003; Gombay 2005;) as building blocks for Inuit identity. A few scholars have examined contemporary Inuit collective identity (Billson 1988; Dahl 1988; Dybbroe 1996; Muller-Wille 2001; Henderson 2007) and have done so from an ethnic or cultural perspective. However, to my knowledge none have looked at the connection between the construction of a region (i.e., Nunavut) and the re-definition of Inuit collective identity based on a regional perspective (i.e., Inuit of Nunavut, Nunavummiut).

In addition to presenting the development of Inuit regional identity in Nunavut, my thesis also contributes to understanding Inuit governance and Inuit socio-economic conditions in the Central and Eastern Arctic. Most academic literature on Nunavut (Dahl, Hicks, Jull 2000; Abele 2000; Billson 2001; Loukacheva 2007; Henderson 2008) has focused on the negotiation process that led to the conclusion of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) in 1993 and the subsequent creation of the Government of Nunavut in 1999. In addition, people involved in the negotiations, such as consultants, lawyers, and negotiators (Jull 1988; Merritt and Fenge 1989; Merritt 1993; Molloy 1993; McPherson 2004; Dewar 2009; Fenge and Quassa 2009) have also published on the subject. As demonstrated by Fenge and Quassa (2009), Nunavut's appeal was that ITC expected that the proposed government would be closer to the people, both physically

and culturally. Decentralization that had already started in the NWT (Dacks 1990; Parker 1996; Cameron and Campbell 2009) was not sufficient to quench the desire from Inuit to have their own government.

Loukacheva (2007) and Henderson (2007) explored at length the negotiation process and described the events that led to the signing of the NLCA. The process can be best described in three stages: proposition, elaboration, and approbation. At the proposal stage (1971-1981), ITC submitted to Ottawa three versions of the 'Nunavut Project' (ITC 1976, 1977, 1979). Duffy (1988), as well as Merritt and Fenge (1989), provided an excellent description of this stage and also retraced the main events that surrounded the proposition stage.

Cameron and White (1995) revealed that the dominant issue of the second stage, the elaboration (1981-1991), focused on discussions regarding the boundary location that would divide the NWT in two halves. This stage was the longest and most important phase of the negotiation process. They observed that two separate territory-wide plebiscites were held on the question of the border location (Cameron and White 1995). The stories surrounding these plebiscites can be found in Abele and Dickerson (1982) and in Parker (1996). They illustrated how, in the end, a majority of NWT residents supported the creation of Nunavut and therefore forced the Canadian government through their democratic vote to support the division of the NWT and the creation of Nunavut.

Hicks and White (2000) outlined the story around the successful approval by Inuit and the Canadian government of the NLCA and its companion document the Nunavut Accord at the approbation stage (1991-1993). The Nunavut Accord led six years later to the creation of the Government of Nunavut (1999).

Other have explored the components of the 41 chapters of the NLCA (Hamley 1995; Rodon 1998; Tulloch and Hust 2003; White 2008), while some have examined the political structures and inner workings of the new Nunavut government (Hicks and White 2000; White 2000, 2001, 2009; Henderson 2004, 2009; Timpson 2007, 2009). White (2009) argued that the NLCA establishes clear rules of ownership and control over land and resources in a Nunavut settlement area covering one-fifth of Canada's land mass (1,963,000km²). Hamley (1995) and Rodon (1998) provided an overview of the provisions contained in the NLCA. However, a number of scholars (Henderson 2007;

Loukacheva 2007) observed that the NLCA contained few provisions on social and cultural matters. Instead, those powers are found in the institutions of the Government of Nunavut. Researchers (Abele 2000; Henderson 2004; 2007; Loukacheva 2007) demonstrated convincingly that the establishment of the Nunavut government has put in the hands of Inuit, who compose the majority of the population in Nunavut, powers over social and economic issues (e.g., language, culture, health, housing, education, social services). These powers would have been absent in a simple land claims agreement.

Several scholars (Henderson 2004, 2008; White 2006, 2009; Timpson 2007) have concluded that because of the crucial political role of NTI and since Inuit comprise the majority of the population (85 percent), Nunavut should be characterized as a *de facto* Inuit political arrangement. The examination of the role and activities of NTI is an important component of this thesis.

Although the Government of Nunavut has been in existence for ten years, many scholars (Billson 2001, 2006; Hicks, Bjerregaard, Berman 2007; Henderson 2009; Tester 2009) have observed that Inuit contemporary society is still confronted by socio-economic challenges. They have revealed some of these challenges: i) a lack of affordable housing; ii) low education levels; iii) high unemployment rates; iv) numerous health and social woes; and, v) government funding deficiencies. This dissertation also explores the contemporary socio-economic conditions in Nunavut.

Methodology

To explore the impact of the ‘Nunavut Project’ on Inuit identity, governance, and society, I relied on published documents pertaining to the subject matters of each of the manuscript. A qualitative content analysis approach is used throughout the thesis to analyze the data.

The texts that I use in the first manuscript rely largely on secondary documentary sources; these sources included: published reports, books, and refereed journal articles drawing on the concepts of identity, region, and boundaries. Additional documents focussing on the case study area, Nunavut, were also reviewed. Particular attention was paid to literature on Inuit identity and on the negotiation process that led to the

construction of Nunavut. The last two manuscripts supplemented secondary documentary sources with primary documentary sources.

These additional sources included as well as news articles and opinion-editorials found in regional news media i.e., *CBC News North* and *Nunatsiaq News*. In these manuscripts, there is also a heavier reliance on reports, surveys, and statistical figures originating from Inuit organizations and from governments institutions. Although the primary and secondary sources used throughout this thesis are extensive, I do not pretend to cover all available sources published on the matters examined in the manuscripts.

The thesis draws on qualitative content analysis of narratives found in primary and secondary sources (Bryman 2001; Kitchin and Tate 2000; Hay 2000; Peters 2004). To analyze the narratives found in text, I have used “grounded theory”. Grounded theory is probably currently the most influential approach strategy for conducting qualitative content analysis (Bryman 2001: 397). It invites researchers to fragment their data by coding them into categories. The key process therefore is the breaking down (coding) of data into component parts (categories or themes), which are given names. Coding involves highlighting certain words or phrases found in the text and putting them into categories while looking for similarities and differences, connections and contradictions (Bryman 2001: 391; Kitchin and Tate 2000: 222). Connection is the process through which one searches for recurring patterns within the data; it is concerned with the identification and understanding of the inter-relationship between different categories (Kitchin and Tate, 2000: 234). In sum, coding is a mechanism for thinking about the meaning of data collected and for reducing the vast amount of data. Therefore, coding is where researchers move beyond data collection and try to interpret and make sense of the data.

I focus on categories or themes that I define as central to the research of each manuscript. I searched out underlying themes in the materials being examined. In some cases themes emerged from the data, while in other cases I looked for them in the data (Bryman 2004: 406-407). The idea is to highlight theme patterns within the texts. In the first manuscript these themes included: 1) the use of Inuit socio-cultural traits as they relate to the establishment of Nunavut’s territorial shape (boundaries); 2) the use of socio-cultural traits as “symbols of uniqueness” which fabricated Nunavut’s symbolic

shape (symbols); and 3) the use of Inuit socio-cultural traits which contributed to the promotion of an emergent regional consciousness.

In the second manuscript themes included: 1) the structure of the NTI; 2) the interactions between NTI and the regional Inuit associations, between NTI and the Government of Nunavut, and between NTI and the Government of Canada; and 3) the mode of operation of the Nunavut Harvester Support Program. Finally, in the third manuscript themes included: 1) the geography, history, and governance of Inuit of the Central and Eastern Arctic; 2) the federal policy on comprehensive land claims; and 3) the contemporary socio-economic challenges faced by the Inuit of Nunavut.

In qualitative content analysis the researcher must be conscious of the non-neutrality of narratives. Authors seek to accomplish things when they write (Bryman 2001: 360). Thus, primary and secondary sources of documents are interesting to review because of the biases they reveal. Therefore, one should not treat text narratives as complete depictions of reality. Texts will carry a particular point of view, which authors want to get across. They cannot be regarded as providing an objective account. Rather, they reflect authors' views; in the end, there can never be a complete analysis of texts (Wetherell and Potter 1992: 101).

A philosophical starting point for researchers using qualitative content analysis is that knowledge is situated and partial since the world is made up of competing views. The researcher is part of such a construction of knowledge (Dwyer and Limb 2001: 8). A qualitative content analysis approach to texts should encourage a growing reflexivity toward the conduct of the research and its results (Bryman 2001: 470). Reflexivity involves a self-consciousness and self-critical analytical scrutiny of one's self as a researcher (England 1994: 82).

Peters (2004: 258) argued that a researcher cannot produce research that is independent from his/her histories, experiences and social position. All research is interpretative; it is embedded, situated, specific, and hence partial, with an inevitable bias. My view of the world is produced within certain economic, political and social circumstances, which inevitably shape my construction of knowledge through the stance that I adopt. I therefore bear the imprint of my culture and society. The conclusions that I

derive from my text analyses are going to be a reflection of my own personal interpretation.

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) best illustrate the three forms of biases that may blur researchers. These are: 1) the social origin of the researcher (e.g., class, gender, ethnicity); 2) the social position of the researcher (e.g., academic, civil servant, blue collar worker); and 3) the intellectual biases through which he/she sees and constructs the world. The latter bias is the most important of the three, since it refers largely to one's own narrow philosophical approach to the experience of life (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 39). In sum, one can only know one's own "reality" and one can never make a claim beyond this.

In the perspective of Bourdieu and Wacquant's three forms of biases, I recognize that elements of my subjectivity will rest on my personal characteristics as a male Euro-Canadian. I am not an Inuk nor do I work for Inuit organizations or for the Government of Nunavut. Rather, I am a civil servant working for the government of the Northwest Territories, who has been living in the North (Yellowknife) since 1997. I have however travelled numerous times to the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic since 1984 and I have conducted research on Inuit governance since 1991. Like the Inuit people I, as a French Canadian, live in Canada as an "ethnic minority" and as such I feel added comprehension towards one's desire to protect and enhance his/her identity and cultural traits, governance, and socio-economic condition.

In the end, as I write and inscribe meaning to the texts, I actually construct a biased view. I do not claim that my analysis of the data comprises all possible interpretations, but rather portrays defensible results obtained through a qualitative content analysis approach to texts. The production and content of my thesis are my sole construct and responsibility. The result of my research will therefore speak about who I am and to whom I speak. I am in a sense an instrument of my research.

The thesis outline

The dissertation consists of three manuscripts and a concluding chapter. Each manuscript focuses on different aspects of the construction of Nunavut and its effects on

Inuit. The first manuscript presents a critical literature review of scholarly works on Inuit history, politics and identity. The main focus of the paper, however, is on the reconstruction of Inuit collective identity in Nunavut. The second manuscript outlines the governance structure of NTI and its activities. In this chapter, I reveal the interactions between NTI and the Government of Nunavut as well as between NTI and the Government of Canada; I also depict the wildlife harvesting program support initiative administered by NTI. My third manuscript proposes an overview of the regional geography and political history of Nunavut; however, the main emphasis of the paper is on the current socio-economic conditions (up to the year 2007) of Nunavummiut.

My first paper provides a survey of writings on Nunavut. The survey outlines five main themes explored by scholars: (1) historical research done by anthropologists and historians, which recounted the ancestral history of Inuit from pre-contact time up to the 1960s; (2) works which focussed on the Nunavut negotiation process; (3) publications that dealt with the Nunavut political system and the NLCA; (4) papers that retraced the construction of Nunavut geopolitical boundaries, based on the traditional Inuit land use and occupancy; and (5) literature on Inuit identity.

The manuscript mostly centres on the concepts surrounding the construction of geopolitical boundaries and their linkages with Inuit collective identity. In this context, I propose a theoretical model (regionalization process), based on Paasi's works in this area (Paasi 1986, 1991, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2005) that outlines the interconnections between boundaries, symbols and collective identity. The model shows that Inuit collective identity in Nunavut is being redefined by socio-political actors (i.e., governments, Inuit organizations, local medias), who through their narratives promote a new form of collective identity in Nunavut from small-scale cultural identities toward a single large-scale regional identity.

The organizational analysis of NTI constitutes the subject of my second manuscript. NTI is a private Inuit corporation created on April 1, 1993. It is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the NLCA. It represents and defends the interests of the Inuit beneficiaries of the NLCA. Contrary to the Government of Nunavut, which is a public government representing the interests of all residents in Nunavut, NTI is an Aboriginal organization representing solely the interests of the Inuit of Nunavut.

I present the governance structure of NTI, then I analyze its mode of operation; subsequently I look at the political relations between NTI and territorial as well as federal governments. Finally, I examine the various programs and services offered by NTI with a particular emphasis on the Nunavut Harvester Support Program.

My third manuscript describes current socio-economic tendencies (up to the year 2007) in Nunavut. The transition, in the 1950s and 1960s, from a traditional life on the land to a modern one in the communities had enormous consequences for the Inuit. The society was completely transformed. The sedentarization of Inuit alienated them from the land and from their traditional culture and engendered social pathologies that are still being battled today (Billson 2001, 2006).

This paper first presents a geographical and historical overview of Nunavut; it then recounts the process that led to the conclusion of the NLCA and the establishment of the Government of Nunavut. However, the main objective of the manuscript consists in an analysis of contemporary economic, social and political challenges confronted by the newly created Government of Nunavut as it enters its 10th anniversary of existence.

In the last chapter, I bring about a general conclusion whose aim is, in part, to highlight the main concluding elements found in each of the submitted manuscripts. I also discuss my contribution to research on Nunavut as well as future research directions that could further contribute to the understanding of the Inuit experience around the 'Nunavut Project'.

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2. INUIT IDENTITY AND REGIONALIZATION IN THE CANADIAN CENTRAL AND EASTERN ARCTIC: A SURVEY OF WRITINGS ABOUT NUNAVUT⁷

Abstract

The author presents a survey of writings on Nunavut since 1976. The paper focuses on a critical literature review of scholarly works centred on geopolitical boundaries and on Inuit collective identity in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. The author proposes a theoretical model that outlines the interconnection between boundaries, symbols and collective identity. The model shows that Inuit collective identity is being redefined in Nunavut. It is argued that the land claims / self government processes in Canada, aimed at creating large-scale political units such as Nunavut are contributing to the reconstruction of collective identity among Inuit groups.

⁷ This manuscript was published in *Polar Geography*, vol. 31, nos. 3-4, 2008, pp. 99-118. Reprinted with permission.

Foreword: the 'Nunavut Project' and Inuit identity

This first manuscript demonstrates the crucial role of the Inuit political elites in (re)defining a new collective identity for the Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic through the negotiations of the 'Nunavut Project'. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the boundaries of Nunavut were being defined by the various actors involved in the construction of Nunavut. I argue that while the boundaries of Nunavut were being defined in the 1980s, the Inuit political elites promoted the emerging boundaries as a reflection of Inuit traditional land use and occupancy in the Central and Eastern Arctic. In turns, the Inuit leadership used symbols born out of the boundary creation process (including the boundary itself) to promote a collective identity uniqueness distinct from their neighbours i.e., NWT Dene-Metis and Saskatchewan and Manitoba Denesuline. This identity construction resulted from the negotiation of the 'Nunavut Project'; it focuses on a form of regional civic collective identity attached to the newly created Nunavut Territory: i.e., Nunavummiut.

In this manuscript, I argue that this regionalization of Inuit collective identity mediated by the Inuit elite, through the regional media, and originating from the negotiation of the 'Nunavut Project' will continue to change. The establishment of the Nunavut government and its institutions (in particular, the education system) will likely continue to reinforce a regional civic identity (i.e., Nunavummiut) to collectively define the residents of Nunavut (Inuit and non-Inuit), while pulling Inuit away from a traditional cultural based identity. In fact, the regionalization process could be conceived as a struggle between small-scale cultural identity referents to a single large-scale regional civic identity referent. In sum, one may assert that this regional identity construction is one of the legacies of the 'Nunavut Project'.

Introduction

The negotiation from 1976 to 1993 and the subsequent creation of Nunavut in 1999,⁸ has attracted a flurry of publications on the subject of Inuit self-government in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic (Légaré 1999). A survey of writing on Nunavut since 1976, when the Nunavut project was first put forward (ITC 1976), reveals five main themes explored by scholars. First, historical research done by anthropologists and historians, which recount the ancestral history of Inuit from pre-contact up to the 1960s, when Inuit were relocated by government to settle into villages; second, works which focus on the Nunavut negotiation process. In fact, this is where most of the academic literature on Nunavut is found; third, publications that deal with the Nunavut political system and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA). Most of the recent publications have concentrated on this theme. As with the second theme, these scholarly works have been the domain of political scientists. Fourth, the construction of Nunavut geopolitical boundaries, based on the traditional Inuit land use and occupancy, has given rise to some academic research done mainly by geographers. Finally, literature on Inuit identity has been published by anthropologists as well as by sociologists.

Nunavut-related publications show that the last two themes have not been treated as extensively as the previous three. However, they are of crucial importance to understanding how Nunavut was constructed and how the establishment of Nunavut has impacted Inuit collective identity in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. First, this paper undertakes a critical literature review of the writings about Nunavut by exploring each theme with a particular emphasis on the last two themes; second, the concepts surrounding the construction of geopolitical boundaries and their linkage with Inuit collective identity will be explored. I will attempt to answer how the establishment of Nunavut boundaries has impacted on Inuit collective identity in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. Finally, I will examine the role of socio-political actors (i.e., governments, Inuit organizations, local media) in the construction and in the promotion

⁸ On April 1, 1999, the Canadian government officially proclaimed the Nunavut Territory and government. Nunavut, an Inuktitut word that means “our land”, was carved out of the Northwest Territories to become the most recent member of the Canadian federation. Nunavut is inhabited by only about 30,000 people, 85 percent of whom are Inuit.

of a new form of collective identity in Nunavut from “Inuit” (cultural) to Nunavummiut (civic).

Nunavut: a historical background

Early history

Scholars (Damas 1984; Smith-Siska 1990; McGhee 2004) have divided the early history of Inuit in the Canadian Arctic into three distinct phases: the Pre-Dorset, Dorset, and Thule periods. Research in pre-contact history is largely based on oral history and also on archaeological research (Bennett and Rowley 2004). The first inhabitants of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic were the Pre-Dorset people whose ancestors crossed the Bering Strait into North America around 10,000 years ago. According to scholars (Damas 1984; Burch 1986) the Pre-Dorset arrived in the Eastern Arctic from Alaska at around 4000 BC. The Dorset people succeeded them in 1000 BC. However, with the arrival of the Thule people, the ancestors of today’s Inuit around the year 1000 AD., the Dorset people vanished. There is still much debate among academics as to the reasons behind the disappearance of the Pre-Dorset and Dorset societies.

Aside from a brief Viking contact with the Dorset people, at around 1000 AD., early contact between Inuit and Europeans started with the visit of Martin Frobisher to Baffin Island in 1576. The story of his arrival, as well as those of subsequent British explorers, in search of the Northwest Passage, has been recounted by a number of scholars (Berton 2001; Fossett 2001; McGhee 2004). Yet, contact between Europeans (later Euro-Canadians) and the Inuit remain limited until the early 20th century. The establishment of Hudson Bay trading posts and the arrival of Catholic and Anglican churches in the region increased contact with Inuit. Damas depicted those early contacts as “harmonious” (Damas 1993: 5). In fact, until well into the early 20th century, the Inuit continued to live a nomadic life in small groups.⁹

⁹ There were about 50 Inuit ‘tribal’ groups in the Canadian Arctic whose size varied between 30 to 100 individuals (Damas 1984; McGhee 2004).

Canadian Government intervention in the North

Regular contact between Euro-Canadian society and Inuit culture started only after the Second World War (Brody 1991). Canadian government intervention in the North was largely based on concern for the living conditions of the Inuit. Weissling (1991), Damas (2002), and Clancy (1987) illustrated how in order to facilitate the delivery of government services (health, education, social services) and to improve the Inuit living condition, Ottawa established villages along the Arctic coast.¹⁰ Inuit were settled into those villages where the government could provide health, social services and education for them.

The move off the land, in the 1950s and 1960s, changed Inuit lives dramatically (Brody 1991; Creery 1993; Fossett 2001; Damas 2002). Sedentarization in the villages increased the Inuit feeling of alienation from their land and their traditional way of life (Fletcher 2004). This relocation into permanent settlements soon gave birth to dependency on government social services (e.g., housing, welfare). Inuit had become wards of the federal government (Colin 1988). Billson (1990) described how social woes (alcoholism, family violence, drugs, unemployment, inadequate housing, etc.) became prevalent in the newly created villages.

At the end of the 1960s, having recently come from a tradition of governing themselves in almost all aspects, the Inuit were trying to re-acquire control over their lives and their traditional lands (Dickerson 1992). Billson (2001) and Mitchell (1996) maintain that the search for Inuit political autonomy stems from the Euro-Canadian domination on Inuit, which started the settlement initiative of the 1950s. The Inuit political revolution and the birth of the Nunavut project can be understood only within the context of this dramatic shift from the land to village life (Billson 2001: 284). In July 1971, the Inuit formed a political organization, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, to regain control over their political and economic destinies in the eastern and central Arctic.

¹⁰ Today, there are 28 communities in Nunavut.

The Nunavut proposal: the negotiation process

Most academic literature on Nunavut (Abele 1987; Bell 1992; Billson 2001; Gray 1994; Légaré 1996, 1998a) has focused on the negotiation process that led to the conclusion of the NLCA in 1993 and the subsequent creation of the Government of Nunavut in 1999. In addition, people involved in the negotiations, such as consultants, lawyers, and negotiators (Jull 1982, 1988; Merritt and Fenge 1989; Fenge 1992; Molloy 1993; McPherson 2004) have also published on the subject.

Put forward by Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) in 1976,¹¹ the Nunavut proposal sought an agreement with Canada on land claims and on self-government. The Inuit of the Northwest Territories (NWT) hoped that by signing such an agreement, they would establish a new and respectful political relationship between themselves and the Federal government. As demonstrated by Weller (1988) and Hamley (1995), Nunavut's appeal was that ITC expected that the proposed government would be closer to the people, both physically and culturally. Decentralization that had already started in the NWT (Dacks 1990; Légaré 1997) was not sufficient to quench the desire of Inuit political elite to have their own government.

The creation of Nunavut had to be negotiated as part of Canada's policy on Aboriginal outstanding land claims (INAC 1973).¹² Purich (1992) and Légaré (1996) examined at length the negotiation process and described the events surrounding the three stages (i.e., proposal, elaboration, approval) that led to the signing of the final agreement. At the proposal stage (1976-1981), ITC submitted to Ottawa three versions of the Nunavut project (1976, 1977, 1979). Ottawa accepted the third proposal as basis for negotiation. It contained four objectives: (1) ownership rights over portions of land; (2) decision-making power over the management of land and resources; (3) financial compensation and royalties from non-renewable resources developed in the area; and (4) commitment from Ottawa to create the Government of Nunavut. In exchange for the

¹¹ In 2001, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada was renamed: 'Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami'.

¹² The story surrounding the origin of Canada's Aboriginal land claims policy is described in detail by Weaver (1981).

settlement of their claim, the Inuit would have to surrender their ancestral Aboriginal rights to all lands in the North.

Duffy (1988) and Purich (1992) provided an excellent description of the elaboration stage (1981-1991). This stage was the longest and most important phase of the negotiation process. At that stage, Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN)¹³ and the federal government officials drafted the NLCA (INAC 1993). Cameron and White (1995) argued that the dominant issue of the elaboration stage focused on discussions regarding the boundary location that would divide the NWT in two halves.

Two separate territory-wide plebiscites were held on the question of the boundary (Cameron and White 1995). The story surrounding these plebiscites can be found in Abele and Dickerson (1982) and in Parker (1996). They recounted how, in the end, a majority of NWT residents supported the creation of Nunavut, thereby forcing the Canadian government through their democratic vote to support division. The first referendum took place in April 1982 and asked if people were interested in dividing the NWT into two political entities: to the west Denendeh,¹⁴ to the east Nunavut. The plebiscite received the support of 56 percent of the residents. A second referendum on the subject of division took place in May 1992, once the final land claims agreement had been completed and once the parties (i.e., TFN and Canada) had agreed on the location of a boundary line to cross the middle of the NWT. This time 54 percent of NWT residents supported division.¹⁵

Finally, Dacks (1995) and Légaré (1997) related the story that led to the Nunavut Political Accord, which confirmed the birth of the Territory of Nunavut for 1999. Both the Nunavut Political Accord (Canada 1992) and the NLCA (INAC 1993) were approved by adult Inuit living in the NWT through a referendum held in November 1992 (69 percent voted in favor) and later by the Canadian government through parliament in June 1993. This constituted the approval stage (1991-1993).

¹³ In July 1981, TFN replaced the ITC as the responsible Inuit negotiating body for the Nunavut claim. TFN represented solely the Inuit of the Central and Eastern Arctic. ITC felt at the time that it had to pull away from the Nunavut negotiations to concentrate more on Canadian-wide issues.

¹⁴ Denendeh was a political project somewhat similar to Nunavut (Watkins 1986; Smith 1992). Ultimately, the project was rejected in 1991 by Dene-Metis Chiefs of the NWT (Légaré, 1998b).

¹⁵ While the Inuit of Eastern Arctic strongly supported the line, the Dene-Metis of the western NWT disapproved of the proposed line. This explains the low approval level.

The political institutions of Nunavut

The academic literature that illustrates the political system of Nunavut comprises the highest number of recent scholarly material written on Nunavut. Some authors have explored the components of the 41 chapters of the NLCA (Kersey 1994; Hamley 1995; Rodon 1998; Tulloch and Hust 2003), while others have examined the political structures and inner workings of the new Nunavut government (Gray 1994; Légaré 1997; Henderson 2004; Hicks and White 2000).

Tulloch and Hust (2003) argue that the NLCA establishes clear rules of ownership and control over land and resources in a settlement area covering one-fifth of Canada's land mass (1,963,000 km²). Hamley 1995, Légaré (2003), and Rodon (1998) provided an overview of the provisions contained in the NLCA. The agreement gave to the Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic the ownership over an area of 353,610km² of which 36,257km² includes subsurface mineral rights. In addition, public boards composed equally of Inuit and government representatives were created to manage the lands and resources over the Nunavut settlement area. Inuit also obtained royalties from all current and future non-renewable resources development up to 2 million dollars a year. Finally, the Inuit were to receive from Canada 1.15 billion dollars, over a fourteen-year span (1993-2007), as compensation for extinguishing their Aboriginal land rights. However, scholars (Kersey 1994; Cherkasov 1993) point out that the NLCA does not take into account social and cultural items. Those are to be contained in the Nunavut Political Accord.

The Nunavut Political Accord provided a blueprint for Nunavut's political structure. Légaré (1997, 1998a) explored how this blueprint was later refined by the Nunavut Implementation Commission¹⁶ (NIC 1995, 1996). Hicks (1999) and White (2001) depicted the similarities between the political systems of Nunavut and of the NWT. The Nunavut territorial government enjoys the same political powers as the government of the Northwest Territories. These powers and jurisdictions are similar to those held by the provinces except that in Nunavut, in the Yukon and in the Northwest

¹⁶ The NIC functioned from December 1993 to July 1999. It was composed of nine members equally nominated by Canada, the Northwest Territories, and TFN.

Territories, the Canadian federal government owns and manages public Crown lands and non-renewable resources. Nunavut possesses the same political institutions as does the NWT or the Yukon i.e., a Commissioner, an Executive Council, a Legislative Assembly, a public service sector and tribunals.

Nunavut is a non-ethnic public government. However, since Inuit comprise the majority of the population (85 percent), Nunavut is often characterized by scholars (Gray 1994; Légaré 1997; Henderson 2004; Walls 2000) as a *de facto* Inuit government. Nunavut legislative authority rests among the nineteen elected members of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly. There is no party system in Nunavut so each elected member sits as an independent. Hicks and White (2000) argue that the consensus legislative system present in the Nunavut assembly should be described as “a non-partisan Westminster cabinet-style regime” (Hicks and White 2000: 69). It is interesting to note that the Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC) had proposed, in 1996, the idea of a gender equal legislature for Nunavut. The proposal was ultimately defeated by a 57 percent ‘no’ vote in a Nunavut-wide plebiscite held on the issue in May 1997. Dahl (1997), Young (1997) and Gombay (2000) recounted the events that led to the proposal and the reasons behind its defeat.

Researchers (Abele 2000; Billson 2001; Henderson 2004) argue that the establishment of the Nunavut government has put in the hands of Inuit, who compose the majority of the population in Nunavut, powers over social and economic issues (e.g., language, culture, health, housing, education, social services) that would have been absent in a simple land claims agreement. To ensure that as many villages in Nunavut as possible could benefit from government jobs,¹⁷ a decentralization initiative (Nunavut 2000, 2004a; 2004b) was implemented. Thus, the head offices of a number of departments (e.g., Housing, Justice, Culture and language) are now located outside the capital Iqaluit.¹⁸

Seven years after its instalment, Nunavut remains a political challenge. Authors (Abele 2000; Walls 2000; White 2000; Légaré 2001a) have highlighted some of these

¹⁷ There are 28 communities in Nunavut. Ten were targeted to benefit from decentralisation. However, many employees refused to move outside the capital Iqaluit. Today, in smaller communities, many job positions have yet to be filled up.

¹⁸ About 500 of the 1400 government employees work outside the capital region.

challenges such as: (i) a lack of affordable housing; (ii) low education levels; (iii) high unemployment rates; (iv) numerous health and social woes; and, v) limited economic development. Indeed, Nunavut's heavy dependence on federal funding limits its expenditure power and curtails its effort to solve internal challenges.¹⁹ Only future research would bring us clarity as to the political success or failure of this *de facto* Inuit self-government experiment. Nunavut is still in its infancy. It is too early to draw any formal conclusion. Undoubtedly though, to this day, Nunavut's biggest success has been its contribution in creating a civic regional identity consciousness among the Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. This new identity, as we shall see, has been largely built around the construction of Nunavut's boundaries and the ensuing regionalization of Inuit collective identity.

Boundaries and identity: different sides of the same coin

In traditional political geography the link between territory and boundaries are usually taken for granted (Glasner and Fahrer 2004). Boundaries are understood as neutral lines, fixed, absolute, almost material entities. This paper argues that the study of boundaries needs to transcend the notions of static territorial lines in order to become more contextual. Paasi (1996, 2002) points out that those geopolitical boundaries are human creations manipulated by various socio-political groups who attempt to control certain spatial areas. In this context, boundaries have meaning as part of the production of territory. So, the important question here is not only where a boundary is located, but also how this boundary is established and then ritualized in the process of collective identity construction.

Anderson and O'Dowd (1999) interpret geopolitical boundaries as encapsulating a history of struggle against outside forces and as marking the limit of a society. Boundaries by definition constitute lines of separation or contact. The drawing of any regional border represents arbitration, a simplification, of complex political and socio-cultural struggles between various groups who have interests as to the location of the border. Anderson and O'Dowd (1999) explain that once boundaries are drawn, they

¹⁹ About 95 percent of Nunavut's 750 million dollars annual budget is financed by Canada.

generate a dynamic for internal homogenization among residents located within the boundaries. Boundaries both shape and are shaped by what they contain. Boundaries look inwards as well as outwards; they simultaneously unify and divide, include and exclude.

As demonstrated by Newman and Paasi (1998), geopolitical boundaries usually fail to coincide precisely with the extent of a socio-cultural region. They are rarely contiguous to the socio-cultural boundaries of a group of people. Therefore, geopolitical boundaries become inherently contradictory, problematic, and multifaceted. As explained by Bone (1999) boundaries separating socio-cultural regions should be best viewed as transition zones rather than finite limits. Thus, at its boundary a region characteristic becomes less distinct and merges with those characteristics of the neighbouring region.

Paasi (1999, 2003) and Newman and Paasi (1998) have pointed out the importance of political boundaries in the construction of a collective identity for a group of people. Paasi (1996) argues that the bounded territory of a region is the primary focus of collective identification for its citizens. Boundaries penetrate society through numerous practices and narratives and help to construct a civic regional identity. Boundaries both create identity and are created through identity. As I will demonstrate in the case of Nunavut the links between boundaries and identity is particularly strong.

Identity is one such concept that is hard to define. It is in essence a social construct: one's own conscious identity is a product of one's meeting with different forms of others' identities (Barth 1969; Hall 1990). A collective or group identity is but one of many identities in an individual repertoire. As members of a society, each of us occupies a number of statuses and plays a variety of roles which help us shape several forms of identity (Barth 1969; Brah 1996). One can position himself/herself on many identity "axes" (Dorais and Watt 2001). An examination of literature dealing with the concept of identity reveals many forms of identity: cultural, gender, ethnic, religious, etc. (Driedger 1989; Roosens 1989; Castells 1997).

Scholars (Brah 1996; Roosens 1989) have generally established that a person may identify himself or herself with others at three levels. First, on an individual level, where one may identify oneself with some important persons in one's life, (e.g., family, friends, co-workers); second, on a social level, where one may identify with certain social roles (e.g., a gender, an economic activity, a religion, a language, etc); third, on a collective

level, where one may identify oneself with a broad category of persons (e.g., a cultural group, a political unit) at different spatial scales (i.e., local, regional, national, international).

Breton (1984) and Driedger (1989) have identified at least two forms of collective identity: (1) cultural or ethnic identity, which refers to a person's attachment towards a particular cultural group i.e., the Inuit; and (2) civic or political identity, which refers to a person's attachment to a political unit. It is understood that there are several levels of civic identity in one's repertoire (local, regional, national international). The present paper is concerned with identity at a regional level (i.e., Nunavut). Regional civic collective identity rests largely on certain historical, cultural and political characteristics attached to a region (Albert *et al.* 2001; Häkli and Paasi 2003).

The construction of Nunavut geopolitical boundaries

Scholars (Dacks, 1986; Hick and White 2000; Weller 1988, 1990; Wonders 2003) noted that the most challenging issue of the negotiation process that led to the signature of the NLCA surrounded the discussions about the location of Nunavut's boundaries. Where to put the line that would serve to divide the NWT in two parts was the dominant question throughout the 1980s. In the NWT, the Constitutional Alliance composed of Dene, Metis, Inuvialuit, and Inuit representatives was founded in July 1982. It had the challenging task of determining a western boundary line upon which all affected Aboriginal groups could agree i.e., Dene-Metis of the MacKenzie valley, the Inuvialuit of the MacKenzie delta, and the Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. To the south, the Denesuline of Saskatchewan and of Manitoba had also voiced concerns in regards to the southern boundary of Nunavut (Usher 1990).

To assert its claim over the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic, ITC initiated a land use and occupancy study in 1973. The purpose of the three-volume study (Freeman *et al.* 1976) was to prove to government that Inuit and their ancestors had used and had occupied virtually all of the land and oceans in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic for more than 4000 years. The study was guided by Canada's policy on Aboriginal land claims (INAC 1973). The policy states that in exchange for proof of continued use and

occupancy of the land, an Aboriginal group that had not yet surrendered to government its ancestral title to the land may negotiate a comprehensive land claims agreement with the Canadian government (Saku and Bone 2000; Usher 2003). Such an agreement provides to the claimant Aboriginal group certain land ownership and land management powers over a defined region called a “settlement area”.

The *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project* (Freeman *et al.* 1976) regrouped more than 1600 maps (i.e., biography maps) portraying the journeys traveled by Inuit hunters, on the land and on the sea ice, in search of game animals. In addition, the maps pinpointed the locations of Inuit outpost camps, cairns, burial grounds, and place-names. These socio-cultural traits and activities based on Inuit cultural identity helped trace an Inuit cultural space. Research done by Freeman (1976, 1984), Keller (1986), Riewe (1988, 1991) and Wonders (1984, 1985, 1990) have provided excellent maps of current and traditional Inuit land use in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. In addition, Collignon (1993), Lester (1979), and Wonders (1987) have shown the importance of Inuit place-names in determining the possible extent of the Inuit claim area in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic.

The biography maps and their contents were used by ITC and later by TFN to assert Inuit land interests (Wonders 1990). The biography maps became the building blocks towards the delimitation of the Nunavut territorial shape (Brody 1991). TFN attempted to design geopolitical boundaries that were as closely contiguous as possible to those of Inuit traditional use and occupancy of the land (i.e., cultural space). Thus, TFN insisted that the Nunavut western boundary should follow the tree line and should include the Inuvialuit communities and the rich oil and gas fields of the MacKenzie delta.

However, Wonders (1984) and Usher (1990) have demonstrated that very few land areas in the NWT are uncontested or homogeneous. There are significant overlapping areas with a number of Aboriginal groups. Watkins *et al.* (1986) noted that some areas along the tree line were contested by the Dene-Metis who had also traditionally hunted and trapped in the area. The Dene-Metis socio-cultural region (Ash *et al.* 1978) also extended north of the tree line in search of caribou. The area was uninhabited but both sides had hunting and trapping interests to the area. Similar contested overlapping claims occurred along the proposed southern boundary of Nunavut

with Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Usher's land use research (Usher 1990), on behalf of the Denesuline, showed continue use of the land, located in the NWT along the Saskatchewan and the Manitoba borders, by the Denesuline. However, Canada stated that it would deal with the Denesuline overlapping claim in a separate process and that the Denesuline, being non-residents of the NWT, would not be entitled to influence the negotiations in the NWT (Molloy 1993).

As for the Inuvialuit, in July 1985, they decided not to join their Inuit counterparts (Keeping, 1989). Their economic (oil and gas from the Beaufort Sea) and transportation links along the MacKenzie valley were closely tied to the western part of the NWT. They preferred not to embark on a claim that focused largely on the eastern and central Arctic and settled their own land claim in the Western Arctic in 1984 (Wonders 1988, 1990). Therefore, by the end of the 1980s, the only outstanding issue was on how to draw the boundary between the claim areas of the Dene-Metis and the Inuit. Progress on this matter was not made until February 1987, when through the Constitutional Alliance, both side agreed on a compromise boundary (Constitutional Alliance 1987).

However, the agreement broke down a few months later when Dene Chiefs refused to endorse the proposal (Merritt and Fenge 1989; Dickerson and McCullough 1993). The heart of the problem laid in the ongoing harvesting activities of both groups on a 100-km wide area around the tree-line. Both groups argued that the whole of the 100-km wide area should be on their side of the boundary. Having failed to settle the boundary issue, the Constitutional Alliance was disbanded in July 1987. Negotiations on the boundary issue were stalled for the next three years.

In April 1990, Ottawa designated the ex-Commissioner of the NWT, John Parker, with the task of solving the boundary dispute. After consulting with all parties, Inuit and Dene-Metis, Parker recommended a compromise boundary (Parker 1991) largely similar to the border upon which the Dene-Metis and the Inuit had agreed three years earlier, which at the time was rejected by the Dene-Metis. The 'Parker Boundary Line' was later approved (May 1992) in a NWT-wide plebiscite.²⁰ It would now serve to divide the NWT in two halves.

²⁰ In the Eastern Arctic the support for the boundary was strong. However, in the western NWT most people voted against the proposed boundary.

In the end, Nunavut's geopolitical boundaries largely reflected the Inuit socio-cultural region (Figure 2.1) in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. However, other important factors also had to be taken into account in the delineation of Nunavut's boundaries. Thus, TFN did not claim land jurisdiction beyond the southern border of the NWT, even though some Inuit groups had (in the past) traveled down to Churchill, Manitoba. Rather, they chose to respect the existing provincial Manitoba border (Molloy 1993; Fenge 1992; Merritt 1993).²¹ They also respected the existing settlement area boundaries of the Inuvialuit who had signed a comprehensive land claim agreement with Canada in 1984 (INAC 1984). Finally, once Canada had accepted the idea of creating Nunavut, it supported an eastern border for the Nunavut Territory that would follow the NWT existing geopolitical boundaries (Molloy 1993).²² Those borders extended around James Bay, even though the waters and the islands in James Bay had never been used or occupied in the past by the Inuit.

In summary, the construction of Nunavut's geopolitical boundaries was determined by: (1) the spatial localisation of certain past and present Inuit cultural traits and activities; (2) the pre-existing borders of provinces, administrative districts, and settlement areas; (3) Canada sovereignty in the Arctic through the meridian approach to the geographic North Pole; and (4) by the land use interests of other Aboriginal groups (i.e., NWT Dene-Metis).

Today, the western boundary of Nunavut overlaps into parts of the cultural space of the Dene-Metis (Ash *et al.* 1978), who now find some of their traditional hunting grounds within Nunavut. In addition, to the Dene-Metis, the Denesuline of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the James Bay Cree and the Inuit of Northern Quebec have also been affected, since they use some of those lands, now within Nunavut, for harvesting purposes. For all of these affected Aboriginal groups the creation of Nunavut, and in particular the location of its boundaries, has signified a loss of their socio-cultural region

²¹ Indeed, any changes on the location of a provincial boundary require the approval of the province concerned. It also requires an amendment to the Canadian constitution; a task that is particularly challenging.

²² By taking this position, Canada avoided the perennial debate over the provincial offshore boundaries in Hudson Bay and in James Bay (Québec, 1972).

(Figure 2.2).²³ Indeed, one may now expect that the newly created Nunavut government would redefine these lands as part of the heartland of the Inuit socio-cultural region in an attempt to fuse the socio-cultural region with the newly created political region of Nunavut. Obviously, like any other province or territory, Nunavut will jealously guard its geopolitical integrity.

The reconstruction of Inuit collective identity in Nunavut

Research on identity in the Arctic has been conducted mainly by anthropologists and sociologist (Dorais 1995, 2001, 2005; Dybbroe 1996; Briggs 1997; Searles 2001). They have focused on Inuit individual and social forms of identity. They have explored particularly the themes of language (Dorais and Sammons 2000; Shearwood 2001), religion (Laugrand 2002), and harvesting activities (Searles 1998; Rasing 1999; Wenzel 2001; Doubleday 2003; Gombay 2005) as building blocks for Inuit identity. A few scholars have examined contemporary Inuit collective identity (Billson 1988; Dahl 1988; Dybbroe 1996; Müller-Wille 2001), but have done so from an ethnic or cultural (e.g., Inuit identity) perspective rather than from a civic or political basis (e.g., Nunavut residents' identity). To my knowledge none have looked at the connection between the construction of geopolitical boundaries and the re-definition of Inuit collective identity.

The reconstruction of collective identities is mediated and invented by various actors (i.e., TFN, Government of Canada) who will subjectively use symbols and geopolitical boundaries in order to highlight the differences between one's group from other neighbouring groups (Massey 1994; Paasi 1999).

During the construction of a region, boundaries and symbols, founded on an Aboriginal group's socio-cultural and physical environment, are established through which the group learns its distinctiveness and its uniqueness in relation to neighbouring regions (Paasi 1986, 1991). Once a region's boundaries are determined symbols are reinforced and are used as components of an emerging regional collective identity.

²³ Although affected Aboriginal groups could continue to hunt, fish and trap within Nunavut, their Aboriginal rights may have been affected by the creation of Nunavut. Thus, any land claims or harvesting right claims by these groups within Nunavut would be complicated since the newly created Nunavut government will defend the integrity of its newly acquired laws and powers within the borders of Nunavut.

Symbols manifest themselves in the field of communication (advertisement, television, newspapers, books, sculptures, paintings, memorials, etc.).

Symbols are shaped and manipulated by TFN through the local media, in a land claim process, in an attempt to communicate their vision of political and social development to other actors (e.g., Government of Canada, Dene-Metis of the NWT, Denesuline, etc.). Symbols are 'invented tradition'; they are simple to understand and may change their meanings over time. They are continually reinvented by actors who often use them to gain certain socio-political claims (Dybbroe 1996). In sum, symbols legitimize and celebrate the existence of a common regional consciousness or civic identity within a political unit.

In Nunavut these socio-cultural symbols rest on the Arctic climate and wildlife as well as on socio political traits. They manifest themselves in three forms: (1) rituals (e.g., Nunavut holiday); (2) pictorial graphics (e.g., Nunavut's flag, logo-map, arctic wildlife, igloos, inuksuit, etc.); and (3) socio-political names (e.g., Nunavut, Nunavummiut).

Boundaries have an important role in the construction of a regional identity as symbols of the region (Paasi 1997). They become communication instruments (i.e., narratives) through which social distinction are constructed. Scholars (Newman and Paasi 1998; Anderson and O'Dowd 1999; Paasi 2002, 2003) have demonstrated that collective identities are constituted in relation to differences. Boundaries are symbols and manifestation of those differences. They are critical elements in establishing common consciousness within the borders, the 'Us' and excluding those outside the borders, the 'Them'. A major part of the process of producing a common regional civic identity consist of presenting the residents of a region as being as united as possible and of pointing socio-cultural differences with people living outside the existing political boundaries of the region.

Meanings and symbols can be attached to the boundaries. These are then exploited, often by the political elites, to mobilize people and to construct a regional civic identity. Indeed, according to Paasi (1997) and Pickles (1992) regional civic identity is often associated with the narratives of a region's boundaries carried through the media by socio-political actors (e.g., TFN). Therefore, regional civic identity becomes basically a form of categorization, where boundaries are used to distinguish one spatial domain and

social collectivity (e.g., Inuit) from another (e.g., Dene-Metis). These boundaries are then used by TFN to further define all residents of Nunavut (Inuit and non-Inuit) as regionally united through a common form of identity i.e., Nunavummiut.²⁴ In summary, one may say that regional identity and geopolitical boundaries become linked, they are different sides of the same coin.

Conclusion

A review of academic literature on Nunavut has shown that a significant number of scholarly work have focused on the history and on the politics of Nunavut. Even though one may argue that the greatest success of Nunavut has been the emergence of a new regional self-consciousness among the Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic few articles have explored this important subject matter (Dorais and Watt 2001; Légaré 2001b).

I have indicated that as the boundaries of Nunavut were being constructed, Inuit collective identity was being (re)defined in civic regional-scale (i.e., Nunavummiut) and less and less in solely cultural terms (i.e., Inuit). This regionalization of Inuit collective identity is based on Inuit socio-cultural traits and activities. Since the socio-cultural region is the source of Nunavut geopolitical boundaries, the regionalization process attempts to incorporate all Inuit of Nunavut, as well as non-Inuit residents, into a common regional civic identity consciousness: Nunavummiut. As demonstrated by Dahl (1988) in the case of Greenland, this regional civic identity inherits strong Inuit cultural foundations since the vast majority of Greenland's residents are Inuit.

In Canada, Inuit collective identity is being redefined around large-scale political units born through the land claims/self-government processes so as to incorporate Inuit and non-Inuit people into a common regional civic identity: e.g., Nunavummiut, Nunavimmiut, Nunatsiavummiut. Obviously, the Nunavummiut identity portrayed by various socio-cultural symbols will inherit strong Inuit cultural foundations.

Through the reconstruction of Inuit collective identity from cultural to regional, one can see the interconnection between boundaries, symbols and collective identity.

²⁴ The term "Nunavummiut" means in English "the inhabitants of our land".

Their construction occurs simultaneously and is mediated by actors (Figure 2.3). In the case of Nunavut, Inuit cultural factors helped to define the political boundaries of Nunavut. The symbols born from the spatial construction of Nunavut became the cornerstone of an emergent Nunavummiut regional civic collective identity. To sustain itself this new identity reinforces the symbols and highlights the boundaries of Nunavut.

With the continued emergence of new Nunavut institutions (e.g., Department of Education, Department of Culture and Language, etc.), one should expect the progressive growth of regional civic identity i.e., Nunavummiut. In time, as illustrated by Dahl (1988),²⁵ one may suppose that the Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic will identify themselves more and more as Nunavummiut. This regionalization of Inuit collective identity has yet to receive broad attention by scholars. Ultimately, we can only hope that more scholars will explore the concepts of regional identity and boundary construction and its impact on Inuit collective identity in Canada's Arctic.²⁶

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²⁵ Dahl asserts that the 1979 introduction of home rule in Greenland has helped to reshaped Inuit collective identity. The Inuit of Greenland now identify themselves collectively primarily as Greenlanders. The term also applies to the non-Inuit Danish inhabitants of Greenland.

²⁶ One may add that there is also a similar regionalization process among the Inuit of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula who now identify themselves collectively as Nunavimmiut on the Quebec side, and as Nunatsiavummiut on the Labrador side. As for the Inuvialuit of the Western Arctic such a regionalization process is currently absent. They have yet to negotiate a self-government component to their land claim agreement. Only persons with Inuvialuit ancestry can identify themselves as "Inuvialuit".

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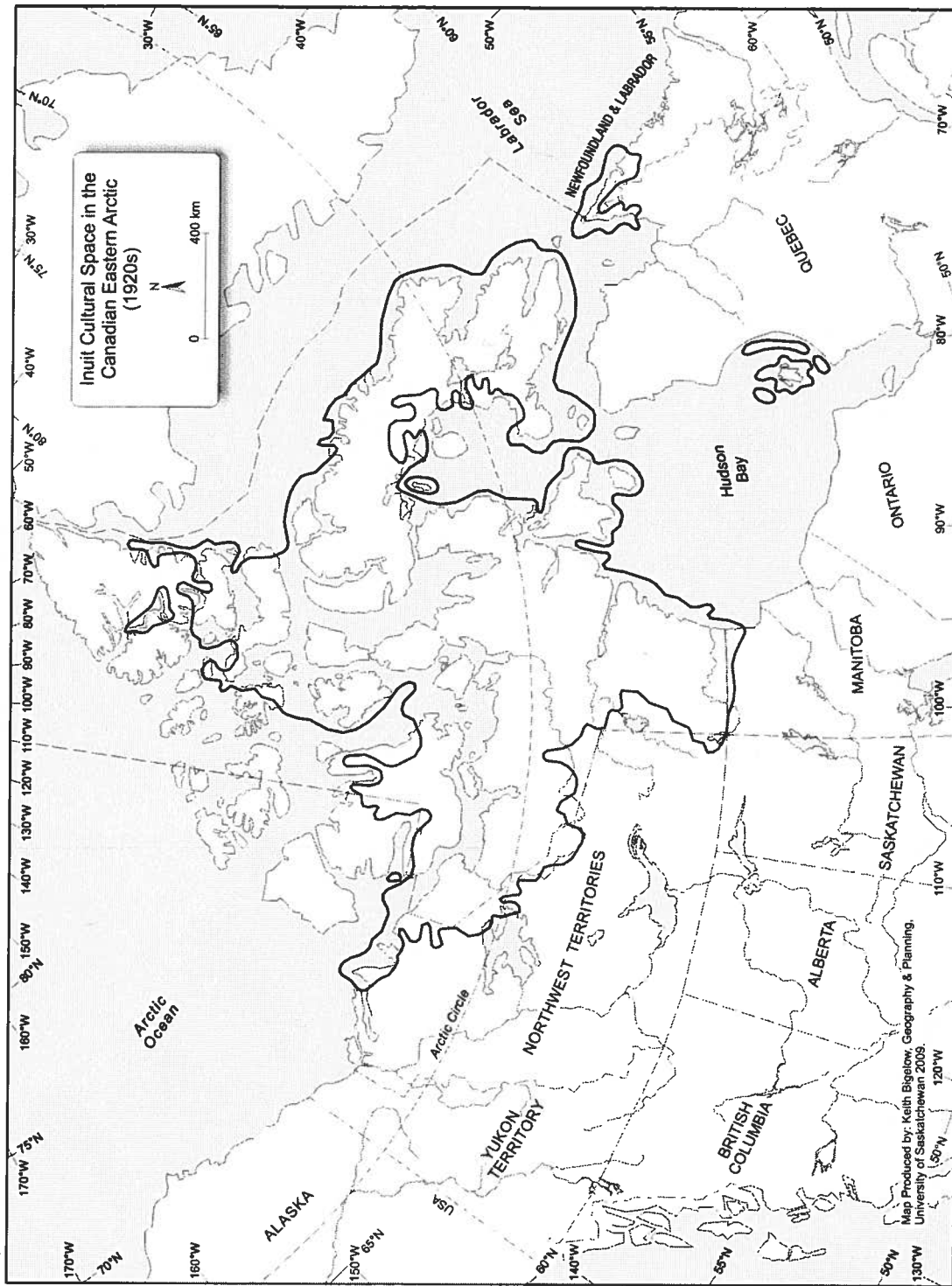
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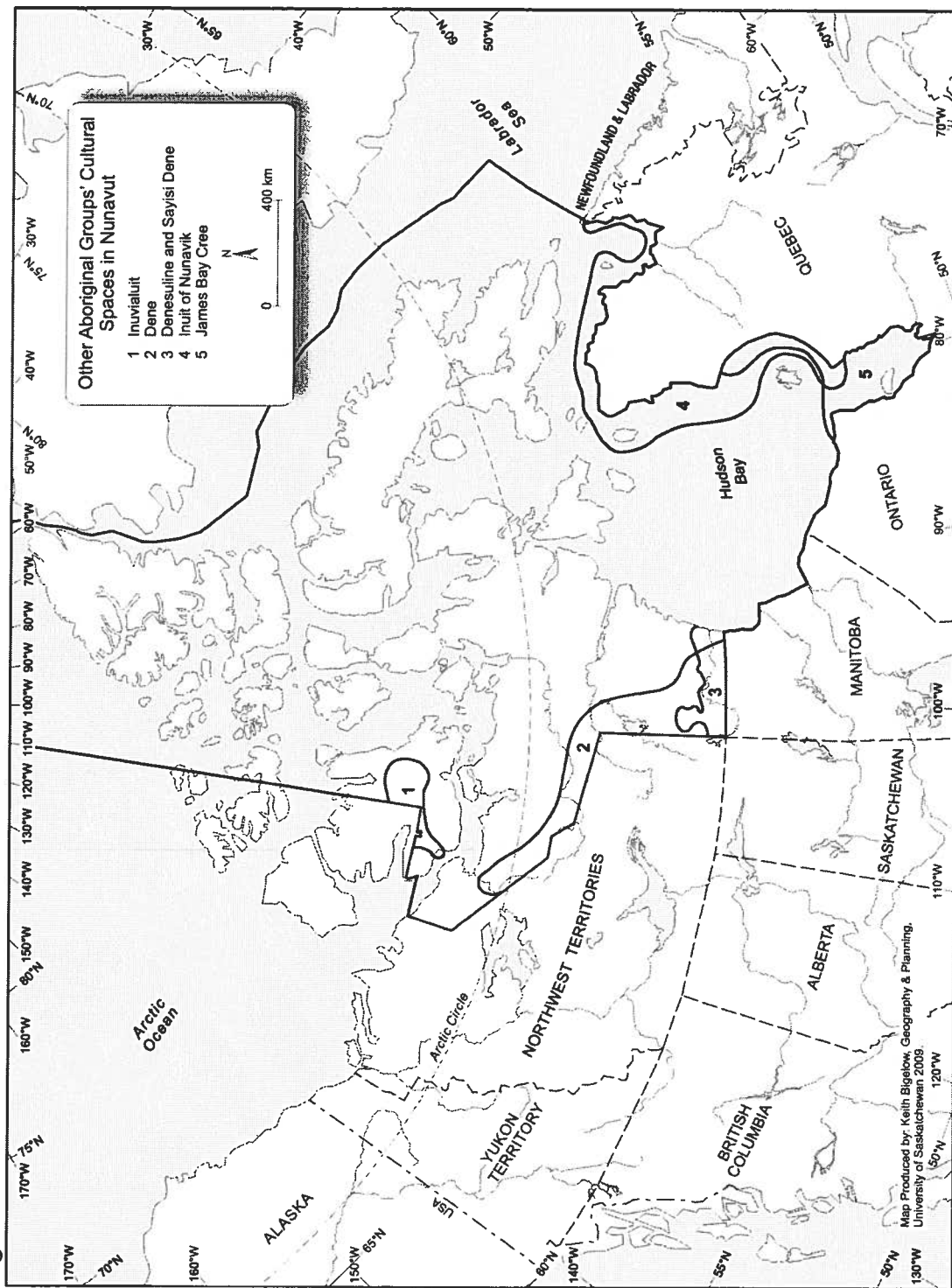
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Figure 2.1



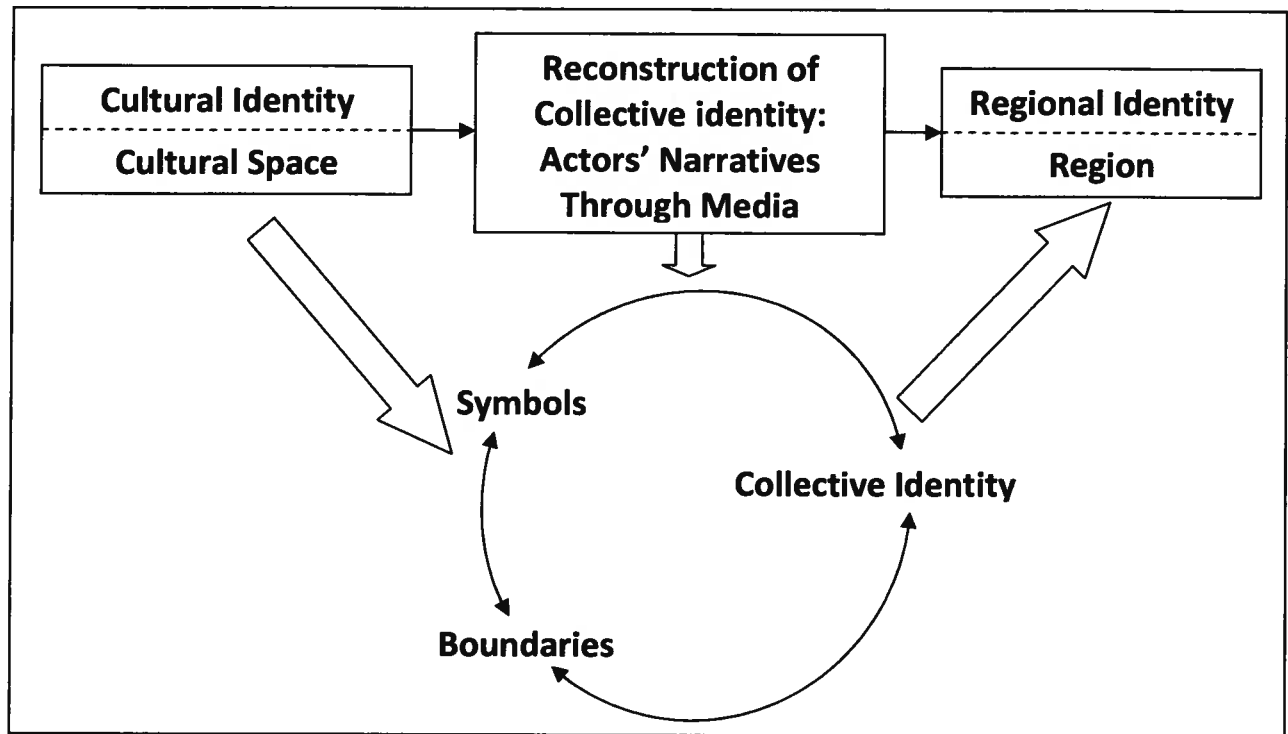
Source: Adapted from Freeman et al., 1976: 167-168

Figure 2.2



Source: Adapted from National Geographic Magazine, March/April 1999: insert map

Figure 2.3: The Regionalization Process of Inuit Collective Identity



3. INUIT GOVERNANCE IN NUNAVUT: THE NUNAVUT TUNNGAVIK INC. AN EXAMINATION OF ITS STRUCTURE, ITS ACTIVITIES AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENTS

Abstract

The Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) is responsible for ensuring that Inuit rights under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement are respected and enforced. The present manuscript examines the organizational structure of NTI, its activities and programs, and its relationship with territorial and federal governments. The paper also describes the relationship that NTI has with a number of public and Inuit institutions in Nunavut. To fulfill these objectives, the author first presents the organizational structure of NTI; then he analyzes the mode of operation of NTI; subsequently he looks at the working relations between NTI and public and Inuit organizations in Nunavut, between NTI and the Government of Nunavut, and between NTI and the Government of Canada. Finally, the essay examines the Nunavut Harvester Support Program delivered by NTI and compares it with other similar programs in Inuit Nunaat.

Foreword: The ‘Nunavut Project’ and Inuit Governance

Besides Inuit identity, the ‘Nunavut Project’ also had an impact on Inuit governance; not only through the establishment of the Government of Nunavut in 1999 but also, and most importantly, through the creation of NTI, following the implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement in March 1993. NTI is the successor Inuit organization to TFN. NTI represents the rights and interests of the Inuit of Nunavut and can best be described as an “Inuit form of governance”. On the other hand, the Government of Nunavut represents the interest of all residents of Nunavut (Inuit and non-Inuit); it is a “public form of governance”. Recent political events have shown that NTI possesses significant political influence over the Government of Nunavut. The *Clyde River Protocol*, signed between NTI and the Government of Nunavut (NTI and GN 1999), seems to clearly position NTI as a second level of governance in Nunavut.

The implementation of the NLCA and the birth of its administrative Inuit organization (NTI) were the outcomes of twenty-two years of negotiations of the ‘Nunavut Project’. NTI gives the Inuit an increased political role in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. Besides providing important programs and services to Inuit, such as the Nunavut Harvester Support Program, NTI plays the role of a “watchdog institution” over the public Government of Nunavut. It exercises significant influence over government’s decisions in particular as it relates to Inuit culture. NTI has also been a strong advocate of the Inuit rights described in the NLCA. This position has often brought NTI to oppose some of the policies and actions affecting Inuit put forward by the Government of Canada i.e., turbot quotas, *Firearms Act*, unsuccessful implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Finally, I note that the organizational structure of NTI is not modelled after Inuit traditional governance but, rather, along the lines of modern Euro-Canadian corporations, which leads to a centralized decision-making process exercised through NTI’s Executive Committee.

Introduction

The Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.²⁷ (NTI) is a private Inuit corporation created on April 1, 1993. NTI succeeded the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut²⁸ (TFN) as the Inuit organization responsible for the implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA). NTI represents and defends the interests of the 26,369 Inuit beneficiaries of the NLCA (NTI 2009: 21).

After 15 long years of negotiations, the comprehensive land claims settlement of the Nunavut Inuit was concluded on December 16, 1991 (Légaré 2001). The NLCA was approved, on November 6, 1992 by the Inuit of Nunavut and by the Canadian Parliament on June 10, 1993. The Agreement came into effect on July 9, 1993. The NLCA covers an immense geographical area of 1,931,511 km² (Figure 3.1) sparsely populated by about 29,474 inhabitants (Statistics Canada 2006); a majority of whom are Inuit (85 percent). Table 3.1 summarizes the main points of the NLCA.

The NTI's role is to make sure that the 212 sections contained in the 40 Articles of the NLCA are properly implemented. NTI is the key organization lobbying on behalf of Inuit interests in Nunavut. It manages Inuit responsibilities set out in the NLCA and ensures that the federal government fulfills its obligations (NTI 2009: i). Contrary to the Government of Nunavut, which is a "public form of governance" representing the interests of all residents in Nunavut (Henderson 2007; Loukacheva 2007; White 2009), NTI is an "ethnic form of governance" representing solely the interests of the Inuit of Nunavut. Inuit beneficiaries of the NLCA are the shareholders of NTI (DIAND 1993: Art. 39).

In the following pages, I will examine the organizational structure and activities of the NTI. The purpose of this essay is, in part, to portray the organizational chart of NTI in order to display its activities. The essay also examines the relationship between NTI and the territorial government as well as between NTI and the federal government.

²⁷ An English translation of the Inuktitut name "Nunavut Tunngavik Inc." would read as: "Foundation Our Land Inc."

²⁸ TFN represented the interests of the Nunavut Inuit during the negotiation period (1982-1993) that led to the conclusion of the NLCA.

To fulfill these objectives, I will first examine the structure and the mode of operation of NTI. I will then highlight the working relations that exist between NTI and other public or Inuit organizations within Nunavut, between NTI and the Government of Nunavut, and between NTI and the Government of Canada. Finally, I will analyze the programs and services administered through NTI for the benefit of the Nunavut Inuit. A particular emphasis will be put on the Nunavut Harvester Support Program.

The organizational structure and mode of operation of NTI

NTI's headquarters are located in the Nunavut capital of Iqaluit. However, NTI is dispersed geographically; it maintains offices in Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay, and in Ottawa. This dispersion causes some headaches, as illustrated by a comment from Michael Qappiq, chairman of the Iqaluit Hunters' and Trappers' Organization, quoted in the local *Nunatsiaq News*: "...in Rankin Inlet they have lots of blizzards over there most of the time their office is usually closed" (Minogue 2005: 2). In addition, due to the absence of direct flights between regional centres, travel logistics can be challenging when personnel need to travel from one regional office to the other. NTI is composed of three levels of decision-making structures and ten departments (Figure 3.2): General Assembly, Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and departments.

The General Assembly

The General Assembly is the supreme decision-making body. A General Assembly is held once a year in the fall. It approves the annual budget of NTI. The General Assembly delegates can increase or restrict the spending level. The General Assembly passes and amends the rules (bylaws) of NTI. Any changes to bylaws must be approved by at least two-third of the delegates. A similar percentage of delegates are required for the acceptance of new bylaws.

Until 2008, the Annual General Assembly Meeting (AGM) consisted of 48 delegates. However, for cost-saving reasons the number of delegates was reduced to 23 in

2009.²⁹ Another reason for reducing the number of delegates to the AGM may have had to do with the decision-making process: “When too many delegates are present at an AGM, it’s moreover hard to make decisions...said James Eetoolook, 1st Vice-President of NTI” (George 2008: 2). In sum, the voting delegates attending the AGM are: members of the Board of Directors of NTI (6); Four representatives from each of the three Regional Inuit Associations (12); one additional representative from the Baffin region (1); President of the Nunavut Trust (1); one appointed representative from each of the following groups: women, elders, and youths (3).

Board of Directors

NTI has a six-member Board of Directors. The members meet four times per year to review the decisions taken by the Executive Committee, and to prepare the yearly budget of NTI. The Board usually approves the decisions taken by the Executive. In fact, to disapprove a decision taken by the Executive would be both complex and likely unsuccessful since it would require the convocation by the Board of a special AGM where two-third of the delegates would vote against a decision from the Executive.

All the three members of the Executive Committee are also members of the Board of Directors and therefore account for half of the membership to the Board. Their pre-eminence within the Board makes it virtually impossible for the other Board members to significantly challenge any decision from the Executive. Those other Board members are the Presidents of each of the three Regional Inuit Associations (RIAs).³⁰

RIAs were creations of TFN in the mid-eighties.³¹ Originally, their purpose was to select Inuit-owned lands within each of their region (Fenge and Merritt 1989). With the implementation of the NLCA, they have now acquired a significant role in the administration of those lands. RIAs cover a geographical area similar to the administrative regions created by the Government of the Northwest Territories in the

²⁹ The saving amounted to about \$250,000 (NTI 2009).

³⁰ Until 2005, RIAs had six members on a ten-member Board of Directors. However, in 2005, because of cost-saving reasons the Board membership was reduced to six. RIAs interests now do not out weight those of the central Inuit institution, NTI, represented on the Board by its three executive members.

³¹ Each RIA has an organizational structure similar to NTI i.e., General Assembly, Board of Directors, Executive Committee.

early 1970s for the delivery of government programs and services (Légaré 1998; Henderson 2009). Figure 3.3 shows the extent of those geographical regions: RIA Kitikmeot (Kitikmeot Region); RIA Kivalliq (Keewatin Region); RIA Qikiqtani (Baffin Region).

The Executive Committee

In theory, the most powerful structure within NTI is the General Assembly. In reality, the real power lies within the Executive Committee. Decisions taken by the Executive cannot be easily disapproved by the General Assembly unless there is a two-thirds support of delegates to do so.³² The three members of the Executive are elected by Inuit beneficiaries, aged 16 and older, for a four-year term.³³ Usually, these elections bring low turnouts (Henderson 2007: 151-163). At the first elections, in March 1993, only 45 percent of the eligible voters went to the poll. In more recent elections, participation has been even lower: only 38 percent of eligible ballots were cast in March 2004, and 29 percent in March 2008. Many factors may explain this apathy. There is no question that the small electorate is saturated by the number of elections in Nunavut: members for the Nunavut Legislative Assembly, members for the Municipal Councils, members for the local Hunters' and Trappers' Organizations, RIA elections, NTI elections. On average, an Inuk voter has the opportunity to go to the poll three times per year! In addition, many Inuit do not have any interest in politics and simply do not vote (Henderson 2007: 151-163). Another reason, which may explain the low turnouts, is the fact that NTI elections are usually held in the spring when many Inuit hunters are on the land (Henderson 2007: 151-163).

Members of the Executive meet once a month to implement the decisions approved by the General Assembly and to supervise the "day to day" operation of NTI. The Executive is composed of a President, a 1st Vice-President, and a Vice-President of

³² To this day, no decision taken by the Executive has been reversed by the General Assembly.

³³ Until 2004, the Executive Committee was composed of four members elected for a three-year term. The number of members was reduced to three, while the length of the mandate was extended to four because of cost-saving reasons.

finance³⁴. Even though the President is ultimately responsible for all decisions taken by the Executive, he/she must have the full support of the Executive on any initiatives. Indeed, some Presidents have been known, in the past, to have had to resign from their post because of lack of support from members of the Executive. In fact, Presidents are often exposed to criticisms and do not generally last for more than one mandate,³⁵ while the other members, who are not as much in the limelight, can last several years: Mr. James Eetoolook has held the post of 1st Vice-President for over fifteen years!

In sum, NTI decision-making process can be best described as collegial, where power rests within the whole of the Executive. Recent reductions in the number of delegates with voting authority attending the AGM and in the membership from the RIAs sitting on the Board of Directors presume an increased in the decision-making powers of NTI's Executive Committee at the expense of the General Assembly and of regional interests.

The departments

To properly implement its duties, NTI has a staff of 86 employees (secretaries, managers, accountants, researchers, etc.); most of whom are Inuit (85 percent). The work of the employees is supervised by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who himself is an Inuk, whose task is to make sure that the decisions of the Executive Committee are implemented³⁶. Most non-Inuit employees (15 percent) are consultants who work away from the offices of NTI. Employees are attached to one of the ten departments of NTI. Each of these departments falls under the authority of one of the members of the Executive Committee and are located in the community where the office of the designated executive member is found (Table 3.2).

³⁴ The office of the President is located in Iqaluit; the office of the 1st Vice-President is in Cambridge Bay; the office of the Vice-President of finance is in Rankin Inlet.

³⁵ Current President, Paul Kaludjak, seems to be an exception to that political tendency since he was re-elected, in 2008, for his second four-year term.

³⁶ The office of the CEO is also located in Iqaluit.

NTI budget

The annual budget of NTI comes from the Nunavut Trust. Money earned by the Trust's investments is distributed annually to NTI. On average NTI's annual operation budget totals 40 million dollars, about 15 million dollars of which is allocated to RIAs for their operations (NTI 2009: 78-79). The Nunavut Trust is required to pay out at least four percent of its investment assets value to NTI every year. In 2008, this amounted to about 41.5 million dollars (Nunavut Trust 2008). In addition, if the Trust makes profit earning from investments beyond the four percent minimum those profit earnings can also be provided to NTI.³⁷ Thus, in 2008, NTI received from the Trust about 66 million dollars of revenues. However in 2009, because of the economic crisis, the Trust lost on its earnings and lost some of its investment assets, the payouts to NTI was slashed to 35.8 million dollars (NTI 2009: 79).

In its early years (1993 – 2003), NTI had to borrow from the Trust since payouts from the Trust were not sufficient enough to pay for the administration of NTI. By 2004, NTI had an accumulated debt of about 140 million dollars owed to the Trust. The Trust warned NTI to improve its financial management: “Archie Argnakaq, the chair of the Nunavut Trust says the land claims organization that receives the money from the Trust has to be more financially responsible...” (CBC News North 2005: 1). To help slash expenses NTI decided to reduce the number of members in the Executive Committee and in the Board of Directors; later it also reduced the number of delegates to the General Assembly from 48 to 23. However, despite these initiatives and repeated warnings from the Trust, NTI's annual budget increased from 35 million dollars in 2005 to 40 million dollars in 2009. These increases can be partly explained by the fact that the number of employees grew from around 60 (2005) to about 90 (2009), while the number of departments increased from eight (2004) to ten (2009).

³⁷ In addition, NTI by virtue of its ownership of some lands with mineral rights (subsurface Inuit-owned lands) may also collect all royalties on those lands. Recently, NTI has collected some benefits through Inuit Impact Benefits Agreements with companies exploring mineral potentials on Inuit-owned lands (subsurface). However, no royalties have been collected yet. NTI has about 80 exploration agreements with mining companies (NTI 2009: 54); the most advanced mining explorations on Inuit-owned lands are: Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation (iron), Meadowbank Gold Project (gold), Avera Resources Kiggavik Mines (uranium). It is estimated that NTI controls about one-third of the lands in Nunavut with proven mineral high potential (Dewar 2009: 79).

Any excess revenues coming from the Trust is used by NTI to payout its accumulated debt. Starting in 2005, superior investment earnings from the Trust transferred to NTI allowed NTI to reduce its accumulated debt towards the Trust from about 140 million dollars in 2004 to about 57 million dollars in 2008. However in 2009, NTI received approximately 35 million dollars from the Trust compared to higher numbers the year before (66 million dollars) (NTI 2009: 79). Therefore in 2009, NTI had to borrow money from the Trust to keep its budget at around 40 million dollars. Currently (2009), NTI's accumulated debt totals 63.7 million dollars (NTI 2009: 78).

It is apparent that since 1993, variable annual revenues from the Nunavut Trust's earnings have not always been sufficient to satisfy NTI's growing hunger for money. This situation has created a very unstable revenue flow, where in some years NTI has received as much as 66 million dollars (in 2008), while in other years it has received much less (35 million dollars in 2009) forcing it to borrow and to increase its debt towards the Nunavut Trust.

NTI mode of operation

Most regional and national Aboriginal organizations (Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, Makivik Corporation, Dene Nation, etc.) possess administrative structures inspired from a Euro-Canadian mode of organization. NTI does not differ to this rule. As with other western corporations, Aboriginal organizations are largely westernized and bureaucratized (Nagata 1987: 62). This gives rise, as we have seen in the case of NTI, to a cumbersome structure of decision-making. How can one explain this western mode of operation?

Two factors justify this mode of operation. First, in order to influence the political decision-makers at the federal, and territorial levels of government, NTI must possess a structure which is legitimized in the eyes Euro-Canadians and comprehensible for the average governmental bureaucrat. To do so, NTI like all other Aboriginal organization has a structure and a mode of operation similar to those found in western corporations: "Since Native political organizations are run by principles recognizable to the dominant

society..., the process has given them a legitimacy in the eyes of the dominant society that they might have otherwise lacked” (Sawchuk 1998: 167).

Second, NTI must adhere to Nunavut territorial laws dealing with corporations and private enterprises. These laws establish common denominators in regards to the management and structures of corporations and private enterprises: “Regulations such as the various societies acts, impose requirements on association board structure” (Sawchuk 1998: 162).

However, this Euro-Canadian mode of operation exercises an influence which goes well beyond the simple structure of Aboriginal organizations. It influences the political behaviour of some Aboriginal leaders and pulls them away from an Inuit traditional form of governance (Loukacheva 2007: 69-70). Recently, some Inuit beneficiaries have expressed three forms of criticisms towards NTI: (1) ethical controversies among some members of the Executive; (2) a structure too cumbersome; (3) salaries that are too high.

Some past Executive members have had to give up their post because of questionable ethics. Several Inuit beneficiaries have expressed the desire to see greater accountability and stability among the Inuit leadership. To achieve this goal, some Inuit have proposed that NTI distances itself from the Euro-Canadian mode of operation, since this structure does not reflect Inuit traditions or customs. They want Inuit elders to have a key input in all NTI decisions. In so doing, these Inuit beneficiaries believe that, with the contribution of elders, NTI will inherit increased accountability, honesty, compassion and humility – qualities that Inuit elders believe are sometimes absent among the young Inuit leadership educated through the Euro-Canadian system: “This election and political process was never an Inuit custom. In Inuit based society, the young did not lead the elders. The Inuit elders have to be solicited as advisors and leaders” (Carpenter 1994: B25).

In addition, the cumbersome structure of NTI makes it hard for the average Inuit, not acquainted with the intricacies of administrative bureaucratic systems, to understand the role and activities of NTI. In an opinion letter published in *Nunatsiaq News* an Inuk beneficiary said: “...the NLCA resulted in the creation of over 50 implementation bodies...that doesn’t help me as that makes me even more confused being your average

Inuk who is neither a scholar nor a lawyer” (Nunatsiaq News 2006: 1). Also, some Inuit have suggested that NTI’s structure should be simplified and more democratized (Nunatsiaq News 2008a). Currently, only a few Inuit participate in the decisions of NTI (i.e., the 23 delegates attending NTI’s AGM). Those decisions often have significant impacts on the lives of the 26,369 Inuit beneficiaries. This highly centralized decision-making process is further reinforced by the dominant role of the Executive within NTI. Questions of political transparency have been raised; Leona Aglukkaq, ex-Minister of Health for the Government of Nunavut and an Inuk beneficiary, was quoted in *Nunatsiaq News*: “Leaders of Inuit organizations should be required to disclose their income and financial interests” (Nunatsiaq News 2008b: 1).

Finally, many Inuit do not appreciate the fact that their leaders give themselves high wages in a region where one finds the highest poverty rates in Canada. Despite cost cutting initiatives, NTI in 2005 boasted the salaries of its executive members (Younger-Lewis 2005: 3). Salaries of the executives range between \$140,000 to \$156,000 a year, executives are also provided with free housing (Bell 2006: 3). A new Inuit middle-class has bloomed, supported by well paid jobs in Inuit organizations (Reany 2009: 47). Jack Anawak, candidate for the NTI’s presidency in 2008, raised concerns about this situation, he was quoted in *Nunatsiaq News*: “...we cannot afford to allow leaders, who do so well for themselves, to do so little for the rest of us” (Nunatsiaq News 2008a: 5). Joan Scottie, a representative from a Hunters’ and Trappers’ Organization, in an op-ed letter published in *Nunatsiaq News* said: “Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. does not serve us. They are only thinking about filling their wallets” (Nunatsiaq News 2008c: 4).

In summary, NTI’s Euro-Canadian mode of operation has facilitated its interactions with federal and territorial government officials. However, this highly centralized and bureaucratized mode of operation is foreign to Inuit traditional decision-making and has raised some concerns among Inuit beneficiaries.

The relationship between NTI and other public and Inuit institutions in Nunavut

NTI has relations with numerous institutions that result from the implementation of the NLCA (Figure 3.4). These relations are generally of three kinds: (1) designated; (2)

delegated; (3) financial. In the first case, NTI nominates members to the Board of Directors of the organizations. However, these institutions (i.e., public co-management boards, Inuit Heritage Trust) are independent from the politics of NTI. In the second case, NTI holds no power of nomination; however, NTI delegates responsibilities for the administration of Inuit-owned lands to these institutions i.e., RIAs. Finally, NTI has its own unique financial relation with the Nunavut Trust.

Public Co-Management Boards

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement sets aside provisions for the creation of five Public Co-Management Boards (DIAND 1993: Art. 10). These institutions (Table 3.3) are financed by Canada; members to these organizations are nominated by NTI, the governments of Nunavut and Canada.³⁸ Once nominated, members are not supposed to defend the interests of the institutions that nominated them; rather, they defend the interests of all Nunavut citizens. As such, co-management boards are considered public institutions even though one may suppose that Inuit interests would be of a high priority on the minds of members whenever decisions are to be taken on issues (White 2008).

Co-management boards are responsible for the management of renewable and non-renewable resources throughout the Nunavut Settlement Area. Even though the Federal Cabinet has the power to veto decisions from co-management boards, this was done only once, in 1996, to restrict the fish quotas (turbot) allocated to Nunavummiut in the Hudson Bay and in the Davis Strait. In fact, Cabinet can use this power only to protect the resources (DIAND 1993: Art. 5.3.3).³⁹

A proponent who wishes to develop a mining or an oil and gas project in Nunavut would need the approval of some of these co-management boards. Since at least half of the members to these boards are nominees from NTI and the remainders are also generally of Inuit descent, NTI assures that the interests of Inuit are taken into account by these boards. In fact, co-management boards provide NTI with a significant role in

³⁸ All members to the Boards are nominated for a three-year mandate.

³⁹ In 1996, the Federal Minister for the Department of Fisheries and Ocean Canada vetoed a decision from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board regarding turbot quotas in the Davis Strait for Inuit fishermen in order to protect the species. This decision prompted NTI to file a lawsuit against Canada. Ultimately, the court decision upheld Canada's position.

regards to land and resources management in Nunavut. Even though board members are supposed to be “neutral” in their decisions once they sit on the board, NTI views its nominees as “its” members: “...in NTI’s view the member should represent Inuit interests, as opposed to the interests of all Nunavut residents...” (White 2008: 78).

Inuit Heritage Trust

The Inuit Heritage Trust (IHT) was established in April 1994 through the implementation of article 33 of the NLCA (DIAND 1993: 226). The four members of the Board of Directors are nominated by NTI for a period of three years. The IHT has the mandate to manage all archaeological sites found in Nunavut. It is responsible for delivering archaeological permits. The IHT is also responsible for establishing by-laws and policies regarding the protection of Nunavut archaeological sites. Finally, it approves any proposed new place-name or place-name change in Nunavut.

Regional Inuit Associations

NTI has control and management over Inuit-owned lands throughout the Nunavut Settlement Area (DIAND 1993: Art. 39). NTI, however, has delegated some of its responsibilities over Inuit lands to RIAs (Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, Qikiqtani). At its inaugural Annual General Assembly, on July 10, 1993, NTI delegates voted in favour of giving management and control over surface Inuit-owned lands (317,353 km²) to the RIAs; NTI kept its management authority over sub-surface Inuit-owned lands (36,257 km²).

Therefore, RIAs control Inuit surface lands located within their respective regions, while NTI has control over all Inuit sub-surface lands (i.e., mineral rights) throughout Nunavut. Because sub-surface Inuit-owned lands are located under surface Inuit-owned properties, it is crucial for NTI to establish a good rapport with the RIAs in regards to Inuit land management, so as to avoid any possible conflicts between NTI and the RIAs over non-renewable resources development.

However, past experiences have shown that the relationship between NTI and the RIAs in that regard has not always been smooth (Légaré 1996: 153). In fact, the working

relationship between NTI and the RIAs over Inuit land management, as well as over Inuit Impact Benefits agreements (IIBAs), reminds us of the often strain relationship that exists between provincial governments and the federal government: “KIA says it wants to become the designated Inuit organization – not NTI – for negotiating the IIBAs under section 27.2 of the Nunavut land claims agreement. KIA wants to position itself to become a significant player in managing and developing non-renewable resources” (George 2009: 4).

As noted earlier, NTI represents the interests of all Inuit beneficiaries to the NLCA (DIAND 1993: Art. 19). However, the three RIAs believe that they more closely represent the common interests of Inuit since they are endowed with the responsibility of defending those interests from a regional perspective rather than a pan-territorial one. The RIAs wish to be granted more authority regarding control and management of Inuit-owned lands, whether those lands are surface or sub-surface owned. They also want a bigger role in negotiating and in benefiting from the IIBAs and a share over future royalty-generating mining projects (George 2009: 4). Nevertheless, the RIAs’ desires to acquire a bigger share of the profit generated by the mining industry could be a double edge sword: regions with greater mineral potentials (i.e., Kitikmeot) could become much richer while less endowed regions would not benefit. At present, because NTI controls sub-surface riches owned by Inuit, any financial benefits are equally spread between all regions.

The Nunavut Trust

The Nunavut Trust was established by TFN on April 1, 1990; its mandate is described in Article 31 of the NLCA (DIAND 1993: 221). The Trust manages and invests the 1.17 billion dollars of compensation funds that the Inuit of Nunavut received from Canada, over a fourteen-year period (1993-2007), following the signing of the NLCA. The Trust also receives and manages NTI’s share of resource royalties coming from federal Crown lands payable under the NLCA⁴⁰ (DIAND 1993: Art. 25).

⁴⁰ Between 1993 and 2008, the Nunavut Trust collected from the government of Canada about 8.3 million dollars in royalty sharing on Crown Lands (Naniiliqpita Magazine 2008: 14).

The money received by the Trust is invested into interest-bearing bank accounts, bonds, or share equities. Only the cash earned by these investments can be used to finance the operations of NTI and the RIAs.⁴¹ Since 1993, the Trust has paid out over 700 million dollars to the Inuit organizations (some of it through earnings, some of which through loans).

The six trustees who are responsible for the management of the Nunavut Trust are appointed by the RIAs (two per region) for a period of three years. Even though the Trust is the sole funding provider to NTI and the RIAs, it is administratively independent from both.

The relationship between NTI and the Government of Nunavut

On April 1, 1999, the new Nunavut Territorial Government was officially inaugurated. The Government of Nunavut (GN) is a public government representing the interests of all Nunavut citizens (Inuit and non-Inuit). The new government has a similar political structure to the one found in the Northwest Territories, although more decentralized (Henderson 2007; Loukacheva 2007).

To establish the principles under which political interactions between the two institutions would take place NTI and the Government of Nunavut signed, on October 28, 1999, the *Clyde River Protocol* (NTI and GN 1999). So, the GN and NTI agreed to conduct their working relations in accordance with this protocol (NTI and GN 1999: 1). Another document, signed five years later further reinforced this relationship. The *Iqqanaijaqatigiit* (meaning “Working Together”), signed on May 28, 2004, serves to confirm the working relationship between NTI and the GN and to provide a framework for the two institutions to work together effectively (NTI and GN 2004a). *Iqqanaijaqatigiit* identified a number of priority areas of interest to both institutions (NTI and GN 2004a: 4). These common areas focus mostly on social and cultural matters (i.e., education, housing, health, language) where NTI exercises considerable influence.⁴²

⁴¹ To this day, no amount of profit investment earnings have been directly distributed to Inuit beneficiaries.

⁴² NTI exercises its influence on the government of Nunavut over social and cultural programs and services delivery through the Nunavut Social Development Council (NSDC) (Henderson 2008: 231). The existence of the NSDC is set up in article 32 of the NLCA (DIAND 1993: 223). From 1996 to 2002, the NSDC was

The GN recognizes that NTI occupies a special place in the affairs of Nunavut as the primary Inuit organization with the mandate to speak for the Inuit of Nunavut (NTI and GN 2004a: 1). *Iqqanaijaqatigiit* depicts NTI as a crucial actor in defending the interests of Inuit in social and cultural areas: “The GN further acknowledges that NTI’s mandate embraces additional responsibilities designed to protect and promote the interest of the Inuit” (NTI and GN 2004a: 1).

To facilitate the interactions between the GN and NTI, the *Clyde River Protocol* as well as *Iqqanaijaqatigiit* establish clearly that the two entities should collaborate to implement policies that may have an impact on Inuit rights: “...The Government of Nunavut and NTI recognize a particular need to maintain close, ongoing development within Nunavut; ...the status, protection and promotion of the Inuit language and culture within Nunavut” (NTI and GN 1999: article B.2).

To harmonize the links between NTI and the GN, the CEO of NTI and the Deputy Minister of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs of the GN generally meet once a month to discuss policy proposals and other matters of concerns for both parties (NTI and GN 2004a: 3).

In general, NTI and the GN have enjoyed a positive relationship and have teamed up cooperatively on work mutually identified as priorities such as social housing. For example, in September 2004, NTI and the GN jointly released a report on the current status of social housing in Nunavut: *Nunavut, Ten Year Inuit Housing Action Plan* (NTI and GN 2004b). Both NTI and the GN demanded that the federal government invests additional funding for the urgent construction of new social housing buildings in Nunavut (Tester 2009). In general, the relationship between the two institutions has been good: “Nunavut Premier Eva Aariak wants to team up with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. on a wide range of social programs and cultural issues” (Windeyer 2009: 9).

However, there also have been some contentious issues between the two institutions. Even with the *Clyde River Protocol* in place disagreements have arise between NTI and the GN regarding the delivery of education programs, the promotion of the Inuit language, and the allocation of government contracts to Inuit-owned enterprises.

an independent institution (similar to the status of IHT); however, in 2003, it was included within the structure of NTI. It is now part of NTI’s Social and Cultural Department. This initiative has given NTI even more say in influencing government policies.

The proposed Nunavut's *Official Languages Bill* and the *Inuit Language Protection Bill*, the former adopted by the Nunavut Legislative Assembly in June 2008 and the latter in September 2008, were criticized by NTI (Obed 2009) which felt that the Government of Nunavut was not going far enough: "President Paul Kaludjak express his dissatisfaction with the proposed language bills...he's concerned they're not tough enough" (Kivalliq News 2007: 3). Similarly, NTI has raised concerns regarding the new *Education Bill*, adopted by the Nunavut Legislative Assembly in September 2008. NTI wants a fully bilingual Nunavut education system to reflect Inuit values and wants Inuit-led regional school boards to be created in Nunavut: "An Inuit-based education system, NTI says, should teach subjects such as hunting, survival skills, food preparation, the evolution of Inuit society, and traditional belief systems..." (Thompson 2008: 2). At its 2007 AGM, NTI passed a resolution requesting that: "...Nunavut introduces bilingual education to schools immediately, with 80 per cent of classes taught in the Inuit language" (Nunatsiaq News 2007: 3). However, the GN qualified those demands as "unrealistic" and instead elected to introduce bilingualism in the schools by year 2020 so as to train additional Inuktitut speaking teachers and to prepare school material in Inuktitut (Thompson 2008: 1).

Another point of contention has been the implementation of the *Nunavumi Nangminiqaqtunik Ikajuuti* (NNI) Policy. The 2003 NNI policy enacted by the GN is the territorial government tool for carrying out its obligations under Article 24 of the NLCA (DIAND 1993: 197-202). The policy provides a bidding price adjustment in favor of Inuit-owned firms: a Nunavut Inuit company benefits from a 21 percent price advantage over a non-Inuit firm when bidding for government contract tenders (GN 2005). NTI maintains an Inuit Firm Registry to ensure that the government contract preference is honored. However, in 2009, a government sponsored report (GN 2009) has revealed that there are some real problems with the NNI policy in fulfilling territorial government's obligations under article 24 of the NLCA. Thus, there are firms that are set up as 51 percent Inuit ownership but this is really a front since these companies are administered and controlled by non-Inuit, so that they can bid on government contracts (GN 2009: 17). The report indicates that NNI is not working: "Too many jobs going to outsiders" (GN 2009: 17).

However, conflicts between the two institutions have been generally “benign in nature”. The *Clyde River Protocol* has reinforced the position of NTI in relation to the GN. The interaction between them can best be qualified as “unique” in Canada. Since it represents the vast majority of the residents in Nunavut, NTI can be interpreted as “a second level of governance” within Nunavut (Loukacheva 2007: 60). NTI acts as a “watchdog institution” to the GN making sure that government policies and laws reflect the interests of Inuit and do not affect their rights.

In conclusion, a review of the *Clyde River Protocol* and the *Iqqanaijaqatigiit* document allows us to establish some key parameters in the relationship between NTI and the GN. First, these documents seem to reinforce the political role of NTI in relations to the GN. Second, the documents emphasize the fact that the Government of Nunavut was created through the NLCA and as such the GN must respect the Inuit rights established under the NLCA (DIAND 1993: article 4). Finally, any policies put forward by the GN must not contradict the articles of the NLCA. This places NTI as a strong force in Nunavut which the GN cannot ignore when it proposes new legislation or policies.

I contend that NTI is the pre-eminent political force in Nunavut. The following factors help support this assertion: first, NTI is the most experienced and oldest political institution in Nunavut;⁴³ second, it represents the vast majority of Nunavut citizens; third it is responsible for defending the Inuit rights defined in the NLCA, those rights that are protected through section 35 of the *1982 Canadian Constitution*; fourth, the commitment to create the Government of Nunavut was done through the NLCA (DIAND 1993: Art. 4), a document NTI is responsible for overseeing. This political pre-eminence enjoyed by a private corporation, such as NTI, is found nowhere else in other territories or provinces in Canada; it is indeed unique to Nunavut.

The relationship between NTI and the Government of Canada

Over the years, NTI’s relationship with the federal Canadian government has been much more confrontational than with the Government of Nunavut. In 1996, NTI brought

⁴³ One must take into account the previous existence of the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (1982-1993).

the federal government to court for not allocating enough fish quotas (turbot) to Nunavut, alleging that this was violating the rights of Inuit as described in the NLCA. In September 1999, the federal court of Canada upheld the decision of the federal government in this matter and NTI lost the judicial review (CNLR 2000). In 2000, NTI filed a lawsuit against Canada challenging the constitutionality of the federal *Firearms Act*. The case is still pending to be heard in federal court. The application of the Act, which requires Inuit to register their hunting rifles, is of great concern to Inuit, who use firearms regularly as tools for feeding their families and who feel that their traditional harvesting rights are being affected. There is a feeling among Inuit that the legislation introduced by the federal government, in 1995, is one more way southern society and politicians are trying to undermine the northern harvesting-based way of life (Myers, Powell, Duhaime 2004: 436). One may suppose that with the recent decision (November 2009) to abolish the federal gun registry, NTI may in the near future drop its firearm lawsuit. Other outstanding social issues have also been raised by NTI, such as the deportation of Inuit initiated by the Government of Canada, in the 1950s, from Northern Quebec to the Arctic communities of Grise Fjord and Resolute Bay, and the killings of husky dogs by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the 1960s (Tester and Kulchyski 1994).

However, the most contentious matter between the two institutions, over the last few years, has been the issue surrounding the implementation of the NLCA. In September 1993, a ten- year implementation financial contract (1993-2003) was agreed upon between NTI and Canada to finance the implementation of the NLCA. Talks on a new ten-year implementation contract (2003-2013), started in 2001 but broke down in 2004.⁴⁴ Canada did not agree to the amount of money requested by NTI. NTI had proposed that Ottawa spend about 20 million dollars a year for the operation of the co-management boards, Canada proposed 10 million dollars a year over a ten year period (Bell 2005a: 2). In addition, NTI had requested about 20 million dollars a year over ten years for implementing Inuit education training as stated in article 23 on the NLCA

⁴⁴ The implementation contract expired on March 31, 2003.

DIAND 1993: 191-195).⁴⁵ Canada refused to invest any amount alleging that training and education was a Government of Nunavut responsibility (Bell 2005b: 2).

To attempt to resolve the deadlock a conciliator, Judge Thomas R. Berger was recruited by the federal government to try to resolve the impasse. He produced two reports (2005, 2006) and made several suggestions to resolve the issue. One of his key proposals was the establishment of a dispute resolution process (i.e., binding arbitration) to move the implementation negotiations ahead: “I recommend that in future a request for arbitration should be allowed to go forward unless it involves a vital question of policy...” (Berger 2005: 38). In his second report (2006), he also recommended of reform of the education system in Nunavut towards a more bilingual curriculum (Inuktitut, English) and asked for additional investment in education. NTI agreed to the recommendations of the conciliator, but Canada refused to commit to any forms of dispute resolution or to additional funding for education in Nunavut. In fact, Canada never formally responded to the Berger Reports.

The unsuccessful negotiations of the implementation contract and the non-support by the federal government of the Berger Reports prompted NTI to file a lawsuit, in December 2006, against the Government of Canada, citing a long list of promises made to the Inuit in the NLCA that NTI said had not been fulfilled.⁴⁶ NTI raised two main areas of substantive disagreement. First NTI felt that appropriate funding was not provided to the co-management boards. Second, NTI estimated that Canada was not fulfilling its obligation to train Inuit under article 23 of the NLCA. Based on an earlier review of the implementation of the NLCA (PriceWaterhouseCooper 2003), NTI estimated the total salaries and benefits lost to Inuit amounted to 123 million dollars annually because of the non-fulfillment of article 23. Largely based on these premises, NTI filed a lawsuit seeking 1 billion dollars in damages (NTI 2006).

The Government of Nunavut has indicated that it supports NTI lawsuit. In 2008 Paul Okalik, then Premier of Nunavut, said that: “...he agrees with NTI’s position that Ottawa needs to do more to help get jobs in government, as well as to meet its other

⁴⁵ Article 23 aims at increasing Inuit participation in government employment (both territorial and federal) in Nunavut to a representative level i.e., 85 percent.

⁴⁶ A review of the implementation of the NLCA sponsored by NTI and published in 2003 concluded that of the 190 specific obligations found in the NLCA about 50 were largely unmet (PriceWaterhouseCoopers 2003).

obligations under the land claim” (CBC News North 2008: 2). Since 2006, little progress has been made, as the federal government has put forward a number of motions to have the Government of Nunavut involved as a co-defendant in the lawsuit. These motions have all been rejected by the federal court, but they have had the effect of delaying the trial.

Obviously, there is still no implementation contract for the period 2003-2013. Currently, Canada is funding the co-management boards at the level of its best offer, made to NTI in May 2004, until a new level of funding can be agreed upon. Thus, for the 2007-2008 fiscal year the total amount provided for the operation of the co-management boards was established at 9.7 million dollars (Quenneville 2009: C5). This is still well below NTI’s original request for 20 million dollars.

The current deadlock reflects the differences between Canada’s compartmentalized approach to the components of the NLCA and the more holistic view of the Inuit (Dewar 2009: 79). Canada has argued that many of the issues attached to the implementation of the NLCA have nothing to do with legal obligations flowing from the NLCA but rather fall into broader questions of policy. As it was well stated by Canada’s Auditor General, Sheila Fraser, in her 2003 report on land claims implementation: “...the Department managed the claims...by focusing solely on the letter of the obligations, appearing not to take into account their objectives or the spirit and intent of the agreements” (Fraser 2003: 19-20). Canada does not feel compelled to implement successfully Aboriginal comprehensive land claims agreements since implementation contracts are not legally binding. Moreover, contrary to the land claims themselves, implementation contracts are not protected under section 35 of the *1982 Canadian Constitution*. Until a federal court obligates Canada to follow the letter of these agreements, it is unlikely that Canada will change its policy position on financial implementation contracts.

In sum, Aboriginal groups are being provided with a toolbox (a comprehensive land claim agreement) with few tools to put in it (minimum financing). While Aboriginal groups view agreements as a marriage, Canada views the signing of comprehensive land claims agreements as a divorce. The unsuccessful implementation of the NLCA raises the

issue of commitment on the part of the Government of Canada in making modern land claims treaties to work and to be fully implemented (Irlbacher-Fox and Mills 2009).

The Nunavut Harvester Support Program

Although NTI's first priority is the successful implementation of the NLCA and the profitable management of Inuit-owned lands, it also delivers a number of socio-economic programs to its beneficiaries. Table 3.4 provides a brief description of some of these programs. The most important socio-economic program is the Nunavut Harvester Support Program⁴⁷ because of its major social impact on several Inuit families.

In Inuit society, traditional wildlife harvesting activities such as hunting, fishing and trapping are as much an economic pursuit as a basis for cultural values and social identity (Natcher 2009: 87).⁴⁸ They reconnect Inuit with the land and with a traditional mode of life. The product of harvesting, country food, is holistically entwined with culture and identity (Tait 2001: 9). However, those harvesting activities, practiced full time in the past by Inuit for their livelihood, have now become threatened by new economic realities. The costs of equipment and fuel are on the rise. In addition, the fur boycott, launched by European countries in the 1970s and reaffirmed recently by the Council of European Union, which approved in July 2009 a ban on the importation of sealskin products, has made it difficult for harvesters to draw a living from trapping to pay for equipment so that they can continue to hunt and to fish and to provide to their families: "...the average price per pelt went from \$70 in 2006 to \$25 in 2009 (CBC News North 2009: 1).

A harvesting study sponsored by NTI in the early 1990s showed that in 1980, an Inuk hunter would have earned an annual income of \$11,258 for the sale of his furs, while in 1990 the same hunter earned only \$1,240 (RT & Ass. 1993: 47). The market prices for furs are so low now that it has become impossible for an Inuk hunter to make reasonable wages in the traditional economy. Yet, there is a crucial need to continue to

⁴⁷ Until 2003, the program was known as: Nunavut Hunter Support Program.

⁴⁸ There are about 6000 harvesters in Nunavut; 1000 of them are full time harvesters meaning that they spend at least 980 hours on the land each year (Priest and Usher 2004: 8). A harvester is understood as a NLCA beneficiary who is 16 years of age or older, and who participate in hunting, fishing, or trapping of animals at any time during the year (Priest and Usher 2004: 23).

gather country food. In addition to its cultural value, country food provides a good alternative to expensive store-bought food and is generally much healthier to consume than imported southern meat.

The 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey conducted by Statistics Canada found that 70 percent of all Inuit adults in Nunavut participate in harvesting country food, while 80 percent of Inuit households⁴⁹ had at least one member involved in harvesting activities (Tait 2001: 10-11). The survey also showed that country food makes about half of all the meat or fish eaten in 73 percent of Inuit households in Nunavut, while 90 percent of households consume some degree of country food (Tait 2001: 13). The survey indicated that the market value of country food, in 2001, amounted to about 40 million dollars (Tait 2001: 9).⁵⁰ These numbers illustrate the importance of hunting, fishing, and trapping in the economy of Nunavut. However, the high costs associated with the purchase of harvesting equipment have made these activities more and more prohibitive for the average Inuk.⁵¹

Access to money, beyond what could be earned from trapping, is critical to support harvesting activities. Since they can absorb the high costs of equipment, the most successful harvesters are those who have a full time employment in the wage economy (e.g., government employment) and practice wildlife harvesting as a part time activity. These are the weekend harvesters. Their cash income is often used to support the purchase of equipment such as snowmobiles, ATVs, motors for boats, etc. (Abele 2009: 39). So, households with high wage incomes tend to hunt game and to consume wild food to higher levels than those with low incomes (Natcher 2009: 90). For those who practice full time harvesting (about 1000 of all harvesters), it is necessary to have supplemental incomes, beyond social assistance, to buy and to maintain the yearly costs associated with harvesting equipment.⁵²

During the negotiation of the NLCA, NTI tried to convince Canada to establish a harvesting support program as part of the agreement. However, Canada refused

⁴⁹ Each household counts on average five family members.

⁵⁰ In 1990, it was estimated that the value of country food from wildlife harvesting contributed to \$17,000 per harvesting household (RT & Associates 1993: 54).

⁵¹ The costs of equipment items could be as high as \$26,000, while annual maintenance of equipment, such as a snowmobile, could reach around \$11,000 (RT & Associates. 1993: 54).

⁵² In Nunavut, about 40 percent of Inuit adults are not active in the wage economy; they rely mostly on social assistance for their income.

categorically, arguing that these programs were funded by territorial or provincial governments. In fact, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA), signed in 1975, is the only comprehensive land claims agreement in Canada where one finds such a program (Québec 1976: Art. 29). The program is wholly subsidized by the Government of Québec.

In view of Canada's position on the matter and the urgent need to help Nunavut's harvesters, NTI decided, in 1993, to create and to finance its own hunter support program. The Nunavut Harvester Support Program (NHSP) is not subsidized through NTI's annual budget; rather it is financed through the original contribution, in 1993, of the Government of the Northwest Territories (15 million dollars) and of NTI (15 million dollars) in a Trust (i.e., Nunavut Hunters Income Support Program Trust). Most of the money was put in short term saving accounts. It is estimated that the investments earned from these savings will enable the program to be self-sufficient until the year 2011: after that date new money will be needed.⁵³

The program started officially in 1995 and initially focused on providing support to full time harvesters with low incomes to purchase large equipment up to a value of \$13,000. In addition, the program provided for an annual gas subsidy of up to \$2,000 (Légaré 2003). In 2003, the program was reformed and the gas subsidy was cancelled; NTI decided to respond to the concerns raised by beneficiaries who felt that some forms of assistance should be available for all harvesters at all income levels (NTI and GN 2008: 35). So, in 2004, NTI provided a new direction to the program in order to render it more inclusive by expanding the number of beneficiaries who may be eligible. It introduced three new sub-programs: The Small Equipment Program, the Community Harvest Program, and the Atugaksait Program. Some of the benefits of the old Nunavut Hunter Support Program applying solely to low income harvesters continued to exist and were put into a fourth sub-program named: The Capital Equipment Program. Table 3.5 provides a brief description of each of these "sub-programs".

The Capital Equipment Program (CEP) is the most important component of the NHSP. Its goal is to help lower income harvesters pursue subsistence harvesting. The

⁵³ NTI's Department of Human Resources is responsible for overseeing the administration and implementation of the NHSP.

amount of funding provided for the other programs of the NHSP is much smaller and have a much more limited impact (see Table 3.5). The demands for funding from the CEP far out weigh the available annual fund currently set at around 2 million dollars a year. NTI estimates that in order to meet the annual demands for this program, the funding levels should be triple and set at around 6 million dollars (NTI and GN 2008: 60). The other programs do not currently use their full budget and usually accumulate surpluses each year. These surpluses are redirected to the CEP, but these amounts are still not sufficient to satisfy all the applications received by the CEP.

The CEP is delivered by NTI in conjunction with local Hunters' and Trappers' Organizations (HTOs).⁵⁴ The CEP is centered on households not on individuals. Only one member per household can benefit from the program even if the household has more than one full time harvester. The criteria for selection are established by local HTOs. It is expected that the HTOs are best positioned to know which households rely mostly on Inuit traditional economy. HTOs screen all applicants; harvesters are expected to apply to their local HTO in the month of August. Once all applications have been screened, eligible applicants⁵⁵ enter into a draw.⁵⁶ HTOs are required to explain to applicants who are not selected for the draw, why they were considered ineligible.⁵⁷

On average, about 20 percent of households of each of the 26 Nunavut communities will, in the end, benefit from the CEP each year (NTI and GN 2008: 60). Once selected, a household cannot be eligible for the program for the next four years. Each selected household may receive up to about \$12,000. This amount is delivered in the form of credit bonds not cash. The credit bonds are used, by the harvester, to purchase equipment (boat, snowmobile, ATV) through a local dealership accredited by the

⁵⁴ There is a HTO in each of the 26 Nunavut communities. HTOs were created under the NLCA (article 5.7.3). Each HTO has a Board of Directors composed of elected Inuit beneficiaries who hold a three-year mandate.

⁵⁵ To be eligible, a harvester must be a Nunavut beneficiary, 16 years of age or older, and a member of a family household with a total income of \$75,000 or less. Until 2003, there was also the added requirement that the applicant had to be a full time harvester. Each year about 300 harvesters are selected to benefit from the CEP.

⁵⁶ There are usually too many eligible applicants in a community for a HTO not to set up a draw.

⁵⁷ Full time harvesters are always prioritized; however, part time harvesters may sometime be selected. Each submission is valued according to the following criteria: annual household income; household need for the requested equipment; willingness to share country food with other residents of the community.

program. The dealership will then get payment directly from NTI. This process guarantees that the funds are spent solely for harvesting equipment.⁵⁸

Although the NHSP has significantly benefited Inuit harvesters, the program has not been without deficiencies. A number of harvesters have complained about the cancellation of the gas subsidy that used to be provided by the NHSP before 2003. This is even more of a concern with the recent increases in fuel costs. However, NTI has made it clear that it does not want to re-introduce the gas subsidy program because of the prohibitive cost associated with this initiative (NTI and GN 2008: 60). Another problem that has been raised is the limitation of one application per household since households often include more than one active harvester (NTI and GN 2008: 52). Often harvesters who are not working live within the same household with people who earn more than \$75,000 a year. These harvesters are automatically not eligible to the program. Some harvesters have also complained about the requirement that household income should not exceed \$75,000 (NTI and GN 2008: 53). The fact is that \$75,000 represents different levels of income in different communities and that somehow this should be recognized in the program; for instance, the cost of living in Kugaaruk is higher than in Iqaluit.

HTOs have not escaped criticism either. Some harvesters have had difficulties to access their share of the NHSP because of lack of capacity in their local HTO (NTI and GN 2008: 47). HTOs are often confronted with high staff turnover rates and frequent changes in Board membership. This general lack of capacity has contributed to screening delays and sometimes has rendered the delivery of the program problematic. On the other hand, some HTOs have also complained about the administration of the NHSP. HTOs have felt that NTI exercises too much control over funding and HTOs want more say over the administration of the program (NTI and GN 2008: 64). For its part, NTI has questioned some of the decisions of the HTOs when screening applicants. Accusations of nepotism have been put forward in some cases. "...of the 14 Iqaluit hunters who got benefits only about one-third are legitimate full-time hunters. Iqaluit HTO used the

⁵⁸ For the Small Equipment Program (SEP) no draws are required; harvesting households just need to prove that they need the equipment. Under the SEP, harvesters also apply to their local HTO, but they may do that anytime during the year. Harvesters usually receive their equipment sixty days after their application has been processed and accepted. All small equipment is purchased by NTI and sent to local HTOs who deliver them to the selected household. A harvesting household may apply for the SEP once a year, the total value amounts of equipment is limited to \$400.

program to reward their relatives. One man who got assistance is the brother of the HTO Chairman, and another has a full-time job” (Gregoire 1995: 19). Under these circumstances, NTI has exercised increased control over the program since 2004. In January 2005, it created the Nunavut Inuit Wildlife Secretariat within its Department of Wildlife to oversee the NHSP.

Lessons from elsewhere in Inuit Nunaat

Solutions to Inuit criticisms about the NHSP may be found elsewhere in Inuit Nunaat (i.e., Inuit homeland) where hunter support programs have also been introduced. In Nunavik (Northern Quebec), a hunter support program has been in existence since 1975 for the Inuit following the signature of the JBNQA (Quebec 1976: Art. 29). The Inuit Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Support Program (IHFTSP) was endorsed by the Quebec legislature in December 1982 (Quebec 1982).

The general basic objectives of the IHFTSP are similar to those found in the NHSP. Both programs have been put forward so as to encourage the continuation of traditional Inuit harvesting activities and to ensure a supply of country food to Inuit households. However, the similarities stop here. There are five major factors that distinguish the IHFTSP from the NHSP. First, the IHFTSP is wholly financed by the government;⁵⁹ second, the Nunavik Inuit organization (Makivik Corporation) or local HTOs do not exercise any control over the program;⁶⁰ third, the program is geared toward individual harvesters rather than households, and no distinction is made here between low income or high income harvesters everybody is entitled to the program; fourth, the program encourages the commercialization of the hunt since harvesters are paid according to the number and weight of animals they bring into the community,⁶¹ the collected country food is then put in a community freezer and distributed to all residents of the community; fifth, the program is guaranteed through its inclusion in the constitutionally protected JBNQA.

⁵⁹ The Government of Quebec is the sole funding source.

⁶⁰ The program is managed by the Kativik Regional Public Government which administers the Nunavik region.

⁶¹ In 2005, the program costs the Quebec Government 5 million dollars (NTI and GN 2008: 27).

The hunter support program in existence in Nunavik, contrary to the one found in Nunavut, seems to be primarily beneficial to those who are already employed in the wage economy and can afford the necessary equipment i.e., the weekend harvesters. The IHFTSP costs almost twice as much as the NHSP to operate for a population of just about 3,000 Inuit harvesters: in 2005, the program costs the Quebec Government 5 million dollars (NTI and GN 2008: 27). More than one harvester per household may benefit from the program. Contrary to the NHSP, there has not been any accusation of nepotism, and no political tension has been detected between local HTOs and the central delivering agency (i.e., Kativik Regional Government). This can be explained by the fact that the program is solely administered by the Kativik regional government. It is apparent that the NHSP is more fair-minded in its distribution of funding support than the IHFTSP, since the NHSP generally benefits first and foremost to low income, full time harvesters.

The Inuvialuit have also introduced a harvester support program. The Inuvialuit Harvesters Assistance Program (IHAP) was established in 1988. The program is financed and administered by the Inuvialuit Regional Council (IRC), which delivers the program through local harvesting committees.⁶² Similar to NHSP, and contrary to the IHFTSP, the IHAP is not guaranteed through the Inuvialuit comprehensive land claim and is a discretionary program. Like the NHSP Capital Equipment Program, the objective of the IHAP is to help support harvesters living in low income households. The IHAP provides financial assistance to harvesters so that they can purchase large equipment (e.g., snowmobile), small equipment (e.g., fishing nets), or even fuel. Applicants submit their demands to their community harvesting committee. Those not selected may appeal the decision through the IRC. The Inuvialuit appeal process avoids any nepotism or abuse of power in the screening of applications by local committees. The annual budget assigned to the IHAP of around \$200,000 is much more limited than in the cases of the NHSP or the IHFTSP (NTI and GN 2008: 31). However, the number of harvesters is smaller (around 400) than in Nunavut or in Nunavik. Selected harvesters⁶³ may receive equipment up to a value of \$10,000; they are expected to contribute 25 percent of the

⁶² Membership to local harvesting communities is selected by the IRC from a list of proposed names submitted by the community.

⁶³ About 60 harvesters are selected each year.

cost value of the equipment; once selected a harvester can not apply for the program again for the next four years (NTI and GN 2008: 31).

The control over the membership of community harvesting committees by the IRC reduces tensions between the IRC and local communities. However, similar to the Nunavik case, the administration of the Inuvialuit program is highly centralized and it mostly falls in the hands of one agency i.e., IRC. It is apparent that the degree of centralization in the decision-making process surrounding these harvesters support programs differs: the IHFTSP is the most centralized program, while the NHSP is the most decentralized; the administration of the IHAP seems to be in between these two approaches.

Even though the delivery NHSP has encountered some difficulties and has been subject to critiques, it is unlikely that harvesting activities in Nunavut would be an economically viable activity for a large portion of harvesters without the help of the NHSP. The core program of the NHSP remains the Capital Equipment Program credited for providing support to lower income harvesters.

However as indicated earlier, the Nunavut Hunters Income Support Program Trust, which finances the program, will likely run out of funding by 2011. One solution could be for the Nunavut Trust to take over the financing of the NHSP. Another solution could be for both NTI and the Government of Nunavut to fund the NHSP beyond 2011 and to continue to foster country food harvesting in Nunavut for economic, social and cultural reasons. The NHSP could then be jointly administered or could be put in the hands of an independent agency. There is no question that the continued presence of the NHSP is crucial for the preservation of the traditional economy in Nunavut. However, in the final analysis, the enigmatic question remains: what is the future of the NHSP?

Conclusion

Our analysis of NTI has revealed a number of important factors. First, NTI's organizational structure is based on Euro-Canadian state government models. It is a centralized institution whose structure is dominated by the three members of the Executive Committee who are the real power brokers of NTI. However, NTI's decision-

making process is collegial rather than presidential: decisions are taken by the whole of the Executive in which the President is just one of the members. Under these circumstances, the role of the President of NTI can best be described as one of a spokesperson presenting to the public the collegial decisions of the Executive. I argue that recent structural reforms have reinforced the decision-making power of the Executive within NTI at the expense of the Board of Directors and the General Assembly. So as to reduce the annual budget of NTI, the terms of the executive members have been extended, the number of regional representatives to the Board of Directors has been reduced, and the participation level of delegates attending the General Assembly has shrunk.

Second, tensions between NTI and the RIAs will likely continue for as long as land management operations remain as they are, i.e., surface rights controlled by RIAs, sub-surface rights controlled by NTI. Third, with the exclusion of the Nunavut Trust, NTI has significant links (delegated, designated) with all institutions created through the NLCA. NTI therefore possesses a certain degree of influence over the decisions taken by these institutions. Fourth, programs and services put forward by NTI have generally been highly appreciated by Inuit beneficiaries. Even though our analysis as shown that the NHSP has encountered some criticisms the program has been in general quite successful and has helped increase wildlife harvesting activities in Nunavut. I argue that because of its importance in preserving and promoting traditional harvesting activities in Nunavut the NHSP should continue beyond 2011.

Finally, the NTI's political relationship with the Government of Nunavut could be best characterised as "unique". This form of relationship is found nowhere else in the provinces or territories of Canada. The *Clyde River Protocol*, endorsed by the GN, puts NTI as a real power broker in Nunavut. As the guardian of Inuit interests in Nunavut, NTI exercises considerable influence over the decisions, the policies, and the laws of the Government of Nunavut. In sum, NTI can be characterized as a "watchdog institution"; NTI does not hesitate to criticize the GN whenever it feels that government policies are not consistent with the provisions of the NLCA or of Inuit culture (e.g., language, education). So, to avoid any potential imbroglio the GN has taken the habit of consulting regularly with NTI.

On the other hand, NTI's relationship with the Government of Canada has been much more contentious and confrontational. There is no cooperation agreement, similar to the *Clyde River Protocol* that could guide the discussions between the two institutions. Discussions on the implementation of the NLCA have been tense. NTI feels that Canada is not living up to the provisions of the NLCA. The debate has now shifted towards a legal stance which still has yet to be heard in federal court (at the time when this manuscript was written). Only the future will tell how this jurisdictional imbroglio, which has strained the relationship between the two institutions, will unfold.

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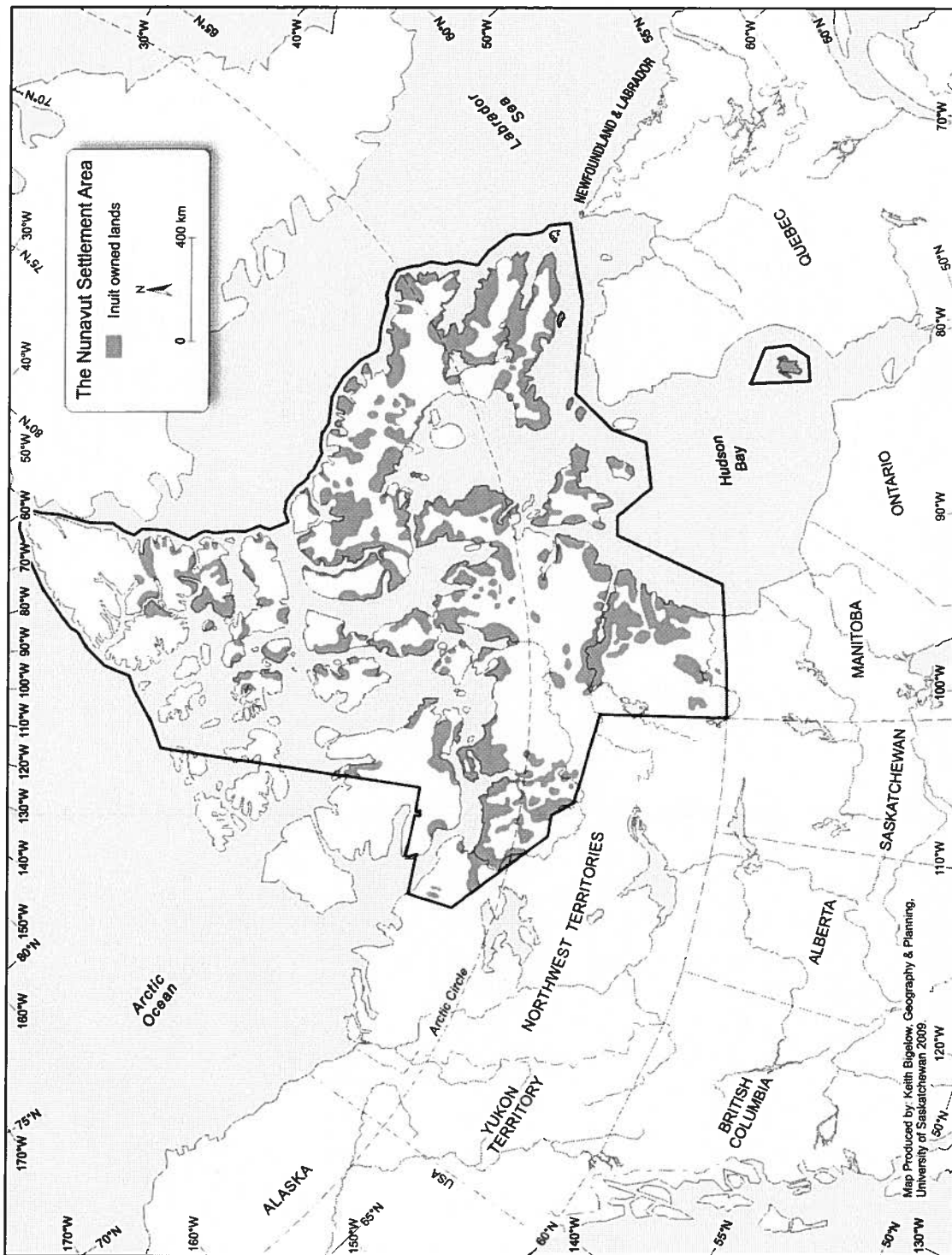
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Figure 3.1



Source: Adapted from DIAND, 1993: 21

Table 3.1: Synoptic Table of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement

Five co-management boards are established for the management of lands and resources in the Nunavut Settlement Area.
Inuit have the right to hunt, fish and trap throughout the Nunavut Settlement Area with no need to apply for permits.
Inuit own 353,610km ² of surface land. This represents 16.5 percent of all the lands of the Nunavut Settlement Area. Inuit also retain mineral rights (sub-surface ownership) on 36,257 km ² of lands. This represents 1.8 percent of all the lands of the Nunavut Settlement Area.
Inuit receive 50 percent of the first 2 million dollars collected from Canada each year from mining, oil and gas companies on Crown lands in the Nunavut Settlement Area; Inuit also collect each year 5 percent of additional royalties, beyond the first 2 million dollars, received by Canada. On Inuit owned lands, Inuit may receive up to 100 percent of all royalties.
The Government of Canada will pay to the Inuit 1.17 billion dollars, over a period of 14 years (1993-2007), as financial compensation. This money is deposited in a Trust (Nunavut Trust).
In exchange for the rights and benefits defined in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, the Inuit have accepted to extinguish all of their land rights.
Source: after DIAND 1993

Figure 3.2: Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. – Organizational Chart

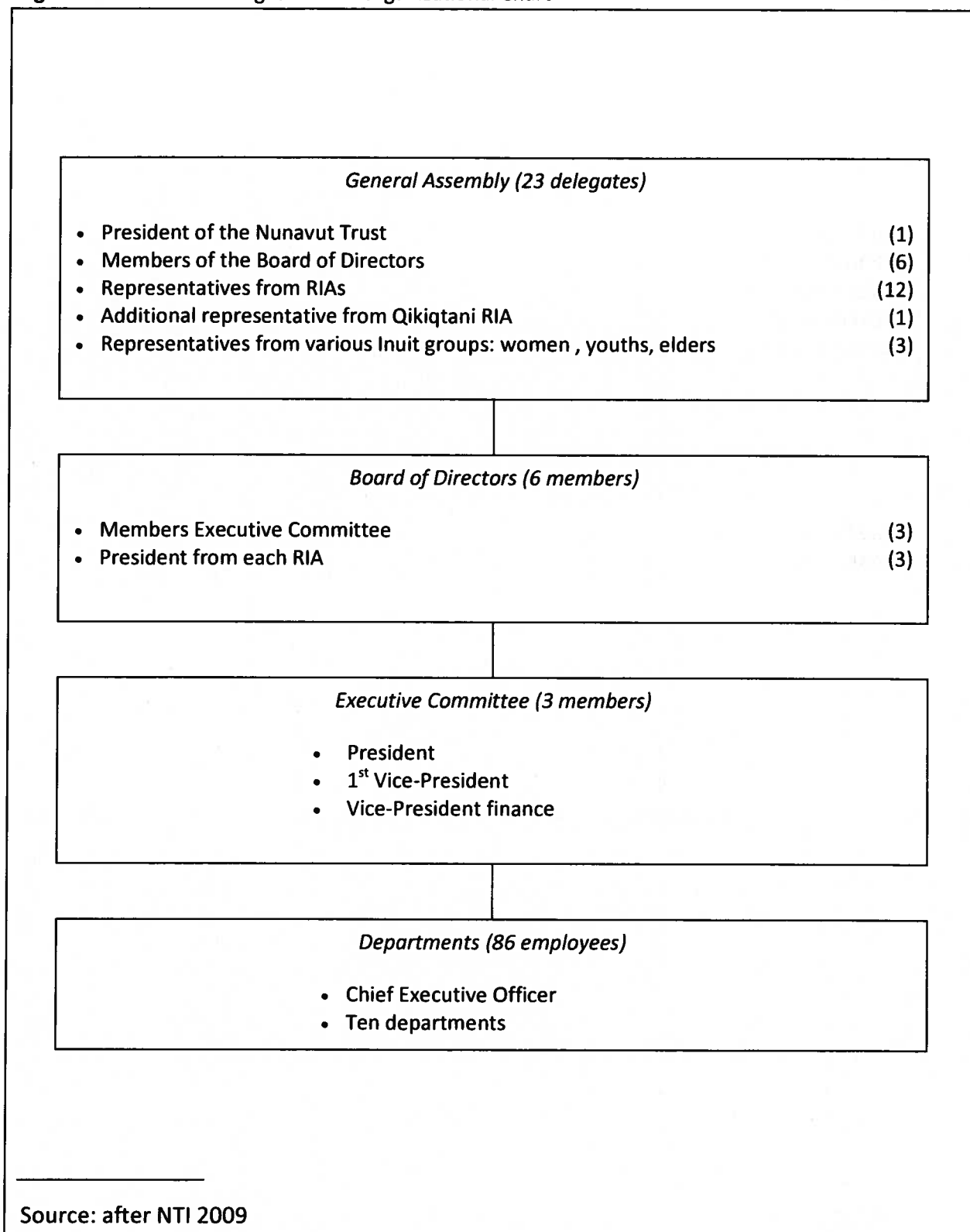
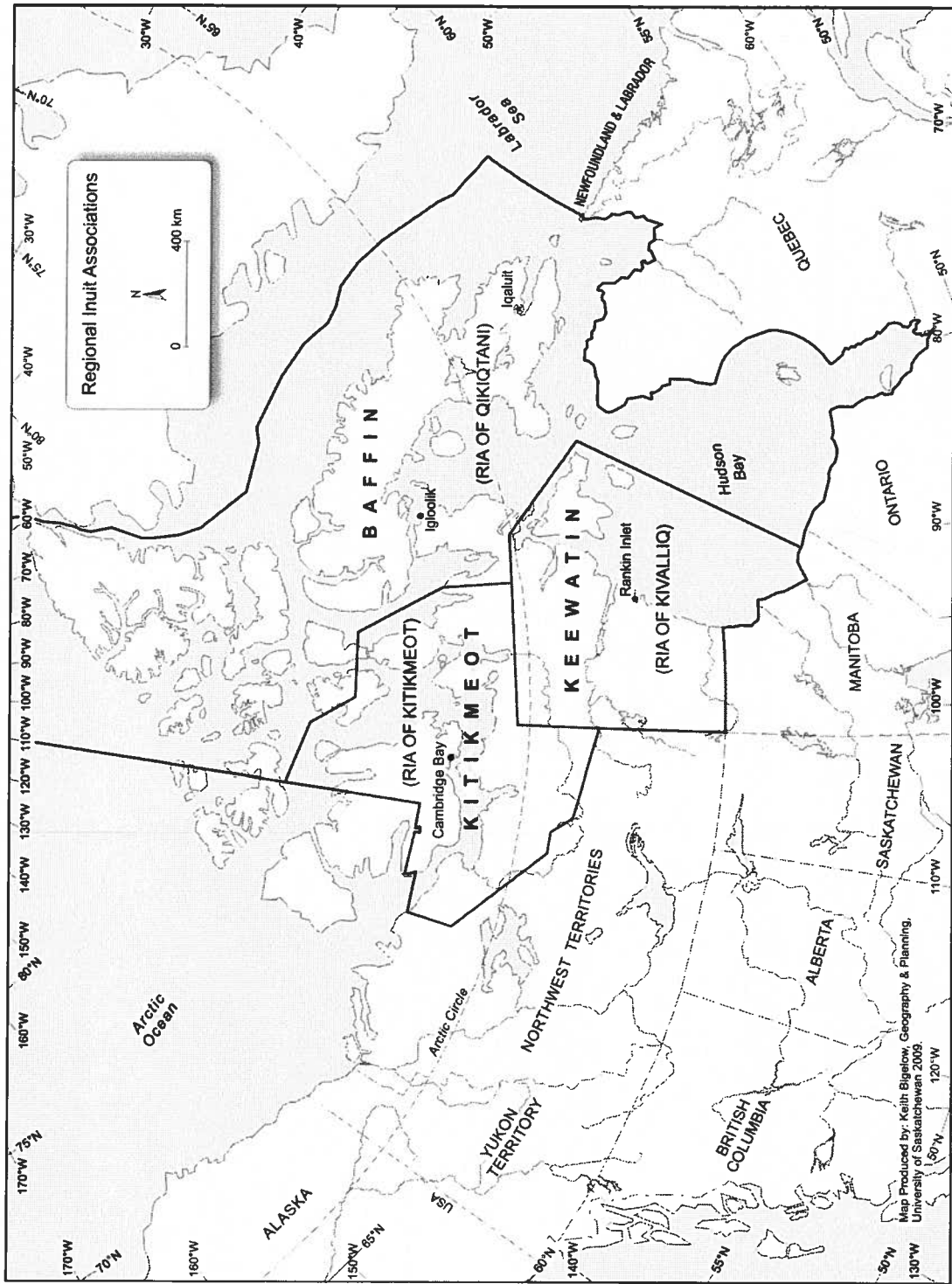


Figure 3.3



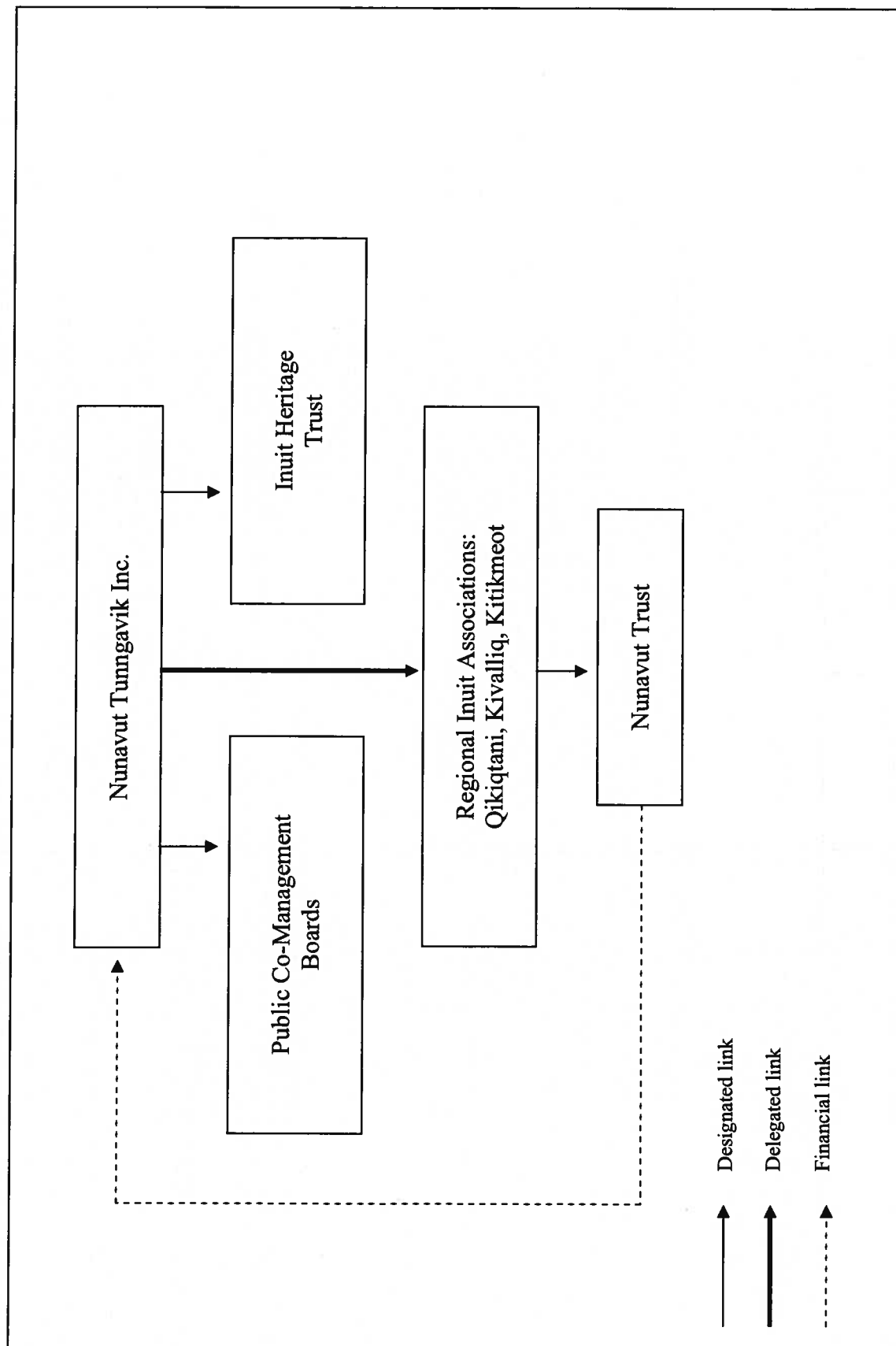
Source: NTL, 1998c: insert map

Table 3.2: The Departments of the Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

<i>Departments</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Under Authority of</i>
Administration	Responsible for the general administration of NTI	President
Business Development	Registers Inuit-owned businesses and provides incentives	President
Communications	Inform Inuit beneficiaries about NTI's policies, programs, and services	President
Finance	Manages NTI's finances. Oversees the enrolment of beneficiaries	Vice President Finance
Human Resources	Recruits and trains staff. Oversees the delivery of Elder's benefit Support Program and the Nunavut Harvesters Support Program	Vice President Finance
Implementation	Oversees the implementation of the NLCA	President
Lands and Resources	Oversees mining development on Inuit-owned lands.	1 st Vice President
Legal	Initiates and supervises lawsuits brought forward by NTI against third-parties or governments.	President
Social and Cultural	Provides social programs and services. The Nunavut Social Development Council (NLCA, article 32) is part of this department.	President
Wildlife	Responsible for nominations on co-management boards. Investigate wildlife research projects.	Vice President Finance

Source: after NTI 2009

Figure 3.4: NTI and other Public and Inuit Institutions in Nunavut



Source: after NTI 2009

Table 3.3: Nunavut Public Co-Management Boards*

Name: Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NLCA, article 5)

Headquarters: Iqaluit

Members Designated (8): NTI (4); GN (1); Canada (3).

Function: The Board supervises and regulates wildlife harvestings. Respecting conversation principles, it determines the quotas on fish and mammals harvested within the Nunavut Settlement Area.

Name: Nunavut Impact Review Board (NLCA, article 12)

Headquarters: Cambridge Bay

Members designated (8): NTI (4); GN (2); Canada (2).

Function: The Board screens large-scale development project proposals. It gauges their impacts on the Arctic ecosystem. Ultimately the Board approves or disapproves project proposals.

Name: Nunavut Planning Commission (NLCA, article 11)

Headquarters: Taloyoak

Members designated (8): NTI (4); GN (2); Canada (2).

Function: The Commission is responsible for setting planning goals. It formulates and reviews land use plans. It ensures that development projects respect the Nunavut land use plans.

Name: Surface Rights Tribunal (NLCA, article 21)

Headquarters: Iqaluit

Members designated (8): NTI (4); GN (2); Canada (2).

Function: The Tribunal determines the amount of indemnity given to NTI when a developer damages the ecosystem of the lands.

Name: Nunavut Water Board (NLCA, article 13)

Headquarters: Gjoa Haven

Members designated (8): NTI (4); GN (2); Canada (2).

Function: The Board has responsibilities and powers over the regulation, use and management of water in Nunavut. It also screens small-scale development project proposals.

* A sixth co-management board, the Nunavut Marine Council (NLCA, article 15) has not been set up yet.

Source: after DIAND 1993

Table 3.4: Synoptic Table of Programs Delivered by NTI

<i>Programs</i>	<i>Description</i>
Quama	A healing team composed of social workers and elders travel each year to about four communities. They organize sharing circles with residential school students and their families to help them heal from past social traumas and abuses.
Elder's Benefits Plan	Provides monthly benefit payments (between \$90 and \$150 per month) to Inuit elders born on or before December 31, 1948. About 1500 elders currently benefit from the program.
Kakiniit Student Grants	About ten education grants are allocated each year to Inuit students who wish to pursue post-secondary academic studies.
Compassionate Travel	Provides financial assistance for air travel for family members (maximum two) who wish to travel to see a family member who is terminally ill. Each year, about 50 Inuit benefit from the program
Bereavement Travel	Provides financial assistance for air travel for family members (maximum two) who wish to travel to attend the funeral of a family member in another Nunavut community. Each year, about 250 Inuit benefit from the program.
Nanatuqaminut Travel	Provides financial assistance for an individual (up to \$500 a year) or a group (up to \$5,000 a year) who wish to travel to their ancestral lands.
Nunavut Harvester Support Program	Provides financial support to full time and part time harvesters. It also provides financial support to groups of community harvesters and to those who teach harvesting skills.

Source: after NTI 2009

Table 3.5: Synoptic Table of the sub-programs delivered by the Nunavut Harvester Support Program

<i>Sub-programs</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Estimated Budget (2005) *</i>
Capital Equipment	Provides financial assistance to low income harvesting households earning annually under \$75,000. Harvesters selected may receive large harvesting equipment (e.g., snowmobiles, ATVs, boats, etc.) up to a value of \$12,000.	\$2,000,000
Small Equipment	Provides small equipment up to a value of \$400 (e.g., sleeping bags, Coleman stoves, fishing nets, sewing machines, etc.) to harvesting household. This program is open to all harvesters with no restriction on income.	\$250,000
Community Harvest	Provides financial assistance to Hunters' and Trappers' Organizations (HTO) to organize a community hunt. An HTO may receive up to \$3,000. The meat collected is used for a community feast or distributed free of charge to families with no means for hunting.	\$200,000
Atugaksait	Provides financial assistance to individuals or groups who wish to teach survival skills, harvesting knowledge, or traditional sewing techniques to youth. Each community may receive up to \$8,000. The money may also be used for youth camps on the land.	\$450,000

*The total annual budget is 3.5 million dollars; about \$500,000 is set aside for the administration of the program.

Source: after NTI, GN 2008: 18-19.

4. CANADA'S EXPERIMENT WITH ABORIGINAL SELF-DETERMINATION IN NUNAVUT: FROM VISION TO ILLUSION⁶⁴

Abstract:

The paper presents a geographical and historical overview of the Territory of Nunavut (Canada) established in 1999 and inhabited by a majority of Inuit People. The author outlines the process that led to the conclusion of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the current structure of the Government of Nunavut, though a public rather than an ethnic government, can best be comprehended as a form of Inuit self-government. The main objective of the paper consists of an overview and analysis of current socio-economic challenges faced by the Government of Nunavut. Based on the visions of the *Bathurst Mandate*, the author attempts to assess the success of the 'Nunavut Project'

The author concludes that because of Nunavut's weak economy and fiscal dependency on the central federal Government of Canada, the numerous socio-economic challenges have not been resolved. The Nunavut experiment has not yet been proven a success. The prosperous vision, expressed through the *Bathurst Mandate*, of a viable Nunavut seems for now just an illusion.

⁶⁴ This manuscript was published in the *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, vol. 15, nos. 2-3, 2008, pp. 335-367. Reprinted with permission.

Foreword: The 'Nunavut Project' and Inuit society

In addition to identity and governance, the 'Nunavut Project' also has had an effect on the social and economic issues prevalent in contemporary Inuit society. The Canadian initiative of the 1950s which led to the settlement of Inuit into permanent communities, introduced social pathologies that the Inuit society must still struggle with today. One of the goals of the 'Nunavut Project' was to provide to the Inuit the necessary political tools to better their social and economic plight. Apparently, as I demonstrate in this manuscript, the success of the 'Nunavut Project' in regards to socio-economic issues can be best portrayed as 'questionable'.

Although, through the construction of Nunavut, Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic have acquired political decision-making powers in social programs including education, health, housing, and economic development these programs are still deficient due to fiscal dependency on the Canadian government. Nunavut is not economically self-sufficient and does not possess the capacity to fund better social programs and services.

In the end, I argue that to possess self-governance and to hold jurisdiction over social programs does not equal economic independence and to improved social programs and services. In fact, it seems that, to this day, the most important repercussions of the 'Nunavut Project' are felt in the area of increased regional identity. One may hope that with increased economic development and with a fair spread of fiscal benefits from land resources, through a devolution arrangement with Canada, the Inuit of Nunavut will find solutions to their socio-economic woes. At least, one may argue that the 'Nunavut Project' has provided the political decision-making tools to better tackle those social issues in the future.

Introduction

In May 1993, Inuit⁶⁵ representatives and Canadian government officials signed the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) (INAC 1993) that gave birth to the Nunavut Territory and the Government of Nunavut.⁶⁶ The Nunavut Territory was carved out of the Northwest Territories (NWT) on April 1, 1999 (Hicks and White 2000: 30-115). The NLCA is by far the largest and the most comprehensive of all Aboriginal land claims and self-determination agreements settled by Canada (Légaré 1996). It has been hailed by the Canadian government as the most advanced model of Aboriginal self-determination in Canada.

The creation of Nunavut was first suggested in 1971 by the Inuit organization Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), the institution representing the political interests of the Canadian Inuit. The 'Nunavut Project' (ITC 1976) was aimed at settling the outstanding land and political claims of the Inuit of the Northwest Territories (NWT). The basic idea behind the 'Nunavut Project' was to create a territory where the vast majority of people would be Inuit. As such, the proposed new Territory and its institutions would better reflect Inuit values and perspectives than the present NWT (ITC 1976: 15). The first President of ITC, Tagak Curley, summarized the goal of the 'Nunavut Project': "...our main hope is to ensure that Inuit will have greater control over the policies that are implemented in the Eastern Arctic is the concept of Nunavut (Curley 1982: 409). "Gradually we see the federal government's influence over the north decreasing, until we manage our own house, and run our own affairs" (Curley 1982: 409 and 411).

After 17 years of arduous negotiations between the Canadian government and Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN),⁶⁷ the NLCA was approved by Canada on June 10, 1993. The political component of the Agreement allowed for the establishment of the Nunavut government in April 1999 (INAC 1993: 23). Today, the government is close to its tenth anniversary of existence. There have been two general elections (1999, 2004) to

⁶⁵ Until the 1970s the word 'Eskimos' (an Indian word meaning 'eaters of raw meats') was widely used as an appellation for these Arctic People. However, they have always preferred to call themselves 'Inuit' (meaning 'The People'). The word Inuit is used throughout this paper.

⁶⁶ 'Nunavut' is an Inuktitut word, the language of the Inuit, which means 'Our Land'.

⁶⁷ TFN succeeded ITC, in July 1981, as the Inuit organization representing the interests of the Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic.

the Nunavut Parliament and all its administrative functions, departments and agencies, are now fully operational. Canada has always maintained that the new Territory would spark a renaissance for Inuit people by enabling them to gain control over their political destiny (Molloy 1993). Inuit leaders argued that such control would put their people on the road to solving the terrible social problems that plague the region (Ernerk 1990).

This paper intends first to present a geographical and historical overview of Nunavut. The author then describes the process that led to the conclusion of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the current structure of the Government of Nunavut. The main objective of the paper consists of an analysis of current economic, social and political challenges faced by the newly created Government of Nunavut. To this end, the author attempts to answer two core questions. First, did the implementation of this Canadian experiment in Aboriginal self-determination help to solve some of contemporary challenges faced by the Inuit society? Second, is the vision of a viable Inuit society in Nunavut by the year 2020, as described in the *Bathurst Mandate*, closer to reality or is it an illusion? To answer these questions, I will review the 1999 government's vision reflected in the *Bathurst Mandate* (Nunavut 1999) and renewed in 2004 (Nunavut 2004a) in light of the current social, political, and economic realities of Nunavut.

Nunavut: The Land and the People

The Nunavut Territory is the largest political unit of Canada, covering one-fifth of the Canadian land mass and a very large marine area which includes the Hudson Bay and James Bay as well as most of the marine areas of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago up to the North Pole (Figure 4.1). Its geography is primarily a composite of islands, bays, and channels; it is the home of the second largest islands archipelago in the world (Indonesia is the first). Nunavut lies entirely north of the 60th parallel, much of it beyond the Arctic Circle. With an area of 2,121,103 km², it is so large that, if independent, it would rank as the world's twelfth largest country. The creation of the Nunavut Territory, in 1999, required a reshuffling of the NWT borders (Légaré 2001). The boundaries of Nunavut

largely follow the Inuit traditional land use and occupancy area in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic (Freeman *et al.* 1976).

Nunavut as a whole has an Arctic climate. It has the coldest weather in Canada where the average July temperature is only 9°C. In fact, Nunavut only has an average of 20 to 30 frost-free days per year. Winter lasts nine months and the average January temperature dips to -30°C. The Arctic Ocean, Hudson Bay, Baffin Bay and the numerous straits and channels of the Arctic Archipelago are frozen for much of the year, forming pack ice several meters thick. The winds are prevalent throughout the year and can often be quite strong, causing blizzard-like conditions in the winter.

The ground is frozen permanently (permafrost), except for an active layer of about six centimetres from the surface, and the short summer seasons do not allow the growth of trees. In Nunavut most of the landscape is treeless. The land is covered by the Arctic tundra, which counts over 300 kinds of plants (flowers and lichens). These are important food sources to a number of Arctic animals (e.g., caribou, musk-oxen), which are part of the Inuit food diet.

Even though Nunavut has a vast geography, only 29,474 residents (Statistics Canada 2006) sparsely inhabit it. A majority of the inhabitants (85 percent) are Inuit. Inuit are a circumpolar people whose homelands lie in Greenland, northern Canada, Alaska and Russia. They are linked in kin and in cultural ties, including a common family language (Eskaleut) (Abele 2000: 199). In Canada their traditional territories are in the Northwest Territories (Inuvialuit), Labrador (Nunatsiavut), northern Quebec (Nunavik), and Nunavut. About 70 percent of Canadian Inuit live in Nunavut.

Collectively the Inuit and non-Inuit population of Nunavut are known as Nunavummiut.⁶⁸ Nunavut's tiny population is scattered among 28 coastal communities (only Baker Lake is not coastal) with great distances in between. The capital Iqaluit, located on Baffin Island, is the only city in Nunavut, with a population of about 6,500; all other communities have less than 2,000 residents and hold on average 400 inhabitants.

⁶⁸ 'Nunavummiut' is an Inuktitut word, which means: 'The Inhabitants of Our Land'.

Some communities have as few as twenty-five residents. Nunavut has a high birth rate and a very young population.⁶⁹

Nunavut does not have any road infrastructure linking it with the rest of Canada. Ships transport most merchandise and equipment to the coastal communities of Nunavut during the short summer season (July to September). All Nunavut communities possess an airstrip. However, flying is expensive. Items flown by plane can cost two or three times more in Nunavut than they do in southern Canada. In fact, due to Nunavut's remoteness and difficult access to southern markets, the cost of living in Iqaluit is about 65 percent higher than in Toronto (Statistics Nunavut 2001).

Nunavut: A Historical Background

The earliest *paleo-eskimo* cultures in the Arctic regions date back 4,000 years, when early hunting societies moved from Asia across the Bering Strait to present-day Alaska, northern Canada, and Greenland (McGhee 2004). The Inuit in Canada are descendents from the most recent of these societies, the Thule People, who came into northern Canada from Alaska 1,000 years ago at the same time when the Vikings arrived in Greenland.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, the Inuit had little contact with white people apart from sporadic encounters with Vikings and later with whalers and explorers. They lived a nomadic way of life of subsistence based on the hunt of whales, caribou and seals. However, the introduction of the fur trade changed Inuit life style forever, creating an economic relationship of dependency. Between 1910 and 1940 Inuit gradually shifted from a hunting economy to a trading economy based on white fox trapping. They progressively organized their movements and their social life as a group around the trapping activity (Collignon 2006: 38). The Hudson's Bay Company supplied items to the Inuit that would be paid with the next season's furs, thereby promoting a system of dependency centred on credit and debt (Crowe 1991: 112).

⁶⁹ Nunavut possesses a birth rate of 25.6 (per 1,000); 60 percent of its residents are under the age of 25; 42 percent are under 15 (Statistics Canada 2006).

The Inuit lived off the land, pursuing trapping for their livelihood and hunting for their sustenance. However, they have now become dependent on commodities coming from the modern world such as rifles, ammunition, flour, tea, and tobacco. Instead of hunting only for his family, the hunter now began to produce a surplus for trade. Some Inuit began to gather around the posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. They formed small communities where nomadism began to decline.

In the 1930s and 1940s Inuit living conditions plummeted. Inuit economic destitution resulted in part from the collapse of the fur trade in the 1930s. The value of a white fox pelt dropped from \$40.00 to \$10.00.⁷⁰ Starvation became commonplace (Crowe 1991: 26). The need to deal with this situation would eventually bring about a major change in the Inuit relationship with the Canadian federal government (Purich 1992: 42).

The Second World War brought the military, particularly Americans, to the Arctic, along with journalists. Army personnel discovered that in the Arctic infant deaths, epidemics and starvation were commonplace and that Inuit were not receiving the social benefits available to other Canadians. The American medical officers commented to journalists on the poor health of the Inuit. Until then, the Canadian government presence in the Arctic could be summarized as 'benign neglect' (Dickerson 1992). The only political forces in the region were the trading posts, the missionary churches and a few Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachments. In view of the international negative publicity surrounding the desperate plight of the Inuit, the Canadian government had to take action to rectify the situation.

By the early 1950s, the government began to settle Inuit in permanent communities where they could receive programs and services available to southern Canadians. During the fur trade period, Inuit came to regard commodities such as tea, flour, and especially tobacco as essential to their lives. Thus, when government intervention came to provide for health, education, and housing the seeds had already been sown which made settlements attractive to most Inuit. The government began establishing health services and schools on the location of many of the existing trading posts in the Arctic where Inuit used to gather in the past. There was an extensive program

⁷⁰ All currency figures are given in Canadian dollars.

of construction of social houses, schools, and health clinics to provide better living to the Inuit (Damas 2002).

Throughout the 1960s, Inuit congregated at various northern sites. By 1970, most Inuit of the NWT had relocated into 34 communities. Health care, education, housing and later the full range of pensions and income support programs were delivered into the newly created communities. The new sedentary lives in the communities could be characterized by a mixed economy of hunting and trapping with welfare and some elements of the wage economy. Most items of daily life (e.g., clothing, food, drink) were now store bought.

The transition from traditional life on the land to a modern one in the communities had enormous consequences for the Inuit. The society was completely transformed. Settlement succeeded in creating a structurally and culturally marginalized people (Billson 2001: 283). The social welfare system, while designed to help Inuit, shattered or disoriented a previously socially stable society. A rash of social problems emerged from the dramatic changes in lifestyles and livelihood. As the male population lost its provider role, and unemployment became a way of life, disconcerting rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, and domestic violence appeared (Billson 2001: 284).

Another stressful element came from the size of the communities. Traditionally, Inuit lived in small groups, usually two to ten families, but in the new permanent communities they lived among large numbers of strangers. The younger generation in particular was caught between the pull of two traditions. The result was depression and frustration, which often lead to suicide. In sum, through the government supply of food, clothing, housing, health, and education, the Inuit lost control over their daily affairs. They had become *wards of the State*: "...the native peoples knew that the real power in the north lay with whites. Inuit had literally been taken from their hunting grounds and placed in new bungalow communities where the white people could better administer them and run all aspects of their lives" (NCF 1983: 35).

An Inuit political elite emerged in the late 1960s. Educated in non-Inuit ways the Inuit elite was nonetheless rooted in a strong sense of Inuit identity. This political-administrative elite was not prepared to accept second-class status on their own lands (Hicks and White 2000: 52). These Inuit familiar with Canadian political methods could

represent Inuit and speak on their behalf on the political scene. They demanded for Inuit a capacity to control their social and political destiny. They created an awakened sense of politicization among the general Inuit population (Merritt and Fenge 1989: 258).

These Inuit leaders had attended, as children, the southern-style residential schools education system installed in the Arctic in the 1950s. They had learned how to deal with bureaucrats and could speak their language (Collignon 2006: 48). The residential school system was strict. Inuit children were generally taken away from their families a few years before they reached puberty. They spent the winters in one of the two residential schools located in the North (Chesterfield Inlet, Churchill) and the summers out on the land with their parents. They lived in two worlds. They spent their school years alternating between a white education and an Inuit education.

Many Inuit leaders, who later would be on the forefront of the 'Nunavut Project', attribute their leadership success to their rigorous education, which straddled two worlds. They spend their school holidays on the land with their parents, therefore acquiring a good command of the Inuit language as well as land-based skills, hunting skills, and sewing skills: "...there is a delicious irony that the first bright generation of such children founded and led the Nunavut autonomy movement with their new learning" (Jull 2000: 120).

ITC was founded, in August 1971, by this first generation of political Inuit leaders. ITC was a direct result of the increased Inuit political self-awareness and an expression of their rights as a people. It grew out of a desire among Inuit to conduct and to govern their own affairs. ITC pressed for cultural, social, and political rights, within the Canadian political system. Preserving and protecting their culture and language while improving their social and economic environments emerged as key issues for Inuit in the early 1970s (Fenge 1994: 186). The goal of ITC was to create a greater autonomy for the Inuit through land ownership rights and political self-determination⁷¹ as expressed by the 'Nunavut Project'.

⁷¹ Self-determination is understood here as internal self-determination. The Inuit, like many other Aboriginal groups, were seeking only to obtain a greater form of autonomy within Canada. They did not question the political existence of the Canadian State in the Arctic. In Canada, this political arrangement is called 'self-government'.

In sum, the reason behind the Inuit desires, in the 1970s, to push for their own political autonomy were three-fold. First, there was the absence of any land cession treaty with the Canadian government and Inuit Aboriginal title could still be asserted. Second, the Inuit of the NWT possessed a demographic majority and cultural homogeneity in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. Third, the Inuit wanted to control their own political, social, and economic agendas so as to improve their socio-economic conditions (Légaré 2001: 143).

Canada's Aboriginal Land Claims Policy and the Nunavut Project

Put forward by ITC in 1976, the 'Nunavut Project' (ITC 1976) sought an agreement on Inuit land claims and self-determination. The Inuit were hoping that by signing such an agreement, they would establish a new and respectful political relationship between themselves and the Canadian government. The claim was negotiated under the umbrella of Canada's *Comprehensive Land Claims Policy*.⁷² The Policy is based on outstanding Aboriginal rights.

Aboriginal rights arise from the fact that the Aboriginal Peoples were, at the arrival of European colonizers, in sovereign occupation of what is now Canada with their own customs, laws and civilizations. The British Royal Proclamation of 1763 recognized the fact that Aboriginal rights are rooted in an Aboriginal title (Borrows 1997). The Aboriginal title should be understood as an encumbrance on government to dispose of the land. According to the Royal Proclamation, the Aboriginal title arises from long and continuous use and occupancy of land by the Aboriginal Peoples prior to the arrival of European colonial powers in North America. The Royal Proclamation provides to Aboriginal groups a unique form (*sui generis*) of communal property rights, although British or Canadian Courts has never precisely defined its exact meaning (McNeil 1997). Thus, British law recognized this *sui generis* communal title and requires the British Crown and its successor, the Canadian Crown, to extinguish the Aboriginal title through a treaty making process before colonizing the land. To comply with this, eleven land-

⁷² Canada's Comprehensive Land Claims Policy was first put forward in 1973. It was revised in 1987 (INAC 1987).

cession treaties were signed between the Crown and several Indian groups, in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Zlotkin 1991).

However, in the 1920s, Canada ceased to sign treaties with Aboriginal groups. The Canadian government was of the opinion that the Royal Proclamation of 1763 had become obsolete with the independence of Canada from the British Empire in 1867 (Weaver 1981). However, the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the *Calder case* (1973) (Canada Supreme Court 1973) brought the issue of treaty making into the forefront of Canadian politics. In this case, involving the Nisga'a Indians of the province of British Columbia, the Attorney General of the province affirmed in court that the Royal Proclamation was no longer valid following the independence of Canada. The judges, however, recognized the continued validity of the Royal Proclamation and the legal existence of Aboriginal title for those Aboriginal groups who had not yet signed a land-cession treaty with Canada (Niedermeire 1981).

The *Calder* decision by the Supreme Court set the stage for Aboriginal groups to claim for land and internal political sovereignty by establishing the long-time occupation, possession and use of traditional lands as legal basis for Aboriginal title: "...the *Calder Case* gave new life and energy to the Aboriginal movement in Canada" (Amagoalik 1994).

In August 1973, as a consequence of the *Calder case*, Canada announced that it would negotiate to settle outstanding Aboriginal title with those groups who had not yet signed a land-cession treaty with Canada. To do so, Canada established a process known as the *Comprehensive Land Claims Policy* (INAC 1987). The policy provides guidelines to these negotiations (Légaré 1996: 140-143). In 1974, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) established the Office of Native Claims to negotiate claim settlements.

Under Canada's Comprehensive Land Claims Policy (INAC 1987: 11-15), an Aboriginal claimant group⁷³ would agree to relinquish to the Canadian government any Aboriginal rights to the land (i.e., Aboriginal title) in exchange for: (1) exclusive communal ownership over large tracts of land within their traditional territory; (2)

⁷³ A request to start a land claim negotiation can be done only by an Aboriginal group and not by an individual (INAC 1987: 9).

financial compensation for lands and resources they have relinquished; and (3) establishment of co-management public boards to manage all lands within their settlement area. The most controversial element of the Comprehensive Land Claims Policy is the requirement for a claimant group to extinguish their Aboriginal title for a settled land claim.⁷⁴ The extinguishment requirement arises from the desire of the Federal government to conclude settlement of claims in which it is clear who owns what with no fear of future claims and confusion on land title ownership. Thus, since the early 1970s, Canada has been committed to a process of land claims settlement for dealing with Aboriginal title and rights.⁷⁵

At the beginning of the 1970s, the Inuit of the NWT had not yet signed any land-cession treaty with the Canadian government. For Inuit leaders, however, the claim settlement process involved much more than a real-estate transaction in exchange for the extinguishment of title. They viewed instead the process as an historic opportunity to reorder their relationship with Canada and to secure their socio-cultural, political and economic future as a people (Usher *et al.* 1992).

A long and protracted negotiation process ensued between TFN and Canada (Légaré 1996: 148-150). In May 1992, the Inuit land and political claim was settled through the NLCA (INAC 1993). The Agreement was approved by a referendum, in November 1992, when 69 percent of Inuit living in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic voted in favour of the Agreement (Légaré 1996: 151). The major issue during the referendum campaign surrounded the extinguishment clause, but many Inuit felt that the prospect of Nunavut would make up for the extinguishment of their Aboriginal title. Thus, in exchange for the defined rights and benefits contained in the provisions of the NLCA,⁷⁶ the Inuit ceded to the Canadian government all their undefined Aboriginal claims, rights, title and interests to the lands and waters anywhere in Canada (INAC 1993: 11). The Agreement obtained Canada's parliamentary approval on June 10, 1993. The land and resources component of the Agreement became effective on July 9, 1993,

⁷⁴ Many Aboriginal groups have either refused to ratify their claims or engaged in land claims negotiations because of the extinguishment clause (Asch and Zlotkin 1997: 209-211).

⁷⁵ Since 1982, existing Aboriginal rights are both recognized and protected by the 1982 *Canadian Constitution Act* (section 35). Any land claims agreement approved by the Canadian parliament obtains protection under the *Canadian Constitution Act* (Canada 1982).

⁷⁶ The NLCA is a 282-page legal document composed of 42 chapters (INAC 1993).

while the political autonomy component (i.e., Government of Nunavut) became reality on April 1, 1999.

The NLCA is the most far-reaching Aboriginal Land Claims Agreement ever signed in Canada between an Aboriginal group and the Canadian federal government.⁷⁷ The document encompasses 42 articles dealing mainly with land, water, wildlife, and natural resources management.⁷⁸ The Agreement gives to the Inuit of the Central and Eastern Canadian Arctic the ownership rights of close to 18 percent of the land in Nunavut. Inuit owned lands total 353,610 km² of which 36,257 km² include subsurface rights, where Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI)⁷⁹ can benefit from any mineral and energy extraction. Also five public management boards have been instituted in the Nunavut area to manage the resources on all lands (Inuit owned and public lands) (Légaré 2003: 127-131). These boards focus on how the land and the resources should be developed. Finally, NTI also received from the Canadian government 1.15 billion dollars over fourteen years (1993-2007). That money is held in common trust and is mainly used to finance the administrative operations of NTI (NTI 1993).

For the Canadian government, the reasons for settling the Inuit land claims were legal (i.e., the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and recent court decisions such as the *Calder case*). However, the reasons for establishing the new Government of Nunavut were solely political. Canada had no legal obligations to create the Government of Nunavut and to divide the NWT. It did so, because the measure attracted favourable media coverage and represented an opportunity to improve Canada's standing on the international scene (Jull 1993). It was also an effective means of reinforcing Canadian sovereignty over the waters of the Arctic Archipelago, an issue the United States has been reluctant to recognize (Légaré 2001: 29). Effective occupation of the Arctic waters is for Canada an important

⁷⁷ Between 1974 and 2004, Canada signed eight Comprehensive Land Claims Agreements with various Aboriginal groups, all located in Canada's North.

⁷⁸ A. Kersey (1994) provides an analysis of all 42 articles of the NLCA in relation with the provisions of the International Labor Organization Convention 169. She concludes that the NLCA generally espouses the spirit of Indigenous self-determination as reflected in the Convention. However, she criticizes the extinguishment clause contained in the NLCA which forced the Inuit to abandon all their traditional Aboriginal rights in exchange for the defined rights of the NLCA. She further explains that Canada's refusal to ratify Convention 169 is based on the fact that the Canadian government does not want Indigenous groups within its borders, such as the Inuit of Nunavut, to eventually claim international status as sovereign states.

⁷⁹ NTI succeeded to TFN in March 1993. Its role is to administer the implementation of the NLCA. For a full account on the role and activities of NTI, see: A. Légaré (2003).

part of the concept of sovereignty. The Inuit do use substantial parts of these waters as a source of food, which helps in Canada's claim to the Arctic waters.

The Government of Nunavut

Article 4 of the NLCA provides for the creation of a new territory (Nunavut) with its own public government: "...the Government of Canada will recommend to Parliament, as a government measure, legislation to establish, within a defined time period, a new Nunavut Territory, with its own Legislative Assembly and public government, separate from the Government of the remainder of the Northwest Territories" (INAC 1993: 23). Article 4 is short but it is by far the most important article of the NLCA. It obliges Canada to come to terms with the political aspiration of the Inuit by committing to the creation of Nunavut. To put this into practice a *Nunavut Act* (Canada 1993) was enacted by the Parliament of Canada on 10 June 1993 to take effect on April 1, 1999. The Act confirms the division of the NWT and the birth of a new political unit in Canada: the Nunavut Territory.⁸⁰

The *Nunavut Act* states that the Nunavut territorial government possesses the same political powers as those held by the other Canadian territorial governments (NWT, Yukon). Nunavut also holds the same political institutions as does the present NWT and Yukon Territories, *i.e.*, a Commissioner, a Legislative Assembly, a public service sector, and tribunals (Canada 1993). As with the other territories, Nunavut is a public non-ethnic political jurisdiction. However, what makes Nunavut unique is that, since the Inuit clearly compose the population majority, Nunavut can be portrayed as a *de facto* 'Inuit self-government'.

Canadian territorial jurisdictions, contrary to Canadian provinces, do not hold their own constitution⁸¹ (*e.g.*, *Nunavut Act*) nor do they own public Crown lands and natural resources. These are controlled and administered by the Canadian federal government. Thus, the Government of Nunavut does not benefit from the exploitation of land resources (minerals, oil, and gas). Those benefits go either to Nunavut Tunngavik

⁸⁰ In order to provide legal continuity, the laws of the NWT remain in effect until such time as the Nunavut Legislative Assembly enacts new laws.

⁸¹ Provincial and federal powers are defined in sections 91 and 92 the *Canadian Constitution Act* (Canada 1982: 26-31), while federal legislation (section 91) creates the territories and enumerates their powers.

Inc. (NTI), which owns 18 percent of the land (Inuit owned lands), or to Canada which owns the remaining 82 percent (public Crown lands). In addition, the Canadian Parliament may change at any time the powers delegated to the Government of Nunavut by amending the *Nunavut Act*.⁸²

The Nunavut Legislative Assembly functions on the political principle of no political parties.⁸³ All nineteen elected members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) sit as independents. Elections take place once every five years. Following the February 2004 election, 17 of the 19 MLAs were Inuit. Premier Paul Okalik, the first Inuk lawyer,⁸⁴ heads a Cabinet of six Ministers. In this unique form of British parliamentarism, political decisions are taken by a majority of MLAs where each can express freely her/his views on a given subject (White 2006).

The first item on the political agenda at the opening of each newly elected Assembly is to select a Premier and a six-member Cabinet. MLAs choose among themselves the Premier and Cabinet members. The Cabinet members are answerable to the Assembly. For any law to pass it needs the support of ten MLAs: usually a minimum of three ordinary MLAs along with the support from all Cabinet members. Often, the ordinary MLAs become the 'unofficial opposition' to the government headed by the Cabinet. This creates a unique and interesting dynamic (Henderson 2004: 137-138). Finally, the Canadian government nominates a Commissioner as the representative of the Queen. She/he holds the official title of 'Head of Government' for five years. However, the Commissioner's powers are solely ceremonial; the real power rests in the Legislative Assembly.

The administration of the Nunavut government is largely decentralized. The Government of Nunavut counts ten departments and eight agencies (Figure 4.2). The extent to which administrative structures can be imbued with Inuit values and culture will be critical to the success of the Nunavut government. The Inuit language (Inuktitut) as the eventual working language of the Government of Nunavut is crucial in this context.

⁸² Amendments are by convention done with the political support of the legislative assemblies of affected Territories. However, by law the Parliament of Canada could amend territorial acts without the support of the Territories and has done so a few times in the distant past; the last time was the *Yukon Act* in 1978.

⁸³ Inuit people have traditionally been against the introduction of party politics, because a party system implies party discipline and Inuit have always preferred to freely express their individual views rather than subordinate them to party discipline.

⁸⁴ 'Inuk' is the singular word for the plural 'Inuit'.

The Bathurst Mandate

The *Bathurst Mandate* (Nunavut 1999, 2004a) is a statement of priorities developed in a series of workshops held by the Cabinet of the new Government of Nunavut in October 1999 and renewed in April 2004 after the second elections. Under the heading *Pinasuaqtavut* (that which we've set out to do), the document identifies four broad categories of actions organized under four headings: *Inuuqatigiittiarniq* (healthy communities); *Pijarnirniqsat Katujjiqatigiinnirlu* (simplicity and unity); *Namminiq Makitajunnarniq* (self-reliance); *Ilippallianguinnarniq* (continuing learning). Under each category there is a vision, or objective, to be reached by the year 2020: "...this plan envisioned what life in Nunavut will be like in the year 2020...I am confident that we will reach these objectives and our goal which is improving the lives of all Nunavummiut by strengthening our culture and expanding our economy" (Nunavut 2004a: 1-2).⁸⁵

I propose to review the components of each of these categories. The goal is to portray how close the current Nunavut society is in reaching these objectives. In so doing, I will highlight the current socio-economic shortcomings so as to evaluate how far the objectives contained in the *Bathurst Mandate* are from becoming reality.

Inuuqatigiittiarniq: 'healthy communities'

The Nunavut government vision is that by the year 2020 it will respond to all the basic needs of individuals and families to ensure that all Nunavut communities are "healthy". Thus, Nunavummiut will benefit from improved health and social conditions equal to or better than the Canadian average, while present housing deficiencies will be resolved (Nunavut 1999: 1-2; Nunavut 2004a: 4-7). This category focuses on: (1) social issues; (2) health; (3) housing.

⁸⁵ Statement by Paul Okalik, Premier of Nunavut.

Social Issues

The sedentarization of Inuit alienated them from the land and from their traditional culture and engendered social pathologies that are still being battled today: low self-esteem, alcohol and substance abuse, family violence, youth suicide and welfare dependency. These social woes have been part of their daily lives since the 1960s. Culturally many Inuit have lost the traditional life skills that ensured survival for their grandparents; yet, they have not acquired all the skills that are needed to function successfully in a modern and post-industrial society (Billson 2001: 289). Inuit deal with the effects of rapid socio-economic changes brought by sedentarization in different ways. Some adapt and try to fit in, some turn to religion to find comfort, others drink and use drugs, or commit crimes and acts of violence, some kill themselves.

Inuit youth in Nunavut are bored because they have limited opportunity for post-secondary education, social activities and employment in the communities. They are lost between the Inuit and the non-Inuit worlds: "...our children identify better with a Chinese character named Li than they do with their own grandfather. They know hip-hop or rap music better than they know how to drum-dance or throat-sing. They could probably build a shack better than an igloo, drive a vehicle better than a dog team" (Arngnanaaq 2004).

The number of Inuit youths who have taken their lives lately is staggering. Between 1999 and 2005, 175 Nunavummiut took their lives. An average of 25 people kills themselves every year in Nunavut (Hicks, Bjerragaard, Berman 2007). Most are male, between the ages of 15 and 24.⁸⁶ Suicide in Nunavut is closely linked to a wide range of social and economic conditions such as deficient parenting, low education levels, high unemployment, poor housing, limited recreation activities, consumption of alcohol and drugs, criminal activities, etc., (NTI 2004). Scholars have argued that many factors may contribute to suicide: adverse childhood experiences such as poor parental behaviour, the presence of alcohol and violence at home; overcrowded housing and high

⁸⁶ In 2003, the rate of death by suicide was 11 times the national Canadian average. Inuit men committed 86 percent of suicides, with 60 percent between the age of 15 and 24 (Hicks, Bjerragaard, Berman 2007: 45).

level of school drop outs.⁸⁷ All these factors often lead into suicidal thoughts. Still, some researchers (Hicks, Bjerregaard, Berman 2007: 51) have concluded that suicide is a function of economic realities such as high unemployment rates: “It should be noted that it is the sub-regions which have experienced the most development in recent decades that have generally experienced the lowest rates of death by suicide” (Hicks, Bjerregaard, Berman 2007: 53).

Alcohol and other substance-abuse problems are prevalent in many communities; family cohesiveness has suffered,⁸⁸ and crime, violence, and suicide affect every community.⁸⁹ There are high rates of violence against women in Nunavut. In 2005, these rates were a staggering 14 times higher than in the rest of the country.⁹⁰ James Eetoolook, Vice-President of NTI said: “...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” (Hicks and White 2000: 94).

Crime is prevalent in contemporary Nunavut society. The rate of people in Nunavut who were charged with crime was more than five times the national rate in 2005. Nunavut has the highest rate of crimes in Canada and the highest rate of incarceration for violent crimes (George 2006a). In fact, the number of people charged with criminal offences in Nunavut almost doubled during the first five years of Nunavut’s existence.⁹¹ In 1999, 1,362 adult Nunavummiut were charged with criminal offences, in 2003 that number rose to 2,333 (Bell 2004a). In addition, many of these offenders (51 percent) returned to custody within a year after being released (George 2006b). Thus, crimes, family violence, suicide are very much part of Nunavut’s contemporary society.

⁸⁷ F.J. Tester and P. McNicoll (2004) illustrate that 56 percent of all suicides were related to alcohol and drug abuse; 64 percent had a history of economic distress and chronic depression; 12 percent of all adult Inuit have reported having seriously considered committing suicide.

⁸⁸ In 2005, 22 percent of people in Nunavut aged 15 and older was a victim of family violence (Nunatsiaq News 2006).

⁸⁹ Thirty-five percent of Nunavummiut have sniffed solvents; the suicide rate is six times the national average (Lanken and Vincent 1999: 46).

⁹⁰ For example, the sexual assault rate was, in 2005, 12 times higher than the Canadian national average. In 2005, 460 people in Nunavut were charged with some form of sexual assault (This number could be higher since a majority of sexual assaults are never reported in Nunavut) (Nunatsiaq News 2006).

⁹¹ In 2004, the rate of criminal offences was five times the Canadian average. In 2004, there were at any given time an average of 93 Nunavummiut doing time in territorial correctional facilities up from 85 five years early, in 1998, when Nunavut had not yet been created (George 2006a).

Health

In Nunavut, poor nutrition, high smoking rates, sexually transmitted diseases and mental and emotional health needs are among the most pressing public health concerns for adult women, while for men these also include substance abuse and poor anger management. Lung cancer is five times higher than in the rest of Canada.⁹² Tuberculosis and diabetes are rampant. In Nunavut there is a higher amount of respiratory illnesses such as tuberculosis due to inadequate housing. Diabetes and obesity⁹³ are also chronic health conditions due to the fact that most people do not move outside the villages in search of game (country food) and have become dependent on fatty food supplied at the community grocery store. Nunavut health indicators (Statistics Nunavut 2001) compare with third world countries, such as Egypt, than they do with the rest of Canada! Infant mortality rates in Nunavut (15.6 per 10,000) are on par with Romania and 3.5 times higher than in Canada (Statistics Nunavut 2001). Nunavummiut have an average life expectancy of 68.7 years, 11 years lower than in the rest of Canada on average (Statistics Canada 2001).

Because of the remoteness of the area, health costs per capita in Nunavut are higher than anywhere else in Canada. Each year, the territory spends more than \$8,700 per person on health while the Canadian average is \$4,100 (CBC News North 2004). A high staff turnover remains a major barrier to improving public health, particularly in small communities.⁹⁴ Of the 161 nursing positions in Nunavut in 2004, 40 of them, or 25 percent, were vacant. There were only 12 family doctors to serve a population of about 30,000 over an area five times the size of France (NTI 2004: 49). There is also a high turnover ratio among medical personnel⁹⁵ and few Inuit nurses.⁹⁶ This makes it difficult to provide for an efficient and culturally sensitive health care system.

⁹² In 2005, Nunavut had the highest smoking rates in Canada, at 53 percent, more than twice the national average rate at 21 percent (George 2006c).

⁹³ In 2005, Nunavut's adult obesity rate was at 26 percent (George 2006c).

⁹⁴ Recruitment is tough, because full-time staff from the South may pay \$2,500 a month for rent and can easily find jobs in other regions of Canada with much lower costs of living.

⁹⁵ Doctors do not generally stay more than 12 months in Nunavut.

⁹⁶ There were only two Inuit nurses who graduated in 2005. In 2006, Nunavut's health system counted a total of only eight Inuit nurses.

Housing

The majority of Inuit in Nunavut live in social housing. Close to half the population, or 13,666 residents, live in 3,786 social housing units in the territory. Ninety-eight percent of social housing tenants are Inuit. Therefore, social housing represents close to 50 percent of all housing units in Nunavut (NTI 2004: 7).

According to Statistics Canada data, some 54 percent of Inuit live in overcrowded conditions (four or more persons per dwelling)⁹⁷ that contribute to poor mental and physical health, family tension⁹⁸ and violence, and interfere in students' homework and school performances: "...more than half of Inuit families are living in overcrowded conditions. With about 15 people living in a three-bedroom house, three generations in one house, its got to be really stressful for families to be living in such close quarters" (Etitiq 2004).

In 2006, a research led by Dr. Frank J. Tester (2006) on crowded homes in the community of Cape Dorset showed that overcrowding often led to mental and social illnesses. Results of the research indicated that in such an environment 26 percent of people felt angry, while 15 percent felt depressed. People can't sleep or do their homework in crowded houses. The study also showed that many persons are on waiting lists for houses but they usually wait two to three years before acquiring a house.

Housing is one of the two primary commitments (along with education) of the Government of Nunavut (Nunavut 1999: 3). Since its creation, the Government of Nunavut has been able to finance the building of about 50 houses per year, only two to three per community, while the need is growing at a rate of about 270 units a year (Bell 2004b).

The waiting time for social housing in Nunavut's capital, Iqaluit, averages two years, but can be as high as five years in smaller communities: "...It's nearly impossible to find, afford or even build adequate housing in Nunavut" (Kilabuk 2006). Approximately 4,000 people (or 1,000 families) are on the waiting list to obtain social housing: this represent about 15 percent of Nunavut's population (NTI 2004: 8). By

⁹⁷ The number of persons per dwelling was higher for Nunavut (3.84) compared to the Canadian average (2.65) (Statistics Canada 2001).

⁹⁸ In 2005, 20 percent of adult Nunavummiut reported being stressed and depressed (George 2006c).

2020, if nothing substantial has been done to alleviate the current state of housing deficiencies; overcrowding rate among Inuit will likely reach 75 percent (Nunavut 2004b).

To stop the crisis, the Government of Nunavut is proposing that Canada invests 1.9 billion dollars over a ten-year span (2006 – 2016) so as to build the 3,000 units that are currently missing, the 2,730 units (or 273 per year) that are needed to keep pace with the Inuit population growth, and finally to repair 1,300 current units that are deficient (Nunavut 2004b: 19-20). Only a large Canadian investment would be sufficient to address the housing crisis in Nunavut.

Significant investments in housing seem to be the only route to address one of the root causes of poor health and low education levels among Inuit. However, the initial response to the proposal from the Canadian federal government was not positive, stating that “the project was too ambitious” (Clinton and Vail 2005: 8). In its 2006 budget, the federal Government of Canada gave Nunavut 200 million dollars for housing construction. However, the federal money is enough to build just 725 units over the next three years at an average cost per unit of \$250,000. This meets only 20 percent of Nunavut’s needs (Windeyer 2007). This obviously does not go far enough to alleviate the current pressure on housing. The federal money for housing falls short of the 1.9 billion dollars asked by the Government of Nunavut in their ‘Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan’ submitted to Canada in 2005 (Nunavut 2004b).

Pijarnirniqsat Katujjiqatigiinnirlu: ‘simplicity and unity’

By the year 2020, the Nunavut government envisions that Inuit culture and traditions will be reflected in its institutions while Inuktitut, the Inuit language, will be the working language of the government (Nunavut 2004a: 8). To make sure that Nunavut eventually operates with Inuit norms and values, it is important that the Inuktitut language be widespread within government. A policy to hire more Inuit government employees has recently been put forward. The goal is to have 85 percent Inuit employment within government by 2020 so as to properly reflect the percentages of Inuit

living within Nunavut. This vision therefore centres on: (1) the Inuktitut language; (2) Inuit employment in government.

The Inuktitut Language

Nunavut is the only jurisdiction in Canada where a majority of the population speaks an Aboriginal language. For 75 percent of Inuit, Inuktitut⁹⁹ is still their first language spoken at home, and as many as 15 percent of Inuit (mostly living in the smaller communities) have no other language (Berger 2006: iii). However, a limited Inuktitut curriculum in schools and an ever growing southern media (TV, internet) presence make it more challenging to pass Inuktitut on from one generation to the next. Even though Inuktitut is the language most widely spoken in Nunavut, 42 percent of the Inuit have reported difficulties receiving services in Inuktitut from their government (NTI 2004: 31): "...I went to the post office and took the time to look around...there is absolutely nothing in Inuktitut, and we're in Nunavut. There isn't a single staff member that speaks Inuktitut. Imagine yourself in the place where you were born and raised, and you couldn't communicate with the people who are there to serve you. It's as if you are foreign to your own country" (Nunatsiaq News 2007).

English, not Inuktitut, is currently the working language of the Government of Nunavut. The majority of government employees are non-Inuit (53 percent) and few of them attain much capacity to speak and write Inuktitut, while all Inuit in the public service are fluent in English. One of the key demands by Inuit leaders for the creation of Nunavut was to address the lack of 'Inuitness' in the previous government of the Northwest Territories. Yet, little seemed to have been done to satisfy this issue, as expressed by Mr Johnny Kusugak, the languages Commissioner of Nunavut: "The Government of Nunavut needs more Inuktitut speakers...in order to reach the goal of making Inuktitut their working language by 2020" (Younger-Lewis 2005). In May 2006, a government policy was put forward to try to counteract the prevalence of English in government. The policy requires that all senior government officials in Nunavut be able to speak Inuktitut by 2008, or risk losing their positions. The Premier, Paul Okalik,

⁹⁹ It is important to note that because Inuktitut lack of a common dialect, Inuit from different regions of Nunavut often have a tendency to use English when they communicate with each other.

announced the policy: “They have to be fluent, they have to work with members and with people within Nunavut,...They should understand and be able to communicate with Inuit that may be unilingual” (CBC News North 2006).

For Inuit, it is also unacceptable that the majority of signage and advertising in Nunavut is in English only: “...Inuktitut should be displayed as prominently as English” (NTI 2004: 35). “Laws should force all enterprises to use Inuktitut in their commercial signs, posters and advertisements posted outside their business” (Younger-Lewis 2005). To counteract the slow erosion of Inuktitut, a new territorial *Official Languages Act*, along with a companion bill entitled *Language Protection Act*, was drafted in March 2007. Of the two proposed bills, the *Language Protection Act* (Nunavut 2007) is the most important piece of legislation. It will oblige all organizations to use the Inuit language in public signs along with English and/or French. On all signs, the Inuit language would have to be at least equal in prominence to other languages. The Nunavut language Commissioner will be in charge of enforcing the Act. Fines of up to \$5,000 could be imposed to those who do not follow the new law once enacted. This proposed Act should establish the Inuit language on equal terms with French¹⁰⁰ and English as official languages. However, only time will tell if this new Act will diminish the current pre-eminence of English throughout Nunavut. Ultimately, the Nunavut government hopes to make Inuktitut the primary cultural means of communication and identity for Nunavummiut, as Greenlandic is for Inuit Greenlander, or French is for Quebecers.

Inuit Government Employment

The government is the major employer in Nunavut, accounting for about 40 percent of all jobs (Pool 2000). The recruitment process of government staff has been plagued by a shortage of qualified Inuit professionals. Article 23 of the NLCA (INAC 1993: 191-195) requires that Inuit fill 85 percent of government employment.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ About 600 people in Nunavut are Francophones; most of them live in Iqaluit.

¹⁰¹ As of December 31, 2005, there were 3,516 full-time jobs available within all departments, agencies, boards, and corporations of the Government of Nunavut; 2,886 of those jobs were filled; there were 630 vacant jobs in the Government of Nunavut. The biggest needs were in the Department of Health and Social Services (190 vacancies) and in the Department of Education (120 vacancies) (Nunavut 2005).

However, the Inuit currently fill only 47 percent of government employment.¹⁰² Lack of education and training make reaching representative numbers difficult. The problem is that more than half of the government positions require college or university training, which is not accessible in most communities.¹⁰³ In addition, the supply of qualified Inuit is exhausted. The government workplace has absorbed most of the available qualified Inuit. Talented and ambitious Inuit often prefer politics to administration and seek to make their mark by holding office in the Inuit organizations (*e.g.*, NTI), or in one of the numerous NLCA public institutions.

Namminiq Makitajunnarniq: 'self-reliance'

The Government of Nunavut desires to be economically self-reliant and debt free by the year 2020. It is hoped that Nunavummiut will enjoy a growing economic prosperity. To reinforce the current economy the government will negotiate with the federal government in order to obtain a fairer share of resource royalties coming from Nunavut's lands and waters. The current high unemployment figures are expected to be considerably reduced. By 2020, it is expected that Nunavummiut will enjoy low levels of dependency on government transfer payments (*i.e.*, income support programs). The government intends to help build local employment through continuing government decentralization, to ensure an increased number of Inuit employees within government. Finally, the public boards born from the implementation of the NLCA should receive adequate funding (Nunavut 1999: 5-6). This heading covers a wide range of issues: (1) Nunavut fiscal status; (2) the economy; (3) the decentralization initiative; and (4) the implementation of the NLCA.

¹⁰² Government Inuit employment is mainly concentrated (84 percent) in administrative support categories. There are few Inuit who occupy professional or senior managerial positions within the Government of Nunavut (Berger 2006: 18).

¹⁰³ There is no University in Nunavut and one college whose headquarters are in Iqaluit with regional outreach locations in Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay. The remaining 25 communities have no college access. Internet access to facilitate virtual education remains a challenge in these far northern latitudes.

Nunavut Fiscal Status

The Nunavut Territory is the most fiscally dependent jurisdiction in Canada and relies on federal funding for about 90 percent of its annual budget (Clinton and Vail 2005: 27-29). Nunavut collects only 75 million dollars annually from its own source revenue, *i.e.*, taxes and local services. Nunavut's operational budget comes from the Canadian government, primarily through a multi-year unconditional formula funding arrangement. This heavy dependence on Ottawa is unlikely to be reduced significantly for the foreseeable future.

Nunavut's 2005-2006 annual budget was set at 935 million dollars. However, traditionally the expenses of the Government of Nunavut have been higher than its set annual budgets. In fact, the Government of Nunavut spending has grown by an average of 6.5 percent annually since 1999 while Canada's funding transfers to Nunavut have increased at a rate of 3.5 percent a year (Clinton and Vail 2005: 27-29). This situation has contributed to an accumulated deficit of 141 million dollars by the end of the year 2005 (Clinton and Vail 2005: 27-29). This fiscal predicament will likely continue to grow unless Canada increases its contributions.¹⁰⁴

Nunavut hopes to improve its fiscal precariousness by acquiring from the Canadian government control, management, and benefits over public Crown lands and resources. Currently, the lands in Nunavut are mostly owned by the federal government and all resource royalties and taxation¹⁰⁵, which come from resource extractions (minerals, oil, gas) on those public Crown lands, flow to the Canadian government. The Government of Nunavut does not benefit from any resource extraction. This obviously has raised some concerns among Inuit: "...we have no control over the land, waters, and subsurface. If we have all these resources in our lands, we should have a say in everything and have more than 80 percent or even all the rights to the resources. To me, the Nunavut government is just a puppet with no actual powers. To the Canadian

¹⁰⁴ The *Nunavut Act* prohibits a total accumulated debt of more than 200 million dollars. Once Nunavut reaches that amount, it will have to cut down on its budget. This will likely affect its delivery of programs and services.

¹⁰⁵ Royalties and taxation are land lease payments and income taxes coming from companies who extract minerals or energy from public Crown lands. The amount paid varies according to the value of the extraction. Until 2003, the Canadian government had never collected more than 20 million dollars a year in royalties from mines in Nunavut.

government, we are a minority, they will take all our resources and give them to the rest of Canada and abroad” (Illauq 2004).

Nunavut hopes that a ‘devolution agreement’ would increase the government internal revenue sources and would decrease its dependency on federal funding. For the Nunavut Premier, Paul Okalik, devolution talks provides the hope that Nunavut may increase its economic self-sufficiency: “...I’d love to see the day when we can run our own programs and not have to run to Ottawa every year and ask for more money so that we can provide programs that are comparable to the rest of the country...to be on our own, that’s our goal” (Bell 2006).

However, talks on devolution have yet to start between federal and Nunavut officials on that issue. The previous Liberal government had announced, in 2004, that devolution negotiations with Nunavut would begin immediately and would be concluded by 2008. However at this juncture, following the 2005 election of a new conservative government in Ottawa, little progress has been made to launch the devolution negotiations that would lead to the transfer of control and administration of public lands and their natural resources to Nunavut. Canada has not proceeded yet with these negotiations.

The Economy

In Nunavut there is no developed wage economy, no industry, and no agricultural or manufacturing base. Government is the dominant player in the domestic economy providing for about 40 percent of all employment. Mining and construction industries are the only other substantial employers (Clinton and Vail 2005: 41). Nunavut can best be described as having a mixed economy. Inuit combine cash income from a variety of sources (wages, social assistance, fur, arts and craft sales) with income in kind from the land.¹⁰⁶ In fact, 85 percent of all Inuit families are involved to various degrees in the traditional economy as a supplement. The annual value-exchange coming from country

¹⁰⁶ 46 percent of households in Nunavut are involved in the creation of traditional crafts and 59 percent rely largely on hunting and fishing for their food (Pool 2000: D6).

food (mostly caribou and seal meat) per family amounts to about \$23,000 (Légaré 2003: 132).

Hunting, fishing and trapping, once the mainstay of the economy of the North and a principal source of employment, now provide full time support for relatively few Inuit.¹⁰⁷ To support oneself from sealskins, it would be necessary to kill three or four seals per day every day of the year, at about \$70.00 each, and somehow manage to find the two hours per pelt to ready them for sale. The trapping of sealskins today is hardly a valuable source of income. Other economic activities such as tourism¹⁰⁸ and commercial fishing still play minor roles in Nunavut's economy.

Most households rely on government transfers (*i.e.*, unemployment insurance, social assistance) for their incomes. The unemployment rate among the Inuit is 32 percent,¹⁰⁹ compared with 2 percent for non-Inuit; in smaller communities this rate runs as high as 70 percent.¹¹⁰ The average cost of living in Nunavut is 1.65 times higher than in southern Canada¹¹¹ while the average income of Inuit remains low at \$26,000 per year (27 percent lower than in the rest of the country) (Berger 2006: 11). This makes living in Nunavut a constant struggle for lots of residents.

Mining is by far the most dynamic private sector in Nunavut. In 2004 alone about 1,000 exploration permits were delivered to companies (Clinton and Vail 2005: 41). So far, many minerals have been found in Nunavut (diamonds, gold, uranium), but they are hardly accessible in a region with little infrastructure, no roads, no rails, and with no deep-sea ports. Currently, only one mine is operational in Nunavut, the Jericho diamond mine,¹¹² which employs about 125 people, most of whom are non-Inuit. The mine is located close to the NWT border and can be accessed in the winter from Yellowknife (NWT) through a winter road. Other mines are also expected to open soon: Izok Lake

¹⁰⁷ There are about 1,000 Inuit full time hunters and trappers in Nunavut (Légaré 2003: 133).

¹⁰⁸ Worth an estimated 30 million dollars annually, tourism is looked upon as a promising future industry (Pool 2000: D6).

¹⁰⁹ Those individuals who regularly hunt in order to help support their families do not count as 'unemployed'.

¹¹⁰ This high rate of unemployment affects mainly young Inuit males who, often frustrated and angry at the lack of employment, search for relief in alcohol and drugs. This in turn leads to crime and violence (Mitchell and Tobin 1999: 23).

¹¹¹ The traditional economy in Nunavut contributes to soften the impact of the high cost of living.

¹¹² There are two other mines located in the same region on the NWT side of the border. Canada is currently ranked as the third diamond producer in the world.

Mine (lead and zinc), Mountain Lake (uranium), Doris North and Meadowbank (gold). All are located close to the NWT border where winter roads linking the proposed mines to Yellowknife can be constructed at reasonable costs. Much hope is riding on mining, which could create 1,500 jobs over the next decade.¹¹³ There are also vast reserves of oil and gas, which lie beneath Nunavut's lands and sea; but the tremendous logistical difficulties of extracting these resources and transporting those to southern markets have thus far prevented sustained efforts at developing them.¹¹⁴

The Decentralization Initiative

Unquestionably the most unusual organizational feature of the Nunavut Government is its strong administrative decentralization. The desire to adopt a decentralized model rested mainly on two factors. First, decentralization spreads the economic benefits of well-paid government employment around the territory. Second, decentralization keeps with Inuit political culture, which prefers government to be as close to the people as possible.¹¹⁵ Ultimately, the main goal of decentralization was to provide training and employment to residents in smaller communities.

The decentralization initiative that saw the transfer of over 700 government employees in 10 small communities outside the capital Iqaluit was completed within three years after the election of the first government: "Premier Paul Okalik promised that he would distribute about 700 headquarters jobs among 10 selected communities. For good or for ill, he was true to his word" (Nunatsiaq News 2005a).

The success of decentralization depended on having trained personnel available in the designated communities. But in many instances government could not employ the local population because of lack of training on the part of the applicants. Often, staff

¹¹³ It is estimated that even fully developed those mines would not be able to bring more than 100 million dollars to government in royalties (Clinton and Vail 2005).

¹¹⁴ It is estimated that Nunavut holds about 35 percent of Canada's oil and gas reserves. Those reserves are located in the High Arctic Islands (Clinton and Vail 2005: 44).

¹¹⁵ In traditional Inuit societies the basic social unit was the family and the camps, which usually consisted of several families (20 to 50 people). Each camp had a 'leader', who had superior hunting abilities and who led the decision-making process of the camp. Camp governance was a flexible system based on consensus. Led by their 'leader', Inuit took decisions affecting camp life by proposing a point of view and then modifying it through discussions until general agreement (*i.e.*, *consensus*) was achieved (Creery 1993: 108).

located in the capital Iqaluit was asked to move into smaller and remote communities. By bringing candidates from outside the communities, it defeated one of the purposes of the decentralization plan, *i.e.*, employment for the local residents of the community.

The government's plan to decentralize quickly met with both problems and criticism. There were not enough staff homes in the communities to house the incoming staff. Often employees located in the capital Iqaluit did not wish to move to more remote communities, so resistance to decentralization was constant. Large number of employees working in the capital and being asked to move to smaller communities simply chose to retire or quit. This hurt government's ability to provide efficient services: "When Nunavut residents try to get services from their government, they're too often confronted with incompetence and confusion. ... It's clear that many employees still don't know what they're doing, and that some departments are still suffering from the effects of decentralization" (Nunatsiaq News 2005b).

The Implementation of the NLCA

In September 1993, a Nunavut Implementation Panel was established with membership from the federal and territorial governments and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. to oversee, to provide direction, and to monitor the implementation of the NLCA. Talks on a new implementation contract started in 2001, but collapsed in 2004. As for the Panel, it ceased its function when funding stopped in 2003.

In a report published in 2003, Canada's Auditor General, Sheila Fraser, indicated that the purpose of the NLCA was about clarifying Inuit rights to lands and resources in a way that will help the economic growth and self-sufficiency of the Inuit (Fraser 2003: 19). Fraser pointed out that Canada has a tendency to focus solely on the letter of the obligations of the NLCA, appearing not to take into account the objectives or the spirit and intent of the agreement. She added: "INAC seems focussed on fulfilling the letter of the land claims implementation plans but not the spirit. Officials may believe that they have met their obligations, but in fact they have not worked to support the full intent of the land claims agreement" (Fraser 2003: 1).

Fuzzy, nearly meaningless words found throughout the NLCA present the biggest problem in figuring out how much to spend on the public boards. The last ten-year implementation contract for the land claims agreement expired on July 9, 2003. The public boards are currently funded according to the 2001 funding formula. This does not respond to the current financial demands. So, on December 6, 2006, NTI filed a lawsuit against the Government of Canada for 'breach of contract' (NTI 2006). NTI is asking for 1 billion dollars in damages and repairs based on what NTI alluded is the non-successful implementation of the NLCA.

Ilippallianginnarniq: 'continuing learning'

Under this heading the federal government's objective is to provide a full range of education programs in Inuktitut by 2020. The goal is for the education curriculum to reflect Inuit culture and values. Education is the second major commitment of the Government of Nunavut (the other is housing). This priority arises from the fact that Inuit need to be trained urgently to run the government. The *Bathurst Mandate* predicts that Inuit will have taken leadership roles in government and will be an important part of the Nunavut workforce by 2020 (Nunavut 2004a: 15). Education is the sole subject matter expressed in this fourth and final category of actions.

The residential education system of the 1950s was replaced, in the 1960s, by a community-based education system. The generation of Inuit, who followed the earlier Inuit generation of students assigned to residences, did not have the same education conditions.¹¹⁶ These Inuit children lived at home while they attended school. They went to school in the communities.¹¹⁷ They did not acquire either the tradition or the formal education possessed by the earlier generation of students, many of who became the first Inuit political leaders. They found it very difficult to live on the land, to develop a career, or to complete a higher education. They became, in a sense, a lost generation. Today,

¹¹⁶ In the mid-1950s, the Canadian government built two residential schools in the North (Churchill, Chesterfield Inlet). These schools were strict. Inuit children spent the winters in schools and the summer out on the land with their parents. They lived in two worlds. These students acquired a good understanding of Euro-Canadian culture while maintaining a strong Inuit traditional education on the land. Many became the future leaders who took the cause of Nunavut forward. In the 1960s, the residential education system was replaced with a community-based education system (Creery 1993).

¹¹⁷ Today, all 28 Nunavut communities are equipped with modern primary and secondary schools.

their children suffer from high numbers of school drop out (75 percent of Inuit children do not complete their high school).¹¹⁸ The drop out rate is linked to Nunavut's current unhappy incidence of crimes, drugs and family violence: "The children who drop out have not developed the skills to live off the land, neither do they have employment skills. So they are caught between two worlds" (Berger 2006: v).

Since the mid-1960s, with less than 25 percent of Inuit children graduating from high school (grade 12), the challenge has become how to close the gap between the low level of training of most Inuit and the level of training required to build Nunavut.¹¹⁹ The problems of Nunavut education system include: a lack of Inuit teachers; the use of English as the main medium of instruction; a curriculum foreign to the Inuit culture; the inability of non-Inuit teachers to communicate effectively with their Inuit students in a culturally compatible way (Berger, Ross-Epp, Moller 2006).

The most important issue in education is the culture of the schools and the language of instruction. Teachers from the South have been recruited to teach in Nunavut schools without adequate training to teach in a cross-cultural setting with curriculum simply adopted from southern provinces (Berger, Ross-Epp, Moller 2006: 188). Often cultural differences between the teachers and the students become boundaries. There is an urgent need for large numbers of Inuit teachers throughout the Nunavut's school system.¹²⁰ Currently, there are no grades 1 to 12 curriculum that combines Inuit and non-Inuit perspectives and no teaching tools that reflect an Inuit perspective. Misunderstandings and frustrations occur with ensuing management problems, underachievement, lateness, frequent absences and dropping out (Berger, Ross-Epp, Moller 2006: 201).

In Nunavut Inuktitut material resources are limited to early grades (1 to 4). Nunavut's educational curriculum was inherited from the NWT which itself copied its education system from the southern province of Alberta. In grade 5, Inuktitut is

¹¹⁸ The high drop out rates occur after grade 9 once students encounter the more difficult high school curriculum, and once they are no longer obligated to attend school after the age of 16 (Berger, Ross-Epp, Moller 2006).

¹¹⁹ Only 30 percent of adult Inuit possess an education higher than grade 10; 1 percent of Inuit hold university degrees (INAC 2003: 3).

¹²⁰ Only 38 percent of the 573 teachers in Nunavut are Inuit. There are no Inuit teachers beyond grade 10. Southern teachers usually do not stay in Nunavut more than two years because of the high cost of living and geographic isolation (Hicks 2005: 14).

abandoned as the sole language of instruction, and Inuit children are introduced suddenly to English as the sole language of instruction. Once children leave the Inuktitut-only grades (1-4), and take on higher grades in English only (5-12), many of them feel lost. This change of language instruction causes a rift during a critical phase of a child language skills development.

After grade four, the curriculum does not recognize that most students' first language is not English; neither does it reflect Nunavut's Arctic environment. This often creates an anachronous situation as expressed by a Nunavut teacher: "Here I am reading a story about little squirrels jumping from tree to tree...a lot of these kids don't ever see trees...you have to explain what a tree is, then you have to explain what a squirrel is, by then they have lost the flow of the whole story" (Berger, Ross-Epp, Moller 2006: 190). The current Nunavut education system produces young adults who cannot function properly in either English (because they were unable to catch up to the English curriculum) or Inuktitut (because they learned only a childhood version of their mother tongue).¹²¹ In the end, it appears that Nunavut schools are essentially foreign institutions delivering a foreign curriculum in a foreign language.

Without an efficient Inuktitut curriculum education from grades 1 to 12, the prospect of establishing Inuktitut as the working language of Nunavut seems to be remote at best: "How long would the French Language survive in the province of Québec, the only French-speaking jurisdiction in North America, if Québécois children were educated in English from Grade 4 on?!" (Hicks 2005: 15).

In March 2006, the Berger Report (Berger 2006) proposed to revise drastically the current education system to improve school attendance and education levels. Berger proposed that children from Kindergarten to grade 4 should study entirely in their mother tongue. Focus in Inuktitut in the classroom would ensure students possess a good knowledge and wide understanding of their first language. An English second language program should also be an important component of primary schooling education so that students can be brought up to speed before entering bilingual grade 5 classes. Such a bilingual program would continue up to graduation time at grade 12.

¹²¹ Even among graduates 88 percent cannot read or write in Inuktitut or English well enough to work in government (Thompson 2006).

Berger argues that a bilingual system will solve the current deficiencies (Berger 2006: vi). Inuktitut would continue to be the language of instruction from grades 1 to 4. Starting in grade 5, both Inuktitut and English would be languages of instruction right through grade 12. The report concludes that only a massive spending (20 million dollars per year, over ten years) from the Canadian government will ensure the success of education in Nunavut (Berger 2006: 59). The 'Berger Proposal' faces at least three serious obstacles. First, Canada has already indicated that it will not contribute the additional annual education investment costs of 20 million dollars to implement the plan; second there is a shortage of teachers able to speak Inuktitut;¹²² third, the lack of material resources in Inuktitut beyond grade 4 is quite apparent.

As we have seen, the current source of the problem in the Nunavut education system lies in the shortage of qualified Inuit human resources, the lack of material resources in Inuktitut, and the use of a curriculum agenda foreign to Inuit environment and society. To alleviate the high drop out rate,¹²³ there would be a need to train additional Inuit teachers and to create a complete Inuktitut curriculum with adequate material resources. The 'Berger Proposal' may be part of the solution but the Government of Canada has yet to respond to it.

Conclusion

On April 1, 1999, Nunavut became an interesting example, and reason of hope, for many worldwide Indigenous groups who aspire to greater political autonomy within nation-states (Jull 1993). However, beneath its shell of political autonomy, Nunavut faces enormous challenges: high birth rates, a young work force with high levels of unemployment and dependence on social assistance, low educational levels, high costs for goods, inadequate public services and public housing, poor health conditions, escalating rates of substance abuse, violence, suicide, and high levels of incarceration.

The ultimate challenge for Nunavut is to develop a sound economy so as to provide better programs and services to all Nunavummiut. However, developing a

¹²² In 2000, only 25 percent of teachers in Nunavut could speak Inuktitut fluently (NTI 2004: 14).

¹²³ Recent attempts to boost school attendance through increase physical activity courses and pre-trades programs have met with mix results (George 2007).

healthy economy in a region where communities are confronted with little economic bases, high living expenses, lack of qualified labour, absence of markets, difficulty in obtaining raw resources and punishing transportation costs makes such a task next to impossible.

Nunavummiut are now complaining about the unfulfilled promises of Nunavut: “Many residents are not happy with the Nunavut project, for many years Nunavut’s western region received better services from Yellowknife than they now get from Iqaluit” (Nunatsiaq News 2005b). Mary Inuktaluk, delegate at the Inuit Baffin Region Association, told Premier Okalik that: “...people are finding their health care and education systems have deteriorated since 1999. Now that we’re Nunavut, we seem to have more problems than when we were the Northwest Territories” (Inuktaluk 2004). Peter Irniq, Commissioner of Nunavut, recently said that: “...the creation of Nunavut was to have helped reduce stress for all residents of Nunavut. It seems things have changed from the original dream of Nunavut” (Irniq 2006).

In fact, one may argue that the only real success of the ‘Nunavut Project’, to this day, has been the Inuit reassertion of their collective identity (Légaré 2007: 113-115). This was expressed by Inuit leaders, such as John Amagoalik, and by Canada’s Head of State, Governor General Adrienne Clarkson in the following way: “...I think its been basically a change in a sense of identity Clarkson said. People can stand up and say ‘I’m from Nunavut’. That means something...and you sense that. People feel that identity” (Minogue 2005). John Amagoalik asserted that: “...we are a distinct society, the Nunavut government will have the responsibility of protecting and preserving that distinct society” (Lanken and Vincent 1999: 46).

As demonstrated by the Nunavut case, political autonomy should not be seen as an end in itself; rather it is a means of overcoming poverty, alcoholism, unemployment, inadequate housing, family violence, and suicide that are all too prevalent in Canada’s Arctic¹²⁴. Through the ‘Nunavut Project’ Inuit are trying to reclaim their sense of cultural

¹²⁴ Canada is not the only circumpolar country confronted with these social woes. Northern Russia, Alaska and Greenland also encounter high rates of social problems. In Greenland, for example, the rate of death by suicide per 100,000 persons, in 2000, was at approximately 100 while it was less than 5 in Denmark. Nunavut’s familiar social issues also occur in Greenland i.e., alcohol abuse, family violence, high educational drop out levels, alarming suicide rates, social apathy (Hicks, Bjerregaard, Berman 2007: 45-48).

pride and to improve their social and economic conditions. These viable goals have been well illustrated in the *Bathurst Mandate*. However, the current socio-economic realities have shown that the vision for a prosperous Nunavut by the year 2020 is evidently as far away from reality today as it was in the 1970s, when young Inuit leaders made their first claim for political autonomy.

The NLCA and the *Nunavut Act* gave the Inuit the legal jurisdictional and political tools to confront the social challenges of Inuit society. However, Nunavut's fiscal dependency on Canada and its weak economy have affected the successful implementation of the 'Nunavut Project'. Nunavut today is economically not self-sufficient and unable to alleviate its social issues. The socio-economic crisis confronted by Nunavummiut is made worse through the shortcomings of both land claim implementation commitments and the lack of financial resources made available by Canada to the Government of Nunavut to meet its obligations.

In summary, the NLCA remains the most far-reaching land, resources, and self-determination agreement negotiated between an Aboriginal group and the Canadian government. However, only time will tell the full story of Nunavut, for the real test lies in its implementation. For now, though, the current socio-economic plight of Nunavut does not bode well for the future. The vision of a viable Nunavut society by the year 2020, as expressed through the Bathurst Mandate, seems to be, at least for now, an illusion.

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Figure 4.1

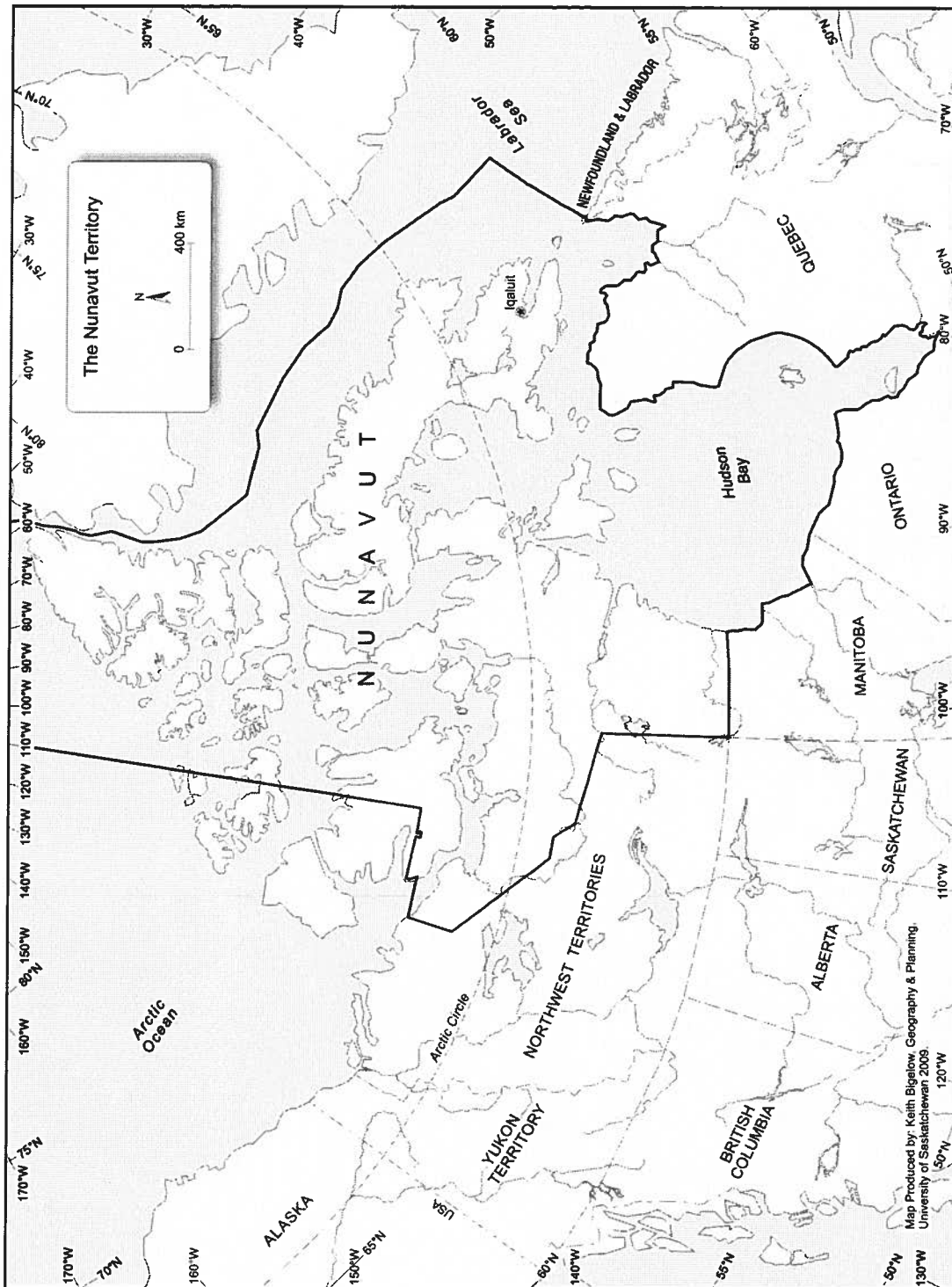
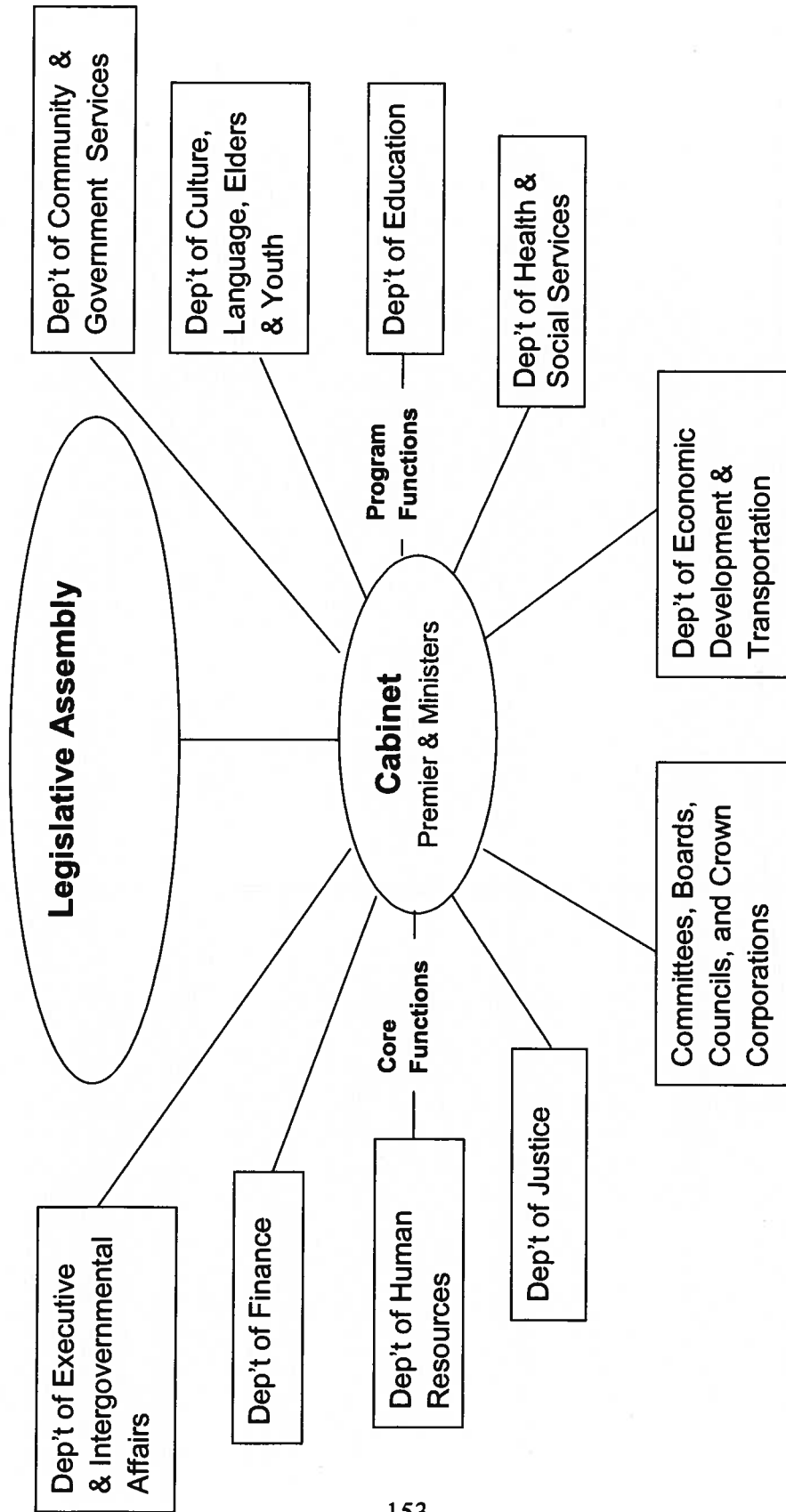


Figure 4.2: Government of Nunavut Organizational Chart



5. CONCLUSION

My thesis contributes to the development of literature on regional identity by exploring the impact of the Nunavut Project on Inuit identity. To better understand the concepts of region and regional identity, I explore, through a regionalization model, how they are socially constructed. My research explored how regions are socially constructed by political leaders and activists (actors) who attempt through their narratives to promote a common collective regional consciousness through symbols embedded in Inuit's socio-cultural traits. I argue that these traits are largely based on the region's natural environment (i.e., arctic climate, arctic wildlife), and how Inuit have coped with these unique environmental conditions (e.g., hunting tools - ulu, housing - igloo, transportation – kayak, cairns - inuksuit). The Inuit language is also a reflection of its environment (e.g., there are over 40 words to describe the different forms of snow). These socio-cultural practices are highlighted by actors, used as symbols, and portrayed as unique to Inuit and particular to Nunavut so as to bring a distinction between 'us' (Inuit of Nunavut) and 'them' (e.g., Dene of the NWT).

Thus, through the reconstruction of Inuit collective identity, one can see the interconnection between boundaries, symbols and collective identity; their construction occurs simultaneously and is mediated by actors through the media. I suggest that with the continued emergence of Nunavut governmental institutions (e.g., Department of Education, Department of Culture and Language, etc.), one should expect the progressive growth of regional identity narratives addressed to, and as provided by, the Inuit of the Central and Eastern Arctic.

My research also highlights a number of important factors in regards to the governance by NTI. First, NTI is a highly centralized institution whose organizational structure is based on Euro-Canadian state government models. Second, tensions between NTI and the RIAs, which are responsible for the management of different facets of Inuit owned lands, will likely continue. Third, funding from NTI to the NHSP has helped increased wildlife harvesting activities. Fourth, in reviewing recent political agreements between NTI and the Government of Nunavut, it appears that NTI is the real power broker in Nunavut. In this context, the Government of Nunavut has taken the habit of

consulting regularly with NTI so as to avoid any political imbroglios that may be detrimental to the territorial government. Finally, relations between NTI and Canada remain tense over the implementation of the NLCA.

I note that even though the implementation of the NLCA and the creation of the Government of Nunavut gave the Inuit the legal, jurisdictional and political tools to confront their socio-economic challenges, Nunavut's fiscal dependency on Canada and its weak economy have harmed the success of the Government of Nunavut's social programs and services since Nunavut has limited funds to allocate for social programs and services. In a healthier economy Nunavut would be better equip to put additional funds for these programs and services. Because of a lack of economic self-sufficiency Nunavut finds it hard to alleviate its social issues.

My review of current cultural, social and economic issues faced by the Government of Nunavut shows that political autonomy alone is not a panacea and does not necessarily bring a quick cure to all the socio-economic woes faced by a society. In sum, political autonomy does not equate to socio-economic autonomy or self-sufficiency. Rather, one should see the creation of the Government of Nunavut as simply an empowering tool to put the Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic in a better position to overcome these socio-economic challenges.

In fact, it appears that in the end the ultimate challenge for Nunavut is to develop a sound economy so as to provide better programs and services to all Nunavummiut. However, developing a healthy economy in a region so remote from main southern markets, confronted with significant transportation challenges due to its geographic isolation, and with limited trained human resources makes this a task quite difficult.

All three manuscripts demonstrate that the 'Nunavut Project' has had a significant impact on the Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. The narratives aimed at increasing a common form of regional collective identity for the Inuit of the Central and Eastern Arctic, where none existed before, is growing. Through NTI, the Inuit are taking on more political responsibilities in administering the land, the resources, and harvesting programs. While there is still a long way to go before improving the socio-economic conditions of the Inuit, the creation of the Government of Nunavut is also providing the opportunity to the Inuit to make decisions in the area of social program and delivery. In

sum, I contend that the realization of the 'Nunavut Project' is today reshaping Inuit identity, Inuit governance, and Inuit society.

The Regionalization Model: A Contribution to Regional Geography

The central contribution of my thesis centred on the development of a conceptual model aimed at explaining the construction of regions and the formation of regional identities. My goal is to provide a contribution to the development of regional geography by exploring the construction of Nunavut as a region and as a spatial referent for collective identity. The thesis also provides a valuable contribution to the existing literature on Inuit society, governance, and identity in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic.

Figure 2.3 discussed in the introduction chapter and in the first manuscript of my thesis depicts the process surrounding the construction of a region and the formation of a regional identity. The model illustrates the interactions between collective identity, symbols and boundaries in the (re)construction of a region and of a regional identity.

Building upon the work done by new regional geographers (Stoddart 1987; Holmen 1995; Paasi 1996; Wood 2001), I propose to expand on the concepts explored by Gilbert (1988) around new regional geography. To do so, I introduce a triangular relation between society, culture and nature where a region represents a socio-spatial unit into which inhabitants are socialized. In this context a region becomes the cradle of collective identity. I call this form of new regional geography, "the regional geographies of identity". I argue that the regional geographies of identity assumes that regions are socially constructed by political leaders and activists (actors) who attempt through their narratives to construct a region and to promote a common collective regional consciousness embedded in people's socio-cultural traits. I further argue that these traits are based on characteristics found not only in people's society and culture, but also in the region's natural environment. My proposed regionalization model helps conceptualize, through the Nunavut case, how the regional geographies of identity operate; this process is illustrated in the first manuscript of my thesis.

The settlement of Inuit into communities, the introduction of the education system and most importantly the negotiation process, fostered by Canada's comprehensive land claims policy that led to the creation of Nunavut, engendered a sense of large-scale regional collective identity among Inuit. As I have explored in the first manuscript of this thesis, before the 1960s, Inuit identified themselves on the basis of small-scale cultural collective identities (Mitchell 1996). In traditional Inuit societies identity occurred mainly at small-scale levels (i.e., cultural spaces) supported and guided by ancestry, kinship networks, language-dialects, and an intimate relation with the land through harvesting activities (Creery 1993; Muller-Wille 2001). As a consequence of Inuit land claims negotiations, the regionalization of the Inuit of the Central and Eastern Arctic led to the construction of a region (Nunavut) and to the formation of a new regional consciousness (Inuit of Nunavut, Nunavummiut). So, Inuit are in a sense inventing or re-inventing their identity in terms that are relevant to the nature of their interactions with Qallunaat (Briggs 1997: 229).

In the end though, we do not generally see the completion of the regionalization process, since any new collective identity remains contested by some, and because such a construction usually takes a longer period of time to be completed than a researcher's lifetime. Henderson reflecting on the 2004 Nunavut household survey noted that many Inuit still identify themselves primarily through their traditional cultural groupings (17percent), while 58 percent identify as Inuit and 12 percent as Nunavummiut (Henderson 2007: 155-156).

Finally, it should be remembered that this proposed model does not pretend to explain all forms of collective identity formation. It is however, I believe, a relevant theoretical model for interpreting the creation of Nunavut and the formation of a regional identity in the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic.

Future research directions

In each of the themes treated here (i.e., collective identity, governance, socio-economic issues) additional inquiry would contribute to an increase understanding on how the construction of Nunavut has impacted the Inuit of the Canadian Central and

Eastern Arctic. Any additional research on Nunavut may also contribute to the development of the field of new regional geography.

My first manuscript explored how actors' narratives attempt to reconstruct Inuit collective identity. It would be of interest to trace how these narratives are perceived by the general Inuit population; it would also be of interest to know what would be the primary collective identity referent of the Inuit e.g., Canada, Nunavut, their village community, their traditional cultural groups, etc. This could be accomplished through a territory-wide survey on collective identity and through sample interviews, using an open-ended methodology, with some Inuit 'ordinary residents' of Nunavut. The results of such a survey, along with the accumulated interviews, could lead to a reinterpretation of our proposed model on the process of collective identity construction (Figure 2.3). Indeed, any such research may demonstrate that the 'ordinary Inuit residents' of Nunavut may not identify themselves on a primarily regional basis (i.e., Nunavummiut) but rather could choose to identify themselves on a cultural basis without any regional political referent (i.e., Inuit), on a regional basis with a strong cultural referent (i.e., Inuit of Nunavut), or on the basis of small scale cultural groups (e.g., Iglulingmiut). On the other hand, a territory-wide research with 'ordinary residents' could also reveal that a growing number of Inuit view themselves primarily as Nunavummiut, rather than Inuit, thus reinforcing the premise of our proposed model. In sum, any such research could make a significant contribution to the theoretical concepts of region formation and regional identity construction.

My second manuscript examined Inuit governance in Nunavut. I believe that it would be beneficial to further explore the decision-making process of NTI through interviews with NTI political leaders and staff, as well as with some leaders from the RIAs. Such interviews would help to better comprehend the relations between NTI and the RIAs. Similar interviews may also be conducted with politicians and officials from the Government of Nunavut to help delineate the dynamic between NTI and the Government of Nunavut. In addition, the review of recent agreements between NTI and the Government of Nunavut may also shed some additional light in regards to the political interactions between the two political structures. Finally, it would also be of interest to know how NTI, and its associated organizations, are perceived by the Inuit

beneficiaries of the NLCA. As I noted in my research, in the past, some beneficiaries have complained about the NTI decision-making process, election process, and the fact that NTI leaders are sometimes viewed as a highly paid elitist group disconnected from the 'ordinary beneficiaries'. To demonstrate if this is indeed the case, further interviews at grass-root levels would be needed. Finally, there is still little research on Inuit wildlife harvesting activities in Nunavut and in the Canadian Arctic in general; any inquiry in this area would be beneficial and would bring an important empirical contribution to the theme of Inuit sustainable economy.

My last manuscript assessed the socio-economic plight of Inuit society over the past ten years and how Nunavut may have improved the social realities of the Inuit. This research could be further developed by examining more completely each of the themes raised i.e., language, health, education, housing, etc. Nunavut is still a young jurisdiction battling against a number of social woes. In addition, it has a high birth rate and a young population with limited education. More and more policy initiatives are being proposed (e.g., new education act, new language act, new housing policies) and these would require on-going assessment by scholars. To know their long-term effect on the Inuit population of Nunavut would be beneficial so as to better comprehend how social issues are being dealt with in contemporary Inuit society. On the other hand, as new metal and energy resources are discovered in the Arctic, Nunavut's economy is bound to improve. A survey of the different kinds of economic activities (e.g., mineral explorations) present in Nunavut should be conducted. Research on possible economic development avenues that may best benefit Nunavut's economy should also be explored. There is still too little research done on the economy of Nunavut.

In conclusion, I believe that this thesis has contributed to our understanding of Nunavut as a 'region'. It has showed how Inuit elite perceive their region and reshape it around a regional identity theme, how Inuit governance is conducted, and how socio-economic issues present in contemporary Inuit society are being tackled. As demonstrated by my research, I argue that the 'Nunavut Project' has had a significant impact on the Inuit of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. My research has some limitations and may have benefited from interviews with 'elite Inuit actors' and with 'Inuit ordinary residents'. However, despite these shortcomings, I hope that this thesis

has contributed to a better understanding of the 'Nunavut Project' and its continued impact on the Inuit identity, governance, and society.

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