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Foreign Bodies: the Etiology of Nunavut Governance

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

to

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
Ottawa, Canada
July, 2010

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Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-71731-8
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-71731-8

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Canada

For Marianne

Abstract

Traditional concepts of cultural encounter and the dominant/subaltern paradigm cannot account for the origins, design and formations of governance of the political territory of Nunavut, proclaimed on April 1, 1999. Multiple sites of contestation brought Qallunaat (non-Inuit) institutions and institutional thinking, materials, technology and political processes into relation with shared traditions and world-views of people who were, until relatively recently, organized into small nomadic hunting bands. Nunavut is a complex of the resulting articulations.

“Foreign bodies” such as the Westminster system of government and the public service may eventually become “vernacularized,” while in turn altering that vernacular. This is reflected in the local emphasis upon *Inuit Qaujimaqatunqangit*, a codification of traditional lived Inuit values and practices. Currently, however, incommensurable elements jostle uncomfortably. Present-day Nunavut is not the conclusion of a linear process, but the expression of many contingent processes, some as yet unfinished.

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Abbreviations used in the text

AIP	Agreement in principle
GNWT	Government of the Northwest Territories
ITC	Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (later the ITK)
ITK	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
IQ	Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit
NCF	Nunavut Constitutional Forum
NIC	Nunavut Implementation Commission
NLCA	Nunavut Land Claims Agreement
NPA	Nunavut Political Accord
NTI	Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
NWT	Northwest Territories
OIC	Office of the Interim Commissioner
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
NEU	Nunavut Employees Union
NPSA	Nunavut Public Service Act
TFN	Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut (later the NTI)

Preface

Young Inuit women in Igloolik went to their high school prom in style this year. The Ottawa Inuit community was “quick to respond” to a request from the students of Ataguttaaleuk High School for prom dresses: a network quickly formed to make it happen. The Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre and other volunteers, with the assistance of Ottawa-based Fairy Godmother Inc., gathered 200 gowns—far more than required, to allow the young women a choice—and Canadian North Airlines shipped them to Igloolik for free. (Finding sufficient suits and ties for the boys proved more of a challenge.)

The President of the Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre, Jolene Bursey, said: “If we can do whatever we can to enhance the lives of children, whether they are in Ottawa or up North, we will do whatever we can to better their lives. To make sure they have an extra-special day is important to us.”¹

Is this yet another iteration of the classically described dominant-subaltern relationship: the Inuit donning the Qallunaat² master’s clothing at once literally and metaphorically, outward forms mirroring their progressive assimilation as subjects? Are the gowns, alive with signification, wearing the bodies in this well-worn North American rite of passage?

¹ “Igloolik teens await shipments of prom dresses via Ottawa.” *Ottawa Citizen*, April 24, 2010. <http://www.ottawacitizen.com/life/Igloolik+teens+await+shipments+prom+dresses+Ottawa/2946684/story.html> [May 1, 2010]

² I shall be using the Inuktitut term “Qallunaat,” sing. “Qallunaak” for “non-Inuit/non-Inuk” throughout this study, in preference to the misleading and frankly Eurocentric expressions “Euro-Canadian” or “European Canadian.”

One is reminded of John Berger's well-known analysis of "Three Farmers on Their Way to a Dance," a photograph by August Sander. The suit, a bourgeois invention, is not designed for the muscular bodies of men accustomed to demanding physical labour. The three young men look awkward in their attire, even deformed: but as Berger notes, "no one had forced the farmers to buy these pieces of clothing, and the trio on their way to a dance are obviously proud of their suits" (Berger, 1974).

There is an ambiguity about the Igloolik prom, however, that casts such hegemonic notions into some doubt. Who, and what, are being assimilated here? Doubtless the imported ritual of the prom represents to some degree an imposition and a willing acquiescence, but it is denying agency and voice to all of the Inuit involved in this project to reduce the matter thus. One can make as strong a case, I believe, that a Qallunaat tradition is being assimilated and re-inscribed. The completion of an academic year has special significance for Nunavummiut (Nunavut people): three-quarters of Nunavut's high school students do not graduate.³ The prom, then, marks not only a transition, but a significant achievement in a society that is deeply traumatized.⁴ But it is my view that concepts of assimilation, the dominant-subaltern paradigm and other representations of

³ "One-quarter of Nunavut students finish high school, stats suggest." CBC news, June 27, 2007. On-line: <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2007/06/27/nu-gradrates.html> (accessed May 30, 2010).

⁴As Thomas Berger noted in 2006: "In 1995, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, in a report to the U.N. Committee on Human Rights, fairly summed up the condition of Nunavut today. He wrote:

"The overall health of Inuit continues to lag far behind that of other Canadians. Life expectancy is ten years lower than the rest of Canada. Many health indicators are getting worse. Arctic research shows that changes in traditional diets lead to increased health problems, particularly of mental health, characterized by increased rates of depression, seasonal affective disorder, anxiety and suicide. Inuit leaders are deeply concerned that the housing, education, health and suicide situation have reached crisis proportions and are not being addressed by the federal government."

power relations are inadequate to the task of mapping Inuit/Qallunaat relations. In this thesis I shall be exploring the introduction of forms of governance—“foreign bodies”—into Nunavut, which came into force upon the official creation of the territory on April 1, 1999. Specifically I shall be examining the deliberations of the Nunavut Implementation Commission, the involvement of Nunavummiut in the design of their governance, and two institutions in particular—the Nunavut legislature and the Nunavut public service. While not ignoring the obvious unequal power relations between Nunavummiut and the Canadian state, I have found it more useful to employ notions of encounter, juxtaposition, engagement and articulation (Weiss, 1996: 149, 219) in describing the coming into being of these forms and institutions.

If politics is the art of the possible, resilient Nunavummiut have understood and practised this art with tremendous skill for decades. The Nunavut project, the result of patient and complex negotiations, is well under way. And yet the “foreign bodies” come with their own specific scripts: those who are engaged in the institutions perform institutional roles and speak with institutional voices. While encounters with Qallunaat—missionization, implication in a money economy through the fur trade, the sedentarization of the 1950s (with traumatic population transfers)—have replicated, if inexactly, the toxic effects of colonization elsewhere, Nunavummiut now find themselves in what is for them uncharted territory, with more freedom to decide and to act, but within a context that is new and not entirely of their own making.

In what I hope is a modest contribution to Nunavut studies, I depart first of all from conventional (and in my view reductive) notions of colonialism (Brody, 1975; Loukacheva, 2007), and in fact I am inclined to agree with Jack Hicks that the concept of an “internal colony” is a metaphorical construction (Hicks, 2006), if one of polemical and strategic value (Bush, 2008: 146; Hicks, 2006, citing Kristian Stokke and Anne Kirsti Ryntveit: 8).

Hicks cites V. Satzewich and T. Wotherspoon, who note that, in the Nunavut context, the concept “tends to assume that the aboriginal and white are homogeneous groups,” and implicitly assumes that “all whites have similar interests in relation to the maintenance of an internal colonial relationship with aboriginal peoples, and that all aboriginal peoples have a singular set of economic, social and political interests that revolve around resistance to internal colonial domination” (Hicks, 2006: 9).

It is precisely that homogenization (with its implicit essentialism) that I am attempting to avoid as it presents itself in the literature in its various guises, particularly in the ubiquitous notion of “culture” (e.g., Brody, 1975; Dorais, 1995; Briggs, 1997). A “culture”—and here I place that term under erasure—is not a monad (Spiro, 1994: 56), nor is it homogeneous (Robinson, 2003: 113). So what is “it?”

The concept, in my view, obscures actual lived relations between and among people by reifying those relations to the point of granting them and their products (rather than the people themselves) a kind of agency—implicit, for instance, in the companion notion of

“self-determination” (e.g., Loukacheva, 2007; Légaré, 2008). This is compounded, of course, by the use of phrases like “the Inuit” and a “unique Inuit identity” and the reification of “Nunavut,” as in “[B]oth Greenland and Nunavut are looking forward to a greater measure of autonomy in regaining control over their affairs” (Loukacheva, 2007: 29, 32).

One might also note the implicit idea of a culture frozen in time when, for example, Hugh Brody writes that if the “intrusion of the dominant society” can be minimized, the “Eskimos of the Eastern Arctic will be able to live in ways that reflect their own preferences” (Brody, 1975, 229), and the suggestion of a “fading culture” in Kevin McMahon’s account (McMahon, 1988: 246).

The term “hybridity” (Shields, 1996; Moquin, 2007; Gold, 2007; Smith, 2008) appears to offer a way out of more or less fixed concepts of “culture,” but in my view complicates the picture without resolving the initial dilemma. No matter how much care is taken, it suggests more or less bounded wholes in collision or embrace, and even the creation of new ones.

Floya Anthias puts the matter squarely in her trenchant critique of “hybridity”:

[I]ronically, hybridity arguments need to stress the retention of part of a cultural heritage (that is, the continuities involved), if they are able to identify the cultural identity which is then merged with other aspects to form an organic whole (Anthias, 2001: 620-1).

She goes on to refer to “the residual elements of essentialization and culturalism retained within the concept of ‘hybridities,’” and argues that “it has not been able convincingly to move away from old notions of culture and ethnicity which still lie at its heart” (Anthias, 2001: 634, 637).

Anthias’ main concern, however, is that the concept effaces power differences and social inequality (Anthias, 2001: 638). Indeed, addressing a concept she calls the “internal colony hybrid,” Smith argues, problematically, that the “hybrid identity bridges the space between colonizer and colonized” (Smith, 2008: 9).

My own approach in this study might be seen as susceptible to the same critique. As indicated earlier, I argue for a more fluid notion of power that escapes the dominant/subaltern model, one that stresses the agency of Inuit throughout. I believe that the various impositions of Qallunaat upon the Inuit inhabitants of the Eastern Arctic since contact are obviously insufficient to explain the formation of the political territory called Nunavut.

In looking at current institutions of governance, I find it more useful to use notions such as “discomfort,” “jostling” and “friction” to describe the myriad difficult and complex interactions between people whose worldviews, histories, values, traditions, social structures and languages are to a greater or lesser degree incommensurable in the Kuhnian sense.

It must be emphasized that even this formulation runs the risk of conceptually freezing the constant flux that is “culture,” its ever-shifting elements continuously discarded, appropriated, borrowed, translated, reinscribed. And mass communications and the virtual space of the Internet have permitted historically unprecedented information-flows and networks that accelerate these transformations. All of us who participate in this mediated world are in a constant state of culture-shock, mild or severe.

The false notion of cultural evolution has long been abandoned: change has no direction. Cultural practice is *bricolage*, not merely in Levi-Strauss’ sense of the word, but a continual making-do with what one has available, the generation of a never-ending series of assemblages, some chimerical and transitory, others robust and, in Heideggerian terminology, ready-to-hand. The institutions of Nunavummiut governance, examined through this lens, reveal much about the nature of institutions themselves, their form and structure, their internal stresses and strains, and their inherent inertia. But, more specifically, the etiology of these “foreign bodies” and their functioning since 1999 is a complex of subtle contestation, boundary-setting, accommodation and adaptation.

In my thesis I attempt to develop the argument that Nunavut did not arise in a linear, progressive fashion—a clear chain of cause and effect leading from “the past” to “the future,” culminating in a political territory of organically related institutions of governance. I believe that we need to look at the formation and functioning of political territories in a different way, one that avoids disguised (and discredited) notions of social evolution and progress, as well as assumed logical and necessary internal relations.

In my analysis of the creation of Nunavut, I argue instead for the application of the concept of contingently-related elements in Deleuzian *agencements* (“assemblages”). I am not here merely stating the truism that these elements are brought into conjunction *par hazard*. Rather, it is the interrelations that form when these elements are juxtaposed that are of interest. Nunavut is not a conclusion, not a finished product emerging from successful negotiations and careful planning, but a territorialized collocation of elements whose interrelations are both centripetal (e.g., Inuit languages, now given official status) and centrifugal (e.g., “public government” vs. the NTI whose constituency is exclusively Inuit).

The foreign bodies of governance, as I indicate, rub up uncomfortably with local values now codified as *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*. Subject as all such importations are to processes of what Sally Engle Merry calls “vernacularization,” this does not always take place quickly. In the case of Nunavut, what might be termed the tensions of translation continue, and this is not happening only in one direction: the foreign bodies retain their properties and in turn alter the local landscapes and mindscapes.

There is, *pace* Donald Purich, no “story” of Nunavut. The seduction of narrative, its beginning, middle and end, encourages us once again to imagine orderly progress and a conclusion. This thesis, of necessity narrative in form, may in spite of myself reproduce that trope: *caveat lector*.

My study begins (Chapters One and Two) with an introductory overview of the recent history of the Eastern Arctic Inuit (mid-twentieth century) and the events leading up to federal government approval of the new territory of Nunavut. This is followed in Chapter Three by an examination of the work of the Nunavut Implementation Commission, including its recommendations, its interactions with the Nunavummiut in their communities, and the consultation-by-plebiscite that determined Nunavut's capital and its electoral system.

In Chapter Four I turn to interviews conducted with six of the influential people who helped to create the Nunavut of today: former Nunavut Interim Commissioner and later Nunavut MP Jack Anawak, NIC members Peter Irniq and Kenn Harper, NIC research director Jack Hicks, NIC legal counsel John Merritt, and NIC Executive Director (and now Deputy Minister of Nunavut's Department of the Environment) Simon Awa. My purpose is to record their entangled narratives: their backgrounds, what drew them to the tasks they assumed, their accounts of the work, and their visions of the future.

This is followed in Chapter Five by a review of Nunavut ten years after, including an examination of two case studies that I carried out under contract for the Nunavut Employees Union, one dealing with the *Nunavut Public Service Act* and proposed changes to it, and the other a comparison of the *Nunavut Human Rights Act* and attendant institutions with those in other Canadian provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

My final chapter presents my analysis and conclusions. In it, I look again at the manner in which “Nunavut” came into being as a political territory, and attempt to account for its forms of governance. How do such assemblages occur? How much is planning and how much is chance? What holds them together and what threatens their stability? I urge some reconceptualization, both of the manner in which we are accustomed to look at political territories and their formation, using some insights from Gilles Deleuze and Manuel DeLanda, and also in the manner in which we *talk* about them.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, to my late partner, Marianne MacKinnon (MA, Carleton, 2005) who lured me into this tangled web called anthropology and who sustained our mutual interest in it—frequently expressed at the top of our voices, especially when issues of agency and resistance came up.

And my thanks to the professors who did their best to teach me their craft and art. In this connection, Frances Slaney deserves special mention: in her blunt way she made me think, reassess, question and reflect. If she hadn’t set me straight on the agency of Inuit—exploding my patronizing and blanket notions of oppression—this thesis, quite simply, wouldn’t have been written.

Edward Atkinson, the Nunavut Archivist, gave generously of his time, copied and shipped a raft of documentary material to me, and was kind and helpful throughout. My interviewees, Peter Irniq, Simon Awa, Jack Hicks, Jack Anawak, John Merritt and Kenn Harper, were most obliging, and I appreciate their openness and frankness during our discussions. Doug Workman, President of the Nunavut Employees Union, not only

provided me (and Marianne earlier on), the opportunity to examine aspects of Nunavut governance to assist NEU, but gave his permission to use my findings here.

My friend Rozanne Lépine deserves a mention as well: a chance argument between us pointed me to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of assemblages, whose explanatory power is explored in my final chapter.

Finally, my long-suffering thesis supervisors Claudio Aporta and Jared Keil must be acknowledged: Professor Aporta for suggesting this area of interest to me with an oxymoron ("Nunavut is hot!") and Professor Keil, whose classes on indigeneity were of great assistance. I thank them both for their wise guidance, but also for their enormous patience—the mountains long laboured, and I hope have produced more, at long last, than a *ridiculus mus*.

Chapter One

Introduction: a people dis/placed

In 1947, the Bureau of Northwest Territories and Yukon Affairs, Lands, Parks and Forests Services, Department of Mines and Resources, published *The Book of Wisdom for Eskimo*. In both English and Inuktitut, the descendants of people who had inhabited the Arctic for millennia were instructed on such matters as how to avoid and treat frostbite, and the importance of keeping their igloos clean.

The well-meaning authors would not likely have foreseen the proclamation of the territory of Nunavut on April 1, 1999, occupying one-fifth of the Canadian landmass, led by an Inuk premier joined by fourteen other Inuit members in a legislature of nineteen representatives, and buttressed by a comprehensive Inuit land claim finalized in 1993.

Here the discredited socio-cultural evolutionary notion once applied to “primitive” peoples (“their present is our past”) is unintentionally parodied by an apparent evolution in the sophistication of Canadian state actors vis-à-vis the Inuit population. Of course the evolutionary frame—its linearity and its deterministic teleology—inevitably restricts or excludes human agency: and in the case of Qallunaat/Inuit contestation, it offers little or no insight into the field of relations that brought “Nunavut”—a conjuncture of contending forces, perspectives and interests—into being.

We do not have here a simple, linear progression from a stifling paternalism verging on the surreal to a people attempting to take its rightful place in a confederation of equals. The formation of Nunavut was the outcome of a longstanding contestation between Nunavummiut and the federal government of Canada: one that continues to this day, its trajectory shaped by the specific circumstances of the historically unequal relations between the Inuit and the Qallunaat.

The 26 communities of Nunavut are the product of a process of sedentarization that was begun in the late 1940s and continued for more than a decade. The settling of a traditionally nomadic, hunting population in an historical blink of an eye was an outcome of the increasing mutual implication of Inuit and Qallunaat in activities that can be traced back to the first encounters between them.

Over time, Inuit embraced trade and became increasingly involved in and dependent upon a monetary economy, in whaling at first and then fur-trapping. In the early 20th century the Hudson's Bay Company moved north, imposed binding contracts upon Inuit trappers, and transferred Inuit populations around to suit its needs; the degree to which Inuit were willing to relocate is contested. The HBC acted at the same time as a government proxy to dispense relief (Purich, 1992: 34ff; Tester and Kulchyski, 1994: 44).

In parallel and related processes, missionaries arrived to convert the population, to school Inuit children, and to dispense health services on behalf of the government (Purich, 40-41). Police and the courts imposed Qallunaat law upon an initially uncomprehending

population, but the establishment of police outposts was more directly intended to serve the needs of the Canadian state: “It is necessary,” said Lomer Gouin, Canadian Justice Minister and Attorney-General in 1922, “to protect our rights against foreigners; to protect our fisheries, and to take care of our property generally” (cited by Purich, 1992: 38).

Dependency upon trapping made Inuit vulnerable, and with the collapse of the fur trade in the 1930s, during the Great Depression, a survival crisis developed (Bonesteel, 2006: 4, 10). Malnutrition became widespread among the Inuit population, starvation was commonplace,⁵ and this was followed by a widespread outbreak of tuberculosis at the end of World War Two (Bonesteel, 2006: 4, 5,10; Rasing, 1994: 621, 102; Purich, 1992: 42; Tester and Kulchyski, 1994: 44). Under some pressure from American doctors (Purich, 1992: 42), the federal government reluctantly took notice of the appalling situation of the Inuit after the war. With the rationale of providing services more efficiently for these kinship-based bands of hunters of no fixed address, permanent communities were created (Purich, 1992: 42-43). We cannot assume that Inuit, given their recent privations, always resisted the move as the population increased, wage-labour employment took hold and social services became available, but it appears that relocation was not always voluntary (Rasing, 1994: 166; Laugrand, Oosten and Serkoak, 2010: 121-2).

The establishment of some of these communities involved wrenching dislocations of groups of Inuit to the High Arctic that might have been carried out, Tester and Kulchyksi

⁵ In fact, actual starvation persisted into the late 1950s. F.Laugrand, J. Oosten and D. Serkoak provide a horrific account of the suffering, and of racism, official indifference and incompetence in the various relocations of the *Ahiarmiut* group from 1950-1958.

suggest, to affirm Canada's sovereignty there: the Inuit being used, in Tester and Kulchyski's memorable phrase, as "human flagpoles" (1994: 114).

The creation of the hamlets, in any case, was a turning-point in an on-going process of institutionalization of a hunting and gathering society, which had effectively begun after first contact. As a population of Others, Inuit had been seen by government, missionaries and even anthropologists as needing to be brought "into" Canadian society, perhaps not in the crude manner set out by Diamond Jenness in 1947⁶ and more recently by Frances Widdowson (2005: 23), both urging wholesale relocation to the South and assimilation, but through an extended process of discipline. Hence a system of population tracking was imposed (disc numbers⁷), and, as noted missionaries, police and various other actors played their institutional roles. Government bureaucrats imposed administrative rule (see, for example, Henderson, 2007, on the formation of the government of the Northwest Territories) and social and medical workers, too, brought their institutional gaze to bear upon the Inuit population.

Sedentarization also created further dependencies: jobs were scarce, and the education received by the children in residential schools was largely irrelevant to the Northern experience. Referred to offhandedly by police as "semi-educated bums" (Rasing, 1994: 169), the first children of the settlement period reached adolescence in the 1980s,

⁵ "They may disappear as a separate people, as several Indian tribes have disappeared before them: but surely it is preferable that they should succumb struggling for a better life in southern Canada than rotting away in the Arctic on government doles. It is only their distinctive race and culture that will disappear, and these are already vanishing" (Jenness in 1964, quoted in Mitchell, 1996: 321).

⁷ Numbers issued to each man, woman and child among the Inuit population of the Eastern Arctic because Inuit did not customarily use surnames. In the Eastern Arctic these numbers began with "E" and in the Western Arctic, with a "W" (Alia, 1994: 12). "E-numbers" are often mistakenly referred to as "Eskimo numbers."

uneducated in land-skills such as hunting but insufficiently “Western”-educated to equip them for Qallunaat occupations, acculturated in Qallunaat ways just enough to alienate them from their own families (Rasmussen, 2001: 91). A generation gap appeared, and at the same time serious crime began to make its appearance among the Inuit—before 1983, offences against the person had been almost unknown (Rasing, 1994: 276, 217). The high suicide rate already referred to is largely among youth, suffering classical *anomie* (Kral, 2003: 10).

By the end of the 1950s, then, the Inuit of the Eastern Arctic had, in just a few decades, undergone deeply traumatic changes, from a hunting, nomadic life to the ultimately tragic consequences of their implication in the fur trade, and then to relocation into permanent communities. Once living on the land in autonomous bands, they were now subject to a highly regulated existence imposed by the Canadian state—and this was a dis/placement, not only geographical, but *spatial*.

Perhaps a comment by Michel Foucault will suffice to introduce this notion:

The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and [g]naws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogenous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be coloured with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another (Foucault, 1986: 23).

There is a word in Inuktitut—“Inummariit” (sing. “inummarik”)—that signifies “true Inuit,” defining at once a way of knowing and a way of being, while also conveying the notion of becoming (Stairs, 1992: 117f; Dorais, 1995: 300; Brody, 1975: 125-144).

Rasing uses the term to describe Inuit elders (Rasing, 1994: 199-200). As in the case of

“true Scotsmen,” we run the risk of both essentializing and excluding if we advance the notion as somehow defining Inuit in the aggregate, especially today. But as an ideal to which one can aspire—named, described and valued among Inuit—it is reasonable to assume that this form of being-in-the-world has been prominent and significant among the Inuit who found themselves in settled communities, as archaeologist Peter Dawson put it, “almost overnight” (Dawson, 2003b: abstract).

Such “true Inuit” constitute, and are constituted in, a space that differs markedly from the linear, Cartesian space that characterizes (for example) Nunavut settlement layouts. As Arlene Stairs put it in 1992:

Becoming inummarik is a lifelong process of developing correct interaction, through both attitude and skill, with people and animals, community and environment. Inummariit (plural) see themselves as people of particular places and cling to their mobility even in the face of settlement pressures. Inummariit are essentially generous, not out of personal largesse but out of the need to maintain identity through right relationship with the world. ... Inummariit hunt and distribute food not only to eat, but to structure their society, and ultimately to build a cognitive model of the world by which they are defined. This model is expressed in particularly inummarik forms of language, consisting primarily in highly specific naming of people and the non-human environment.

Innumarik identity is progressive; one does not assume the fixed qualities of a bounded person, and others do not describe an absent individual in terms of past behaviour.
(Stairs, 1992: 117-18)

The knowledge here is *embodied* knowledge. In the words of one elder: “I mean, you have to be out on the land in order for you to recognize that you are a part of the Earth” (quoted by Takano, 2005: 14). Well-being—health, happiness, pleasure, freedom, beauty

and quietness, and healing—are connected to being-on-the-land, if I might employ a Heideggerian paraphrase (Takano, 2005: 13). And for all the changes around them, young Inuit men these days find a similar sense of well-being and worth (Condon, et al., 1995: 31ff).

In the same vein, wayfinding on the “featureless” Arctic tundra, as Claudio Aporta points out, involves not a memorization of discrete features, but a series of relationships:

[B]oth traveling and orienting are parts of the broader task of dwelling, which implies a comprehensive engagement with the environment. This engagement is not only accomplished through knowledge of the territory but also through a relationship with the environment that includes emotional attachment and memories of significant places. (Aporta, 2003: 120)

The hunter connects to the landscape through precise naming of features, large and small:

Place names in Igloodik refer to a large variety of features. Of 400 place names collected in Igloodik, over 35 per cent refer to land features, including lakes, rivers, hills, rocks, river bends, rock cairns, and portages. The size or scale of the named features vary from large lakes, such as Tasiujaq (Hall Lake), to such specific features as individual rocks (Iksivautaujaq). Names referring to different parts of the same geographic feature are also common. For instance, there is a river named Ajagutalik that has a bend named Sanguraq. (Aporta, 2003: 129ff)

Land-skilled Inuit have what to Qallunaat must appear an extraordinary capacity to find their way around:

In November of 2000 I was traveling with a hunter while he searched and found seven fox traps hidden under a thick layer of snow that his uncle had set across twenty square kilometres of what seemed to me a flat and indistinctive territory. The traps had been set 25 years before and he (the hunter I traveled with) had not seen them since then. Yet, he was able to find each of them in about two hours of searching. (Aporta, 2003: 119)

Space and time for the Inummariit are experienced as an inseparable unity. Inuit guides in the Victorian period were able to draw actual cartographic maps with great skill, “distorting distances to reflect travel time,” the scale of the maps being rendered in days rather than miles (Whitridge, 2002: 3). The “memoryscape” (Aporta, 2003: 123, citing environmental anthropologist Mark Nuttall) of the wayfinder is not a mental map, however, but lived experience: “If language is a way of dwelling (Basso, 1988), then naming is a way of experiencing the environment” (Aporta, 2003: 127).

Guy Bordin notes that “darkness” and “night” are two different concepts for Inuit, the latter being a construction that is “felt by the body” (Bordin, 2004: 37). The space of the Inuit is, once again, *experienced*: “conceived through relations, in terms of axes and routes which connect places. It is a variable, relative, subjective space” (Bordin, 43, referencing B. Collignon).

The culture-shock experienced by those who lived their lives in this way, when subjected to rapid sedentarization based upon the Qallunaat logics of town layout and administration, and individual house-design as well, was profound. As a preliminary, these comments by Tester and McNicoll about a hospital built at Panniqtuuk in the early 20th century seem relevant:

[It is] a visual *imposition on a landscape* previously defined by Inuit. In all colonial regimes, buildings, not made by or under the control of those being colonized, are a sign of presence and domination.... *Qallunaat* buildings are permanent, imposing and impenetrable, except by permission of those who occupy them. Inuit structures—tents, igloos, *qarmaqs*—are, by comparison, temporary, unimposing and can be penetrated physically and vocally with relative ease. The *Qallunaat* structure announces clearly, ‘We are here!’: not only here, but ‘Here to stay!’ (Tester and McNicoll, 2006: 95-6, emphasis added).

The 26 settlements of Nunavut all have that sense of permanence—and, given the space of the Inummariit just described, they were a “place out of place,” that, as Dawson points out, possessed no social logic from an Inuit perspective:

In the archaeological record, the rise of sedentary communities is often a gradual process...[I]n contrast, the creation of permanent nucleated settlements in the Canadian Arctic by the Federal Government in the 1950s and 1960s introduced Inuit families to settled community life almost overnight. The layout and design of these new arctic towns were based upon Euro-Canadian concepts of community structure, administrative control, and social cooperation. Roads, utility hookups, and building codes replaced cultural values, familial ties, and the requirements of traditional activities in determining the placement of roads and homes within settlements (Dawson, 2003b).

The settlement layouts emphasized administration over kinship, prevented the distancing of households that traditionally was used to ease social tensions, placed strangers rather than kin in close proximity to one another, and produced uncontrolled interactions with others (Dawson, 2003a: 37.11; and see Rasing, 1994: 184).

In addition, the form of administration imposed upon the hamlets of the Eastern Arctic was a relatively inflexible southern bureaucracy run by area administrators from the South who “included the local residents only as confused observers” (Hunter, 1976, cited by Duffy, 1983: 201).

As for the houses themselves, which replaced igloos and tents, Dawson points out that they were constructed with Qallunaat values of privacy in mind, rather than the collective interaction favoured by Inuit (Dawson, 2003b: 21.1). Based upon his careful observations, Dawson concluded that Qallunaat and Inuit “practice fundamentally different types of household activities” (Dawson, 2003b: 21.5). He noted, for example,

that groups of Inuit would sleep in the livingroom, and use much of the house for storage (Dawson, 2003b: 21.11-12).

The Inuit *habitus*, to employ Bourdieu's term (1990: 66ff), was in this way brought into direct conflict with a differently-ordered social space, prompting initial resistance and less immediately obvious consequences over a longer period. Dawson suggests that these included "increasing gender asymmetry, a transformation of social relations through the delayed resolution of interpersonal conflicts, confusion over how, when, and where to conduct various household activities, and a loss of cultural identity among contemporary Inuit." Growing gender asymmetry is caused, Dawson suggests, by the fact that men became the owners of the houses, reducing the authority of women; he relies here upon a short study carried out in 1969 by C. T. Thompson (Dawson, 1995:71, 75; Thompson, 1969).

The resistance that Dawson noted took the form of "unsympathetic [Inuit] users" utilizing spaces in a manner that defeated the goals of the designers. Seals were butchered in living areas, seal meat was stored in bathtubs, dining room tables were used as workbenches, and snow machines were repaired indoors (Dawson, 1995: 71).

But such resistance could not prevent the overwhelming changes that were occurring. In general, as Tester and Kulchyski put it, a remorseless state-imposed economic logic "divided and re-divided extended families and groups based on kinship, with a casual disregard for elaborate networks of reciprocity—networks which formed the basis of Inuit economic, as well as social, systems" (Tester and Kulchyski, 1994:8). The

breakdown of the sharing ethic, which had been key to Inuit cohesion in the past, has been duly noted (Rasing, 1994:207; Gombay, 2005:415-16), not to mention the unthinkable, disrespectful wastage of meat (Rasing, 1994: 69; Wenzel, 2004: 245), due to commercial hunting, which drove elders in Igloodik to establish an Elders Waste Committee (Rasing, 1994: 179).

There are now “too many people”:

In the old days we were small groups and we hardly had any problems then. But now there's too many people here. There are different groups here....There are too many different groups nowadays that live together in one place. There are many problems today....In the past, the elders could deal with problems, but now....Even the police cannot stop them. (Immaroitok, 1986, quoted by Rasing, 1994:1)

Time as continuity with the past was also disrupted. The flow of time is embodied in a complex Inuit naming protocol, by which children are given the names of deceased relatives (Dorais 1997: 62ff; Gombay, 2005: 421f; Soukup, 2006:3). This is not simply a gesture of respect: the name is an actual soul (*atiq*). The child is addressed by the honorific formerly possessed by the deceased relative: a father, for example, might refer to his child as “mother,” and the child will address his or her father as “son.” A child whose *atiq* is of the other gender may be cross-dressed until puberty (Rasing, 1994: 106f; d'Anglure 2005: 137). Hence the imposition of Qallunaat naming protocols by the state (after abandoning “disc numbers” in the 1960s) must have been deeply disruptive (Gombay, 2005: 424f)—although many Inuit continue to use traditional naming practices anyway, indicating that the ability of the Qallunaat to impose their institutions is far from absolute.

Indeed, Inuit have continually contested and negotiated the exercise of Qallunaat power: from refusing to board vessels bound for southern sanitariums in the 1930s (Tester and McNicoll, 2006: 103), to dealing with missionization pressure on their own terms (Remie and Oosten, 2002), and, eventually, to pursuing a comprehensive land claim and establishing the territory of Nunavut. As Gold sums up:

The South attempted to impose its notions of place, citizenship, nationhood, Aboriginality, religion, education, and health on the other. At the same time, Inuit resisted, embraced, and reframed southern/western religion, trade, settlement living, southern/western medicine, as well as new beliefs about medicine and illness. (Gold, 2003: 106)

But their experiences shaped the strategies they used. Resistance against a seemingly all-powerful Qallunaat force that could create permanent communities, take children from their parents, enforce Qallunaat law, and disrupt social relations in any number of ways, was expressed; but, as in the case of other groups involved in unequal power relations, not often in direct confrontation (see Scott, J., 1985).

The anthropologist Hugh Brody, cited by Hicks (2006: 10; and see Brody, 1975: 157ff), refers to a kind of all-pervasive fear of the Qallunaat, the Inuktitut term for which is *ilira*:

Inuktitut has several words for fear. Each is a root, to which the infix –*suk*– is added to show a feeling or –*na*– to show a circumstance. Many words for danger are based on the root *kappia*. Hence fear of danger, *kappiasuk*–, and something being frightened, *kappiana*–. Another, less common word for fear is based on the root *irksi*, which denotes a source of terror. Polar bears are sometimes said to be *irksina* – terrifying.

During one of our lessons, Anaviapik talked about white people who came from the south and bossed Inuit around. He gave the example of

a policeman who was especially domineering, who gave orders that resulted in men working intolerable hours, and who had sexual liaisons with women who did not like him. This example led to our talking about why Inuit had, at times, done things that were not in their [sic] own interest. “*Ilirasulaurpugut*,” Anaviapik said. “We felt *ilira*.” I did not know the word. He began to explain it to me. “*Iliranalaurtut*.” “They were *ilira* causing.”

So *ilira* is to do with being afraid? I asked. Like *kappia*? No, not that kind of fear. And not the *irksi* kind of fear either. Anaviapik gave examples of what might make you feel *ilira*: ghosts, domineering and unkind fathers, people who are strong but unreasonable, whites from the south. What is it that these have in common? They are people or things that have power over you and can be neither controlled nor predicted. People or things that make you feel vulnerable, and to which you are vulnerable.

Anaviapik explained further: when southerners told Inuit to do things that were against Inuit tradition, or related to the things that Qallunaat wanted from the North, the Inuit felt that they had to say yes. They felt too much *ilira* to say no. There was a danger – not of a kind that was easy to describe, but real enough. A possibility of danger. White people had things that Inuit needed: guns, ammunition, tobacco, tea, flour, cloth. They were also quick to lose their tempers, and seemed to have feelings that went out of control for no evident reason. They had power, and there was no equality. These circumstances inspired *ilira*. I asked if this still held true, in the Arctic of the 1970s. Yes, Anaviapik said, for the most part; there was some *ilira* – not with every southerner, but with most. They had the power, and they were not like Inuit.

The word *ilira* goes to the heart of colonial relationships, and it helps to explain the many times that Inuit, and so many other peoples, say yes when they want to say no, or say yes and then reveal, later, that they never meant it at all. *Ilira* is a word that speaks to the subtle but pervasive results of inequality. Through the inequality it reveals, the word shapes the whole tenor of interpersonal behaviour, creating many misunderstandings, mistrust and bad faith. It is the fear that colonialism instils and evokes, which then distorts meanings, social life and politics. The power of colonial masters is indeed like that of ghosts – appearing from nowhere, seemingly supernatural and nonnegotiable.

Brody makes specific reference to the removal of children to residential schools:

I have often heard Inuit speak about their agreement to their children being taken away from their homes in camps, and being put in schools far away. This taking of children caused much heartache to Inuit parents, who are famous for their intense attachment to their children. Virtually every Inuit child embodies a much loved and respected older relative (in North Baffin, a deceased relative), the person who is the child's *atiq*. When a child is taken away, therefore, the families lose a loved (and potentially helpful) little person; the embodiment, almost the reincarnation, of an elder, the child's *atiq*, is also lost. Yet when this happened, Inuit seemed to accept the process. When older men and women told me about the grief the boarding school caused them, I asked many times, "Why did you not complain? Why did you go along with it?" The answers repeatedly made use of *ilira*, fear, awe, a sense of intimidation. And when I explored these answers, asking more questions about the feelings and events that surrounded the taking of children out to school, I was told that all *qadlunaat* made Inuit feel *ilira*. Often elders—both men and women—made the point in general terms: *iliranatualulautut*, "they were very *ilira*-making." (Brody, "Some historical aspects of the High Arctic Exiles' experience," 1993, quoted in Hicks and White, 2000: 22)

It is difficult to disagree with Hicks that this mental landscape of unequal relations must have affected the manner in which Inuit expressed and instantiated what he calls their "nationalism" (Hicks, 2006: 11). Regardless of whether we accept the controversial notion of "internal colonization," there is no question that Inuit felt colonized: Hicks, who refers to the concept as a "metaphor," does not deny how "intensely *colonial* the Inuit experience of incorporation into Western society has been" (Hicks, 2006:10).

Thirty years ago, in his study of sedentarization, P. C. Salzman took issue with the notion of society as an integrated system, and with the conception of social change as directional, a movement from one discrete state to another. His concept of society is non-essentialist: he opposes the view that "society is one thing or another, has one particular nature, can be seen as resting upon a specific structure....It is hard to see how a society so

clearly of one nature can shift to something different, how an unalloyed, unitary framework can be moved” (Salzman, 1980: 2,3).

Salzman goes on to say, with refreshing common sense, that we should “think of society as fluid and variable, as being loosely integrated, flexible and adaptable...manifesting *multiformity* in activities, structures, and orientations, providing alternatives and variability and therefore flexibility and adaptability.” This, with Salzman’s notion of “institutionalized alternatives”⁸ helps us to understand, without recourse to essentialist notions of society and culture, the changes that took place in the life of Inuit in the 20th century in particular (Salzman, 1980: 4). Agency of Inuit is not denied; but one is nevertheless forced to recognize that, among Inuit themselves, conflicting social alternatives reflected, through their institutionalization, a relatively restricted range of options.

This may help to explain why the choices made by Inuit leaders during the long path to the formation of Nunavut appear rather conventional. The coming into being of the new territory did not reflect revolutionary change, there was no massive historical rupture, but, again in Salzman’s words, “the assertion of societal continuity in changing or new circumstances.”

Both the direction and the nature of change are constrained and influenced by the multiple (but not infinite or universal) alternative forms that can be activated in a particular society. The processes of change, in so far as they are based in activation, manipulation, and

⁸ Salzman is here referring to recognized alternative paths a society might take, which are legitimized by having recognized proponents, or alternate “types and combinations of on-going activity common among the population,” or an “asserted ideology,” an agreed-upon organizational framework assented to by all members of a society, “sometimes acted upon and sometimes not.”

elaboration of extant societal resources, are more rooted in the collectivity and the customary than has sometimes been recognized. The processes of change are in consequence more under the control of members of society and less disruptive than might otherwise be the case, as well as being more intelligible to the observer. (Salzman, 1980: 6)

But what permitted those choices to take political shape and substance? Who made them?

The best way to encourage political networking is to put bright young people with common concerns in the same place. Here is one on-line account:

Inuit students were brought together at high schools established at Churchill, Manitoba and Yellowknife, NWT. Regardless of what the academic and vocational objectives were for these schools, they provided an opportunity for young Inuit men and women from different regions to start discussing the types of problems all Inuit were facing. From these gatherings and discussions sprang a commitment to the politics of change.⁹

And from this sprang the Inuit Tapirisat in 1971:¹⁰

By the late 1960s it became clear that if there was to be real change in the lives of Inuit, we had to become involved in the political process. We had to do this to protect what our ancestors had left us in trust. If we did not, there would be nothing to pass on to future generations. But we also had to engage in the political process as a means for developing new opportunities for securing our and our children's future. The first step of involvement was to establish a structure that would enable us to unite as Inuit with a common voice. And that is where the story of ITC begins.

Inuit resistance had become institutionalized.

⁹ "Inuit Tapirisat of Canada: The Founding of ITC," [n.d.] <http://www.angelfire.com/realm/shades/nativeamericans/inuittapirisat.htm> [June 2, 2010]

¹⁰ Renamed *Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami* in 2004 (Légaré 2008:101n).

Chapter Two

“A creature that Canadians will recognize”: implementing “Nunavut”

Introduction

In this chapter I shall trace the beginnings of the Nunavut project and the course of negotiations that led to the conclusion of a comprehensive land claim agreement between Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (formerly the Tunngavik Federation of Canada) and the federal government, signed on May 25, 1993. This agreement was enshrined in the *Nunavut Land Claims Act*, passed by the Canadian Parliament on June 10, 1993, along with a piece of companion legislation establishing the territory of Nunavut, the *Nunavut Act* (Jull, 2001: 29ff).

Chapter Three will consist of an examination of the work of the Nunavut Implementation Commission (1993-1999), an advisory body established by the *Nunavut Act*, with some reference to the Office of the Interim Commissioner, which came into being in 1997.

While relying primarily on documentary sources, I shall refer from time to time to interviews that I carried out with NIC Commissioners, staff and the Interim Commissioner for Nunavut, Jack Anawak. (Chapter Four will comprise a selection of observations made in those interviews.)

The purpose here is to map the trajectory of encounter and resistance as it played out in a formal context for nearly three decades, from the creation of the Inuit Tapirisat in 1971 to the proclamation of Nunavut on April 1, 1999. This lengthy process cannot be reduced to

a binary opposition of two homogeneous “peoples”—there were in fact several “peoples” involved, including Dene, Métis and Inuvialuit, and they were far from homogeneous—nor, implicitly, to a notion of unilinear “progress.” It was complex, involving many contending actors, and its outcome, “Nunavut,” was and remains a multiplex of sites of contestation. And its course shaped the specific Nunavut institutions of governance that came into being in 1999.

Nor is there any implication of direct links—dots to be connected—between the many parties involved or the various positions and actions that they took. Indeed, as I shall indicate, conflicting interests and suspicions abounded even within groups: “the Inuit” were hardly a monolith, any more than “the Qallunaat,” and they didn’t behave that way. Rather, it is my intention to note various conjunctures, alignments and convergences of interests (the settlement of land claims as a prime example), oppositions, pivotal moments: not the “direction” but the *form* that those multi-sited negotiations took. It is well beyond the scope of this study to attempt to trace the specific networks through which information passed, or how the various forces in contention, that is, the people engaged in it, arrived at the numerous and conflicting decisions they did. But one thing emerges, nonetheless: the sheer consistency of approach over time of the various Inuit actors involved in the land claims negotiations—namely, their refusal, despite considerable pressure, to abandon the Nunavut project.

One might be tempted to see in all this a false coherence: a kind of negotiators’ jiu-jitsu in which the strength of the state was used against itself to obtain the desired result over

time. Certainly the negotiators were, over-all, shrewd bargainers who could recognize conjunctural advantages when they presented themselves. But this alone did not account for the trajectory of events, and it implies far too much conscious design as well as a narrowly deterministic progression.

The move by an impoverished, even starving people of the early mid-twentieth century, semi-nomadic and without political institutions as such, to higher ground a few decades later, was the result of a complex interplay of forces, state, territorial, community-based and individual. Moreover, “the state,” a liberal democratic one, should not be essentialized: it is a complex of people and interests and powers that cannot be reduced to a homogenized, hegemonic whole. The negotiations, affected by a number of events during their long course, did not result in a counter-hegemonic “win,” but, rather, brought the interests of various contending actors into alignment.

In addition, the actual negotiating strategies and the goals that shaped them arose out of a wider social, historical and political context; and that context, sketched out in the last chapter, must be grasped if we are to understand how Nunavut, the “creature that Canadians will recognize,”¹¹ was conceived, how it came to assume the form it did—and how it has fared since.

Claiming space and place

¹¹ John Amagoalik, sometimes called “the father of Nunavut,” quoted in Hicks and White, 2000:40.

It was the early 1970s, and aboriginal land claims talk was in the air. In 1971 the United States signed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement. The following year, the Gwich'in of the Yukon Territory (the group straddles the Yukon-Alaska border) petitioned Parliament about oil and gas exploration being carried out on their traditional hunting lands. In 1973 the Nisga'a of British Columbia, who had been asserting aboriginal title to the lands they occupied, lost their case at the Supreme Court of Canada on technical grounds. However, while that 1973 *Calder* decision¹² was not a win for the Nisga'a, it clearly set out the possibility of establishing such claims under law. In that same year the Yukon Indian Brotherhood presented a formal land claim to the federal government on behalf of the fourteen Yukon First Nations.

In that same year, the Dene of the Mackenzie River Valley were initially successful in winning the right to block development on their traditional lands until the question of ownership was resolved (Northwest Territories Supreme Court, *Paulette*, 1973)¹³; and the Cree and Inuit in Quebec won a historic injunction (Malouf, 1973)¹⁴ against the federal and provincial governments and Hydro Quebec, which, although quickly overturned, led to the eventual negotiation of a land claims agreement before the James Bay hydroelectric project went ahead. While all of these decisions were contested by the Canadian government and reversed, it was clear that aboriginal people were organizing and mobilizing, and that jurisprudence was beginning to tilt in their favour.

¹² *Calder v. Attorney-General of British Columbia* (1973), 34 D.L.R. (3d) 145. On-line: <http://library2.usask.ca/native/cnlc/vol07/091.html> [June 7, 2010].

¹³ *Re Paulette et al. and Registrar of Land Titles* (1973), 39 D.L.R. (3d) 45. On-line: <http://library2.usask.ca/native/cnlc/vol09/288.html> ([August 25, 2010]

¹⁴ The text, a very lengthy one, is not on-line.

Governments are not usually willing to chance public policy being made by the courts rather than themselves. In response to *Calder*, on 8 August 1973, Jean Chrétien, then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, affirmed that the long-abandoned treaty-making process with “Indian and Inuit people” would be renewed (Butt and Hurley, 2006; DIAND, 1973).

As noted by the Supreme Court in *R. v. Sparrow*, [1990] 1 S.C.R. 1075, this was not only “an expression of acknowledged responsibility,” but much more. It signalled for the first time that the government was prepared to negotiate comprehensive land claims, in particular in British Columbia, northern Quebec, and the Territories. “The Government”, it stated, “is now ready to negotiate with authorized representatives of these native peoples on the basis that where their traditional interest in the lands concerned can be established, an agreed form of compensation or benefit will be provided to native peoples in return for their interest.”¹⁵ Indeed, a comprehensive land claims policy followed in that same month—a considerable retrenchment from the government’s perhaps aptly-named and widely-reviled *White Paper* of 1969, in which the government had proposed a cautious approach to claims remediation falling far short of a comprehensive land claims process, the devolution of aboriginal issues to the provinces, and no “special treatment” of aboriginal people (Government of Canada, *White Paper*, 1969).

The newly-formed Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, on behalf of Canadian Inuit, lost little time. Obtaining funding from the federal government, it began in 1972 to carry out extensive research into Inuit land use and occupancy, and published its findings in a three-volume set of documents entitled “Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project” in 1976.

¹⁵ On-line: <http://www.indigenousbar.ca/cases/sparrow.htm> [June 7, 2010]

Earlier, during a meeting in October 28 to November 2, 1975, more than 100 Inuit delegates in Pond Inlet had passed a resolution authorizing the ITC to commence land claims negotiations with the federal government. Four months later the ITC presented its first land claims proposal to the government (Duffy, 1988: 238).

In that submission, the ITC also proposed the formation of a political territory called “Nunavut,” or “our land.” This was a name that the first President of ITC, Tagak Curley, had suggested in June, 1974, according to Peter Cumming, an ITC legal advisor at the time.¹⁶ On January 5, 1976, James Arvaluk— the second ITC President—staked out the following position at the early stages of negotiating a comprehensive land claim (cited by Hicks, 2006: 11):

We are not extremists. We are not separatists. We have no history of hostility and confrontation... but one of co-operation. And we are optimistic that the Government of Canada and the people of Canada will accept our proposed land sharing settlement in a spirit of co-operation. We are willing to share our land and its resources. It's just that we want benefits...and to ensure that the land is preserved as we know it for future generations of Inuit.

The ITC put forward their ambitious two-pronged demand on February 27, 1976, tying a land claim to that proposal for a new territory: the document, submitted to the federal government, was entitled “Agreement-in-principle as to the Settlement of Inuit Land Claims in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory.”

Arvaluk made it very plain, as a sense of Inuit collectivity was shaping demands for land claims and a territory, that no radical rupture was foreseen. In the same vein, John Amagoalik, a longtime spokesperson for Inuit in the Eastern Arctic and Chief

¹⁶ Quoted on the Government of Nunavut's on-line site:
<http://www.nunavut.com/nunavut99/english/our.html> [June 2, 2010].

Commissioner of the Nunavut Implementation Commission, assured Canadians later on: "*We are not trying to break up Canada. We're trying to join Canada.*"¹⁷ In all its splendid ambiguity, Amagoalik's formulation sums up the Inuit negotiators' strategy perfectly.

The name "Nunavut" is a signifier of contestation—"our land." Without the history of encounter between Inuit and Qallunaat, the word "our" would not be needed. "Nunavut" conveys a notion—a strategic one—of boundedness, but implicitly within a greater whole. Indeed, the word is dialogic, suggesting one or more interlocutors, inviting response. "Our" land, addressed to Inuit, binds *Nunavummiut* together; "our" land, addressed to Qallunaat, formally sets (always negotiable) boundaries.

Thus Amagoalik's statement, like that of Arvaluk at the beginning of the long process that brought Nunavut into being, offers a kind of reassurance, but at the same time it defines an utterly indissoluble presence. To be ignored, or subjected to Qallunaat will, or assimilated, is not to "join." The latter is an uncompromising, explicit expression of agency. There is steel in his conciliatory phrasing.

It should be noted as well that Inuit negotiators never demanded a specifically Inuit government, but took from the start a non-confrontational approach: all residents of the territory, Inuit or Qallunaat, would be represented in a "public government." At the same time, however, Inuit comprised fully 85% of the population. The board of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (formerly the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut), which administers the land claim on behalf of those Inuit beneficiaries, is elected by the latter;

¹⁷ "The Birth of Nunavut" [cover story], *Maclean's Magazine*, July 1, 1999.

and Articles 23 and 24 of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement set out a process for proportional Inuit representation in the Nunavut Public Service and preferential government contracting with Inuit companies, respectively. Under the circumstances, public government was a strategically acceptable option:

Thomas Suluk, one of several former chief negotiators, recalls that the people originally wanted an Inuit government. But negotiators urged them to “eliminate this nativeness, this separateness, because it doesn't have a snowball's chance in hell of making it.” By supporting a public government, “we can get the same thing.”(Vlessides: [c1999])

Geographer Ronald Q. Duffy provides an informative account of those early years of negotiations, characterized by ever-shifting boundaries of contestation, plagued by reverses, delays and impasses. This first proposal would have extended Nunavut across the Arctic, and was enthusiastically supported at the time by the Inuvialuit of the Western Arctic. Said Suluk:

We drafted the Nunavut proposal, a political development paper for the creation of a separate territory within the Northwest Territories. Realizing that land claims will not leave us much land, we feel that our Nunavut government would be able to exercise a certain amount of political control. Since territories don't control land or resources, we hope at least to be able to assert more political pressure than the Northwest Territories government does (cited by Duffy, 1988: 238).

It was not to be. In September, Arvaluk withdrew the proposal after “extensive consultation”:

The ITC wanted time to discuss changes in the suggested political structures for their new Inuit territory and in those proposals that dealt with protection of future rights for the native peoples. The Inuit leaders were forced to realize that much of their original Nunavut proposal was unworkable. Norman Ward of the University of Saskatchewan, retained by the NWT Council to study the implications of the proposal, reported that in his opinion the proper operation of the health, educational, cultural, and administrative agencies, in addition to the community and territorial corporations envisioned in the proposal, would need a group of skilled and experienced administrators far beyond the

numbers that the poorly educated and inadequately trained Inuit population could supply (Duffy, 1988: 238-9).

The perspective enunciated here is excruciatingly paternalistic. Duffy said that John Amagoalik, ITC claims director at the time, “admitted” that the proposal would have created 2,800 jobs by 1980, with no more than 1,400 Inuit available to fill them (Duffy, 1988: 239). This argument, however, seems more than a little unconvincing: present-day Nunavut only recently achieved Inuit parity in the public service (51% by 2008, nine years after proclamation, with 22% of the 3,795 public service positions unfilled).¹⁸ Under the political and administrative direction of capable leaders like Amagoalik, there is no reason that Qallunaat with specific skills could not have been recruited—as they are being to this very day.

More likely, as Duffy suggested earlier, the ITC simply needed time to consult with its Inuit constituency, something that it had neglected to do (Légaré, 1996:146), particularly with respect to proposed political structures for the Nunavut-to-be, and the safeguarding of Inuit rights (Duffy, 1988: 238). Not only was the Canadian government reluctant to discuss the political aspect of the proposal; some Inuit felt that the proposal was selling out their communities (Remie, in Balthazar et al.,1998:134). It is also notable that the Committee for the Original People's Entitlement (COPE), representing the Inuit of the Western Arctic (the Inuvialuit), split from the ITC later in 1976 to pursue their own claim independently, with considerable ill-feeling on both sides (Duffy, 1988: 239).

A second proposal, "Speaking for the First Citizens of the Canadian Arctic," which set out eleven broad principles "for the establishment of Inuit rights between the Inuit of

¹⁸ “Inuit Employment Plan, 2004-2008 Final Report.”

Nunavut and the Government of Canada" (cited by Duffy, 1988: 239) was submitted by the ITC's Land Claims Commission in September 1977, after considerable consultation (Légaré, 1996: 146-7). This was, depending upon the account, either rejected out of hand by the federal government (Légaré, 1996:147), or simply stonewalled (Duffy, 1988: 239), because the land claim was still linked to negotiations for a political territory.

One (but by no means the only one) of the reasons for the federal government's reluctance to engage at this juncture was opposition at the time by the government of the Northwest Territories, which considered division a threat to eventual provincehood (Henderson, 2007: 97-8).

Perhaps a bureaucratic solution could be found to the increasingly complex contention among various aboriginal groups, the government of the NWT, and Canadian state interests in northern resource development? In 1977, the same year in which the ITC launched its second proposal, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau appointed a senior official, C.M. Drury, to prepare a report on political development in the North. This smacked somewhat of the Great White Father approach—at least, some Inuit leaders certainly saw it that way. John Amagoalik wrote to Drury in 1978 and he didn't mince words: "It annoys us that we were not consulted as to how an inquiry should be set up and what its terms of reference should be." The establishment of an Office of the Special Representative (Drury), he said, was a threat to the on-going negotiations: "This compromises the negotiation process and attempts to lower the status of the Commission to that of a Rotary club." If the federal government wanted to engage in discussions about

political development, he said, the ITC's office of constitutional development was the appropriate place for that to happen (cited by Henderson, 2007: 98).

Amagoalik was clearly concerned about what almost certainly was the intent of the federal government to de-link the land claim from the demand for a political territory.

"Change your terms of reference," he demanded, "to integrate your work into the framework of negotiations" (cited by Henderson, 2007: 98).

Peter Kattu, the Sanikiluaq hamlet council chair, said more bluntly:

We are against an outsider deciding for us on how our future government should operate, because you don't know how the Inuit live, you have never lived as an Inuk and you've never been born here. We will not give you recommendations to change the government because we have our own people doing this for us through Inuit Claims negotiations (cited by Henderson, 2007: 99).

As Henderson notes, none of this stopped the ITC from asking for a grant from the OSR to conduct its own consultations on Inuit political development. She refers to this as an Inuit "practical approach" (Henderson, 2007: 99), but there is more to it: the site of engagement of Inuit actors with the federal government was the ITC bargaining table, and it was rightly felt by anxious Inuit leaders that other initiatives on the part of the government were a diversion, indeed a stepping-back or disengagement from the negotiations process by demeaning the ITC's status or sidestepping it altogether.

In any case, Drury's report, completed in 1979 and published in 1980, was sidelined by events. It was, overall, fairly conservative:

The Drury Report cannot be characterized as a radical document. In fact, many people in the N.W.T. are apt to dismiss it as merely a

reflection of the federal government's interest. Indeed, there is little in the report with which Ottawa might argue. No compelling time frame is offered for constitutional change; no suggestion is made for provincial status that would jeopardize disposition of resource revenues; no structural changes are put forth which cannot be accommodated within the Canada Act; and no change is advocated for altering existing geographic and political boundaries (Dickerson, 1982: 463).

Drury, in fact, explicitly favoured a united Northwest Territories. He sympathized with the Inuit position regarding the linking of land claims and "control of the decision-making processes," but he took specific note of federal government policy statements, in 1975 and again in 1977, that attempted to de-link land claims from any talk of the "structures and functions of government" (cited in Dickerson, 1982: 460). Drury suggested a gradual devolution of powers from the federal government, but, rather than a new territory for Inuit, he proposed a quite innovative notion of "paramount authority" for municipalities, likened by Dickerson to "Greek city-states" (Dickerson, 1982: 463).

That was not the direction in which Inuit negotiators from the ITC had been headed. As political scientist Gurston Dacks perceptively noted at the time, "claims negotiations provide the only forum in which the native people wield significant bargaining power. For this reason they resist the suggestion that political development and claim negotiations can proceed separately but simultaneously" (Dacks, 1980:397). The negotiators never swerved, as noted above, from their declared goal of a separate territory.

It would be unfair to fault Drury for producing a report that attempted to negotiate the minefield of contending federal, territorial and aboriginal interests. He carried out the mandate assigned to him by the federal government, and, as Dacks says, “[v]iewed as a constitutional diagnosis and set of prescriptions, there is a great deal of logic” in the *Report*. “However,” Dacks continues, “its proposals ignore the realities of native politics in the Territories” (Dacks, 1983: 399).

The Inuit leaders were heavily invested in a process they had begun in 1976, and would not have been sympathetic to a process of devolution that strengthened the NWT government’s stake and power in what had been ITC-federal government negotiations, hence threatening to derail the latter. Drury’s suggestions, if implemented, would have undermined the process in two ways. The land claims of the territorial aboriginal groups (Inuvialuit, Dene, Métis and Eastern Arctic Inuit), first of all, would be undercut if Crown lands were handed over to the jurisdiction of the territorial government, as Drury effectively recommended; and changes to the governance structure of the NWT could, he thought, be discussed outside the negotiations, and in fact implemented before the settlement of the claims.

This, as Dacks pointed out, would be “certain to provoke the native claims groups” (Dacks, 1980:398). The sensitivity of the latter to the notion of dealing with a more empowered NWT government had already been indicated in 1975 when the first fully elected Council of the NWT passed a motion to rename itself the “Legislative Assembly,” and the elected members of its Executive Committee, “Ministers” (Lewis,

1988). This was perceived as a move toward provincehood, which aboriginal leaders saw as jeopardizing their land claims negotiations. For his part, Northwest Territories Commissioner Stuart Hodgson was hostile to the notion of division precisely because it could thwart the NWT's ambitions in this respect, and suspected that the federal government was secretly supportive of the move (Henderson, 2007:98).

In any event, Drury's work on the sidelines did not derail the negotiations. Inuit leaders had in fact been proceeding on more than one front. In 1977, the Baffin Regional Council was formed, composed of the mayors and chairpersons of the Baffin community councils, with an ITC representative *ex officio*. In the wheels within wheels that constituted institutional relations at the time, the ITC was in fact hostile to its creation, fearing that this had been a territorial government ploy to give voice to Inuit less committed to division and land claims than were they (Henderson, 2007: 104). But the NWT legislature was apparently alarmed as well, and expressed concern about possible demands for a regional government in the territory: it had to be reassured in person by the Speaker of the Baffin Regional Council on March 30, 1979, that the Council simply wanted to be involved in decision-making affecting the Baffin Region. Drury offered the assembly further assurances that runaway regional government was not a possibility. Thus mollified, the legislature passed a motion supporting the Council's "legitimate aspirations" (Duffy, 1988: 243-4).

1979 was, in fact, a pivotal year for Inuit aspirations. The ITC abolished its Land Claims Commission, which had come to act almost as an independent body (Duffy, 1988: 239),

and established a new structure called the Nunavut Land Claims Project. It was headed by the Nunavut Claims Executive Committee, which was charged with conducting negotiations, and reported to the ITC (Merritt, et al., 1989: 69). As had been the case with the Commission, it was chaired by former ITC director of land claims, John Amagoalik. The ITC developed a third comprehensive negotiating proposal in that year, first in the form of a discussion paper called “Political Development in Nunavut” (ITC, September 1, 1979) and then, when talks with the federal government resumed in 1980, as a document called *Parnagujuk: Basic Objectives of the Comprehensive Blueprint for the North* (ITC, 1980).

The “Political Development” document made clear that “Nunavut” was still on the table. The proposal tabled in 1980, however, offered a way out of an impasse: rather than insisting upon negotiating both the land claim and a political territory at once, which had led to three years of stalled negotiations, the ITC was prepared to negotiate a land claim only, in return for a commitment from the federal government to negotiate a territory once a land claim-in-principle was signed. In addition, the ITC offered at the outset a revenue-sharing agreement on oil and gas reserves, rather than claiming proprietary rights in them (Légaré, 1996: 147; Duffy, 1988: 240-1). This proposal was to form the basis of continuing negotiations, which did, however, drag on for another twelve years.

Canada’s first Inuit MP, Peter Ittinuar, was elected for the NDP in 1979; he crossed the floor in 1982 to join the Liberals in order to work on the Nunavut project¹⁹. And the

¹⁹ “Ittinuar, Peter Freuchen,” *Canadian Encyclopedia*. On-line: <http://www.encyclopediecanadienne.ca/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0004080> [June 9,

NWT legislature, newly expanded to 22 seats, saw the overwhelming majority²⁰ of those seats go to aboriginal people in its October 1, 1979 election, including 7 Inuit, among them the redoubtable former ITC president Tagak Curley.

As Dacks suggests, and it may not be surprising, the Ninth Territorial Council elected in 1979 appeared to view land claims more sympathetically than before (Dacks, 1983: 398), and shortly after the election it established the ambiguously-named Special Committee on Unity. That committee reported in 1980 that no consensus existed for division or unity, but observed that its findings “reinforced anew, and most unequivocally: the Northwest Territories as a geo-political jurisdiction simply does not inspire a natural sense of identity amongst many of its indigenous peoples; its government does not enjoy in the most fundamental sense the uncompromising loyalty and commitment of significant numbers of those who are now subject to it” (cited in Dickerson, 1992: 161).

By 1981, the Metis and Dene had submitted their Denendeh land claim, joining the Inuvialuit and the Inuit of the Eastern Arctic in doing so. The government of the Northwest Territories set up a Special Committee on Constitutional Development, which, in 1982, organized a Constitutional Conference, out of which sprang the once again ambiguously-named Constitutional Alliance, which in turn set up the Nunavut Constitutional Forum and the Western Constitutional Forum (Dickerson, 1992: 161; Dewar, 2009: 77). While land claims negotiations progressed, Inuit leaders began to

2010] And see Townsend, T., “Ittinuar crosses floor,” *Nunatsiaq News*, November 26, 1982. On-line: http://www.nunatsiaqnews.com/archives/april0199/nvt90401_15.html [June 9, 2009].

²⁰ 7 Qallunaat were elected, along with 7 Inuit, 5 Dene and 3 Métis (Légaré, 1998:274). It should be noted, however, that Légaré is incorrect in asserting that this was the first time the legislature had a “native” majority: the 1975 election of a 15-member assembly had one as well, returning 6 Inuit, 6 Qallunaat, 2 Dene and one Métis (*Inuit Today*, 1975: 14).

develop specific constitutional proposals for the Nunavut-to-be in a separate process. But as some close observers of the scene put it, despite this apparent bifurcation, Inuit “kept the Nunavut wagon firmly harnessed to the land claim horse.” The land claim negotiators were “creating a *de facto* Nunavut” that would, if division failed to materialize, “create administrative nightmares in a post-claim-settlement world. This strategy was consciously intended to put Nunavut and the land claim on parallel, if not identical, tracks” (Merritt, et al., 1989: 78).

The Nunavut Constitutional Forum included Nunavut and Inuvialuit leaders, Eastern Arctic members of the NWT legislature, and Peter Ittinuar, the federal MP from Nunatsiak. In addition to constitution-drafting, the NCF met with its counterpart from the West from 1983 to 1987 to negotiate a boundary for Nunavut (Merritt, et al., 1989: 82).

1982 was, in fact, another pivotal year. On April 14, upon the prompting of Inuit MLAs who refused to join the Executive Committee of the NWT legislature until their concerns were addressed (Lewis, 1998), a plebiscite on division of the NWT took place—three days before the proclamation of the newly-repatriated *Constitution Act*, with its guarantees of Aboriginal rights in Section 35.²¹ A majority of voters (56%) favoured division, although it was particularly popular among the Inuit of the Eastern Arctic, with 79.3% in favour. In November 1982, the federal government agreed to division on the

²¹ Section 35 was the result of massive lobbying by aboriginal organizations after aboriginal rights were dropped from the draft *Constitution Act* in November 1981 (Merritt, et al., 1989: 80). It was amended in 1983 to clarify that it applied to treaty rights acquired in future agreements, not merely to existing rights at the time of proclamation. “Constitution Amendment Proclamation, 1983.” On-line: http://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/English/cap_1983.html [June 10, 2010].

condition that support for division continue, a suitable boundary be agreed on, the land claims settled and appropriate governance structures designed (Merritt, et al., 1989: 78; Dickerson, 1992:161).

1982 was also the year in which the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut was founded to represent the specific interests of the Eastern Arctic Inuit, and took over land claims negotiations from the ITC (Merritt, et al., 1989: 75).

Negotiations on both fronts progressed, if with some reverses. In 1981, agreement in principle had been reached on a profoundly contentious issue: the establishment of jointly-managed wildlife conservation bodies with decision-making powers. Federal ministers refused to endorse it, however, blocking ratification until 1986 (Merritt, et al., 1989: 74; Dewar, 2009: 76). While the transition from the ITC to the TFN was internally seamless (Merritt, et al., 1989: 75), this change and the appointment of a new chief negotiator for the federal government, in the context of the stalled wildlife agreement, slowed talks until 1985.

Nevertheless, by 1985 the parties had managed to sign off about half of an agreement in principle (Dewar, 2009: 76-7), and, on the political front, the Constitutional Alliance had reached an agreement in principle on the boundary issue (Merritt, et al., 1989: 81).

On the constitutional front, a discussion paper from the Nunavut Constitutional Forum was circulated in 1983, containing proposals for an “Arctic Constitution.” The language in which it is couched is striking in a number of respects.

John Merritt and his co-authors described Inuit motivations from their perspective: “both ‘political’, as an enduring relationship between dynamic societies inevitably requires institutional flexibility, and ‘universal’, in that there is nothing about it that is confined to a particular ethnic group, be it aboriginal, non-aboriginal, brown, black, or striped” (Merritt, et al., 1989: 30). This notion of “universality,” of course, is problematic on its face—it elides the shrewd, strategic deployment of an “acceptable” language of encounter with Qallunaat actors by Inuit leaders. The “universal” was indeed the political. This is reinforced by the NCF in its document: “For the northern reader in Nunavut, this booklet sets out things he or she knows well and relates them to the structures and ideas of the Canadian political vocabulary” (Patterson et al., 1983: 1).

The paper continues with a perceptive, unvarnished account of contestation:

[W]e think it important that everyone feel comfortable, and see the whole picture....Nevertheless, some people may feel that there is not enough detail, or that things here are not concrete enough. That is the problem with constitutions. They do not put a seal in anyone’s pot on Sunday, nor help bring medical services to people who are sick. *They do not say how things are going to be, but rather who will be able to make things happen* and what are the limits on their power to do so. Then the people we elect to a Nunavut legislative assembly will actually do the work. Throughout this booklet you will see that we want those people to be as free as possible to do things, and we try to avoid putting too many limits on them in advance.

There is no magic in a constitution, but there can be no power for the people of Nunavut without one. The sooner we agree on what we

want, the sooner we can seek agreement with the government of Canada to create our Nunavut government. Then all these years of argument and frustration will be over, and we will be able to get on with the simple human right to run our own lives in our own way (Patterson et al., 1983: 2, emphasis added).

And then:

Drawing a line on a map and calling the new territory Nunavut has no meaning unless the people of Nunavut have enough powers to run their lives and to control important matters which affect them. These powers have to be suited to the needs of Nunavut and not just to the theories of political scientists in southern Canadian universities.

At the same time, Nunavut is and will remain part of Canada. Unless its powers and structures are clearly practical within the Canadian political system, it will not be possible for Nunavut to grow stronger and serve its peoples, or help them become fully involved in the opportunities of Canada.

The people of Nunavut receive many benefits from living in Canada, and they give much to Canada in return. This proper balance between local and national interest is the heart of the Canadian political system, and *we must ensure that it develops into a strong bond between partners in the relations of the Nunavut and Canadian governments* (Patterson et al., 1983: 3-4, emphasis added).

It would be risky to read too much into text that is itself an artifact of encounter, of continuing negotiations between the parties. The authors are quite literally mediators, addressing a specific audience. But the oppositional notion—concrete, lived experience vs. “the theories of political scientists”—reminds one of the embodied knowledge of the Inummariit in contrast to the abstract, Cartesian thinking of the Qallunaat, to which I alluded in Chapter One. More obviously, the paradox in the last paragraph quoted is one that runs through the discourse of Inuit/Qallunaat encounter at the bargaining table and elsewhere, one incompatible with binary theories of dominant/subaltern: the goal is to be part of something and yet apart from it, an element of a greater whole and yet equal

partners with it, one government to another. Does this not unerringly capture the sense of the fluid Foucauldian power grid, its fluctuating loci of power, its resistances? In his description of power, in fact, Foucault may as well have been describing the history of the complex negotiations that gave rise to Nunavut:

Power is not something that is acquired, seized or shared... power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations. ...Power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix—no such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body. One must suppose rather that the manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups, and institutions, are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole. These then form a general line of force that traverses the local oppositions and links them together; to be sure, they also bring about redistributions, realignments, homogenizations, serial arrangements, and convergences of the force relations. (Foucault, 1978: 94)

In any case, the document goes on to reiterate a number of principles that had been part of the negotiations from the beginning, such as public government (Patterson et al.,1983: 1), and it sets out reassuring proposals for a Nunavut bill of rights that would apply to all residents of the territory including the “non-Inuit minority” (an explicit mirror-image of Inuit relations with the Canadian state) while also recognizing Inuit customary law and cultural rights (Patterson et al.,1983: 10).

Language rights are unflinchingly advanced: Inuktitut must “be an official language of Nunavut and...all public services be available in Inuktitut, and...public bodies including courts and the legislature operate in Inuktitut as freely as in English” as well as a language of instruction in Nunavut schools “as soon as is practicable” (Patterson et

al.,1983: 14). (It was only in 2009, in fact, that Inuktitut legally became an official language of Nunavut—ten years after the territory came into existence.)

The document attempts to articulate difference:

Inuit differ from other Canadians in their sense of what is public business and what is properly dealt with through the traditional social order of extended families and other relationships, and have different notions of need and sharing....[A]ny development project approvals by the federal government [should] include measures designed to protect the social and cultural character of existing Nunavut communities. (Patterson et al.,1983: 29-30)

...and resistance, the claiming of place and space:

Today there is the bizarre situation where Inuit through land claims talks are ‘proving’ that they are who they say they are and live where they say they live and, therefore, have some stake in the lands and resources they have always occupied! (Patterson et al.,1983: 30)

“Nunavut” is both concept and territory-to-be:

[T]he existence of Nunavut would provide the opportunity for the people of Nunavut to work with the resources and conviction of a genuine arctic government to make their case in Ottawa. They would therefore participate more fully and effectively in the national life. (Patterson et al.,1983: 32)

And international relations—of course, with the cooperation of the federal government—are also envisaged, with the International Circumpolar Conference provided as an example (Patterson et al.,1983: 34-5).

While this grand vision was being developed in a spirit of optimism, and land claims negotiations were progressing and indeed picking up speed, three major reverses were encountered. The first was that the federal Cabinet had taken notice of the fact that treaty rights, not merely “existing” ones but future ones as well (as clarified by the 1983

amendment), would have constitutional protection under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*. This meant that Cabinet would now insist upon direct oversight of the land claims negotiations through developing a mandate for its negotiators. It recast its land claims policy, allowing a wider scope for land claims negotiations, but slowing the process considerably (Dewar, 2006: 76-7; Merritt, et al., 1989: 17ff, 84-5). Moreover, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, William McKnight, was lukewarm at best to the notion of a political territory, and his proposed mandate sidestepped the notion of Nunavut in favour of increased Inuit participation in community government (Merritt, et al., 1989: 18, 19)—a resuscitation of the Drury approach. An angry Donat Milortok, President of the TFN, wrote to him on November 18, 1987:

TFN applauded the land claims policy you announced in the House of Commons nearly a year ago. It broadened the range of topics that could be addressed in land claim negotiations, it more accurately reflected constitutional realities under which the federal government and aboriginal peoples are negotiating land claims, and it usefully portrayed land claim settlements as one means for aboriginal peoples to attain economic self-sufficiency. However, the memorandum you propose to take to the Federal Cabinet contradicts the principles and goals outlined in your own land claims policy.

... Your memorandum, if accepted by Cabinet, would impose on us a land and cash deal that contradicts the intent of your own land claim policy. This is unacceptable to us. Moreover, it should be unacceptable to you for it leads to an Alaskan-style land claims settlement with all its attendant problems, disappointments, frustrations, and failures.
(cited in Merritt, et al., 1989: 20)

Despite (or because of) the federal government's new approach, however, negotiations continued with vigour (Dewar, 2006: 77).

The second event was the collapse of the Iqaluit Agreement, an accord between the Inuit and Dene to set the Nunavut boundary signed in 1987. This was endorsed by the NCF

and the Western Constitutional Forum early that year, and ratified by the TFN and Inuit communities, but not by the Dene and Métis chiefs. A counter-proposal from the Dene and Métis was rejected by the TFN. A territory-wide plebiscite to approve the boundary was, therefore, postponed indefinitely (Merritt, et al., 1989: 21) and the Constitutional Alliance was disbanded (Dewar, 2006: 77).

The third counter-current was progress towards the devolution of powers from Ottawa to Yellowknife. The NWT legislature might have been supportive of the Nunavut project, but it was growing impatient with the pace of negotiations, and MLAs began to demand a rapid transfer of powers (Merritt, et al., 1989: 81). As I noted earlier, Inuit had been rightly wary of proposals for devolution since 1975: increasing the GNWT stake in resource management would effectively make the latter a third party in the negotiations, something that the Inuit negotiators had stoutly resisted (Merritt, et al., 1989: 68). Merritt and his co-authors were eloquent on the subject in the late 1980s:

Mr McKnight wanted to give northerners a greater say in running the North. The easiest, most convenient, and practical way for him to do that was to devolve management authority for land, freshwater, and minerals to the territorial governments, and to negotiate northern energy accords that give territorial governments a major voice in managing northern oil and gas exploration and development. Devolution of natural resource administration and management has been attractive, because it does not necessarily require resolution of the tough, long-term, and complex issues of resource ownership, constitutional development, and division of the Northwest Territories. Moreover, devolution offers a genuine, but not radical, change in the relationship between northerners and the federal government. (Merritt, et al., 1989: 10)

As they go on to note, the federal government and the GNWT lost no time, organizing a

devolution schedule, and despite assurances, doing this behind the back of the TFN (Merritt, et al., 1989: 10-13).

They continued:

Devolution, touted as a political development initiative by the territorial government, is highly prejudicial to division of the Northwest Territories. In fact, it is being pursued in lieu of division. This development may not be particularly surprising to those who follow closely political machinations in the Northwest Territories, but the territorial government's apparent rethinking of the nature and purpose of the TFN land claim, and, in particular, the relationship of agreements-in-principle to the institution of public government, has been surprising and potentially very damaging to the Inuit cause.

Should devolution occur in accordance with the territorial government's scheme, the net effect could endanger Nunavut, for the GNWT might soon be able to deliver some of the things to Inuit communities that the Nunavut Constitutional Forum (NCF) and TFN have repeatedly said could only be delivered following constitutional development and implementation of the settled land claim. In addition, the territorial government would gain considerable political status in the eyes of federal and provincial government agencies and many aboriginal peoples within the Northwest Territories. It would then be much more difficult for Inuit to question the legitimacy of this government, as they have done in the past, by characterizing it as nothing more than the administrative arm of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. (Merritt, et al., 1989: 14)

A zero-sum game, in other words, at least as expressed here. It is important, however, to locate Merritt and his co-authors in the on-going flux of contestation: as legal counsel to the ITC, then a special advisor to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs in the mid-1980s, Merritt left the latter position in 1989 to work for the TFN. He was clearly aligned with the Inuit who were working towards a Nunavut territory. And the other authors were no less *parti pris*. Randy Ames was a TFN researcher (Bell, 2009); Terry Fenge was director of research for the TFN from 1985-1993 (Fenge, 2007-8: 88); and Peter Jull was the founding staff head of the Nunavut Constitutional Forum (Jull, 1988). Their stated

dark suspicions, in their book published *in medias res* in 1989, had its polemical aspects, although their alarm must have been shared by many others.

In 1987, the NWT legislative assembly had approved a document supporting the ill-fated boundary agreement, entitled “Boundary and Constitutional Agreement for the Implementation of Division of the Northwest Territories Between the Western Constitutional Forum and the Nunavut Constitutional Forum.” It also passed a motion recommending to the NWT Commissioner that a plebiscite be held on the question of the proposed boundary in May, 1987. Two years later, on October 31, 1989—possibly in return for Inuit members supporting a permanent legislature building in Yellowknife (Lewis, 1988)—the Eleventh NWT Assembly re-affirmed its support for the creation of the Nunavut territory, passing a motion introduced by MLA Peter Ernerk (Irniq), who later sat on the Nunavut Implementation Commission (Allooloo et al., 1990).

Speakers during that debate indicated that the boundary issue was very much a sticking-point: that matter was sufficient, in fact, for MLA Bruce McLaughlin to oppose the motion (Allooloo et al., 1990).

But support for the Nunavut territory was forthcoming, indicating that while Merritt and his co-authors’ analysis of the possible effects of devolution was sound and logical, there was not necessarily a behind-the-scenes scheme to abandon or subvert the Nunavut project. It might be objected, however, that the motion was one of those routine

parliamentary feel-good moves that committed no one to anything specific, and indeed one MLA, Gordon Wray, was blunt on that point:

The motion is deliberately worded so that this House is not committed to any process, is not committed to whatever conditions were created in the past, or what conditions will be created in the future. It was worded so that Nunavut could take place one year from now, 20 years from now, 50 years from now. It was deliberately done that way. The mover of the motion is simply asking that this House reaffirms the support for Nunavut, without any conditions. That is all it wants to do, because we know that if we try and put conditions in this motion we will be here for the next six or seven days; so when I hear the Member for Yellowknife North and the Member for Pine Point attempting to interpret the motion and put their conditions on the motion, then I react, because this motion does not commit us to any preconditions or future conditions. It simply affirms the support for Nunavut. That is all it does. (Allooloo et al., 1990)

Nevertheless, the GNWT turned out to be on-side. Barely a month later, on December 7, 1989, Inuit leaders met on Parliament Hill with representatives of the GNWT and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to put together an Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) on the longstanding land claim negotiations that had commenced—by fits and starts—thirteen years earlier. The territorial government was directly involved at this point because the Minister had obtained its support for coming to a resolution of the Nunavut question: at the meeting, the TFN and the GNWT agreed to develop a process, outside the land claim agreement, for the creation of Nunavut within six months of the signing of the AIP. This would include a resolution of the outstanding boundary issue, including a territory-wide plebiscite. The commitment of all three parties to bringing Nunavut into being was set out in Article 4 of the AIP (Dewar, 2009: 78):

Article 4: Nunavut Political Development

Part 1: General

4.1.1 Consistent with their long-standing positions, the Government of Canada, the Territorial Government and the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) support in principle the creation of a Nunavut Territory, and the financing of a Nunavut Government, outside of the claims agreement, as soon as possible.

4.1.2 The Territorial Government and TFN undertake to develop, within six months of the Agreement, a process for giving effect to Section 4.1.1 consistent with the Iqaluit Agreement, January 15, 1987.

4.1.3 TFN acknowledges that the process described in Section 4.1.2 shall include a territory-wide plebiscite on a boundary for division, and an agreement among the parties described in Section 4.1.1 on the division of powers (DIAND, 1990: 24).

This agreement, signed on April 30, 1990, was obviously a momentous turning-point. In anticipation of the formation of the new territory, the Nunavut Steering Committee was established in November of that year, with representation from the GNWT, TFN and the federal government. It developed language for the three-party Political Accord (see below) and for the *Nunavut Act*. It carried out various preliminary studies, and established a Transition Office in anticipation of the formation of the NIC (Memorandum, Snider, L., K. Wyman and J. Merritt, ca.1993: 1).

Resolving the outstanding boundary issue was now a *sine qua non* for both the political and the land claim negotiations. The federal government obtained the services of former NWT Commissioner John Parker, who, after consultations with the TFN and the Dene/Métis, proposed a boundary very close to the “final offer” made by TFN in 1989 (Bell, 1991). Inuit leaders accepted the proposal with some reluctance in July, 1991, extracting further concessions at the land claims table in return for their agreement. On May 4, 1992, the long-delayed plebiscite was held, and the boundary was approved by 54% of the voters (Dewar, 2009: 79; Légaré, 1998: 277).

The land claims negotiations, meanwhile, progressed rapidly to a conclusion: by December, 1991, they were all but completed. A final meeting took place in that month with the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, TFN and GNWT representatives, and all outstanding issues were resolved.

In return for the extinguishment of “aboriginal claims, rights, title and interests, if any, in and to lands and waters anywhere within Canada and adjacent offshore areas within the sovereignty or jurisdiction of Canada” (Article 2.1.1.a), the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, *inter alia*, established a Nunavut land area of 1.9 million square kilometres that included outright title to 350,000 square kilometres (with mineral rights for 35,000 square kilometres). Inuit would co-manage wildlife, resources and environmental boards with the federal government, share federal oil, gas and mineral royalties, harvest wildlife throughout the Nunavut settlement area, and receive \$1.148 billion in transfer payments over the next fourteen years, with an additional \$13 million Training Trust Fund (ATNS, 2007).

Of key importance, a beefed-up Article 4 contained an explicit commitment on the part of the federal government to establish the territory of Nunavut, including a provision that the three parties would negotiate a Political Accord to settle territorial powers, to be “generally consistent” with those of the GNWT (NPA, 1992), financial matters for the new government (including the “formula financing” by which the federal government transfers funds to the territories for the provision of public services), and the date the territory was to come into being. That was duly negotiated, and signed on October 30. The land claim agreement itself was ratified by 85% of the voters in November, sixteen years after the ITC had submitted its first claim (Dewar, 2009: 79).

The Political Accord made it very clear that the land claim and the formation of Nunavut were now inseparably linked:

3.1 The Nunavut Act shall be recommended to Parliament, as a government measure, on the date on which legislation to ratify the final agreement is tabled in Parliament, unless TFN agrees to another date.

3.2 Canada shall seek Royal Assent for the Nunavut Act coincidental to seeking Royal Assent for the legislation to ratify the final agreement unless TFN agrees otherwise.

And the NPA, along with the *Nunavut Act* signed into law on June 10, 1993, established the Nunavut Implementation Commission, the advisory body that would turn the long-fought-for idea of “Nunavut” into concrete institutions of governance.

In early 1994, the NIC commenced its work.

Chapter Three

Re/placement, entanglement, articulation: the work of the Nunavut Implementation Commission

Introduction

As it appeared in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, signed off by the TFN and the federal government negotiators on May 25, 1993, Article 4 reads, in part:

4.1.1 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.

4.1.2 Therefore, Canada and the Territorial Government and Tungavik Federation of Nunavut shall negotiate a political accord to deal with the establishment of Nunavut.

As noted in the last chapter, the three parties had already signed that Political Accord in October 1992 in anticipation. In it, they agreed upon the establishment of the Nunavut Implementation Commission, with the composition and mandate outlined below:

6.1 The Nunavut Act shall provide for a Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC) in accordance with this Accord.

6.3 The NIC shall comprise nine Commissioners appointed by the Governor in Council, three of whom shall be chosen from a list of names submitted by the GNWT and three of whom shall be chosen from a list of names submitted by the TFN. Not less than six of the

Commissioners shall be ordinarily resident in the Nunavut Settlement Area.²²

6.4 In addition to the nine Commissioners, a Chief Commissioner, who shall be acceptable to the parties hereto, shall be appointed by the Governor in Council.

6.5 An Executive Director shall be hired by the Commission, and shall manage the Commission's staff and budget. The Executive Director shall report to the Chief Commissioner, and shall act as Secretary to the Commission .

6.6 The NIC shall provide advice to the parties hereto on the creation of Nunavut.

6.6.1 Consistent with its general mandate, the NIC shall provide advice on:

(i) a timetable for the assumption of service delivery responsibilities from the GNWT, federal government or other authority, by the government of Nunavut;

(ii) the process for the first election of the government of Nunavut and for the determination of electoral districts for Nunavut;

(iii) the design of and funding for training plans;

(iv) the process for the identification of a capital city of Nunavut;

(v) the principles and criteria for an equitable division of assets and liabilities between the GNWT and the government of Nunavut;

(vi) capital infrastructure needs of Nunavut resulting from division and the creation of a new territory, and scheduling for construction;

²² Perhaps adumbrating the difficulties that the NIC encountered with the GNWT later on, the territorial government had at first insisted that all nine Commissioners other than the Chief Commissioners should be NWT MLAs. The only Qallunaak Commissioner subsequently appointed to the NIC, Nunavut businessman Kenn Harper, had “cried bloody murder” at the time, pointing out that some territorial legislators had opposed the creation of Nunavut in the first place, that MLAs were too busy in any case to devote the proper time to the task, and that the federal government had never intended the NIC to be a *de facto* sub-committee of the NWT legislature. Others joined him in his objections, and a tripartite composition of the NIC was agreed upon. Harper was then invited to be a Commissioner himself [Kenn Harper, interview].

(vii) the appropriate administrative design for the first government of Nunavut which may include personnel to administer the functions described in 7.1 with due regard for efficiencies and effectiveness; and

(viii) such other matters consistent with the Commission's mandate as may be referred to it.

The determination of the administrative design of the first Nunavut government organization is separate from the determination of ongoing federal financing arrangements for the two territories.

The responsibility for accepting and implementing the recommendations of the NIC will depend on the jurisdiction to which recommendations individually apply.

6.6.2 The NIC shall:

--

(iv) establish public information programs, which may include public meetings, to keep residents of Nunavut apprised of the Commission's work (NPA, 2002).

The NIC was formally established in the *Nunavut Act* as passed in 1993, with its composition (Section 55) and mandate (Section 58) consistent with the Accord.

In this chapter, I shall be relying heavily upon documents in the Nunavut Archives to map the work of the NIC. First, however, a few preliminary observations:

- The NIC was chaired by veteran negotiator John Amagoalik, and eight of the nine other Commissioners were Inuit.²³ Their role was to advise and consult: they had no final decision-making authority.

²³ According to Jack Anawak, the Eastern Arctic MP at the time, the Conservative government had first proposed a list including eight Qallunaat and one Inuk; Anawak's protests reversed the count (Jack Anawak, interview).

- Technical staff were predominantly Qallunaat, although the Executive Director was an Inuk, Simon Awa, now Deputy Minister of Nunavut's Environment Department. John Merritt, for example, was legal counsel to the NIC; Jack Hicks was director of research. But the work of the Commission did not appear to fracture across ethnic lines.
- The NIC cannot accurately be described as “staff-driven.” As in any organization, staff generated ideas, options and advice for their board: but in at least one notable instance affecting a fundamental aspect of governance design, staff advice was overruled.
- The NIC reported, in effect, to three masters: the federal government, the GNWT, and to Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (formerly the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut). This produced, as might be imagined, its stresses and strains.

Perhaps the most important point to make at the outset, however, is this: the legal and institutional context in which Inuit leaders (Commissioners, the NTI, NWT legislators, community officials and others) now found themselves enmeshed was in no way of their own making. In the face-to-face bipartite land claims negotiations, as restricted as the possibilities might have been, there was relatively wide scope for the parties to fashion an agreement that would be of benefit to both: the outcome, whatever it proved to be, would be an *exchange*. But with the establishment of the NIC, and the advent of on-going contestation on several fronts with respect to the design of Nunavut governance, Inuit actors had to make their own institutional choices—their “self-government,” as some have called it—compatible with, and part of, a larger framework that they had played no

part in constructing. It wasn't bargaining: this time they were engaged in a process of accommodation.

The operative word here, however, is "engaged." This was not simply an imposition of "Qallunaat" institutions and institutional values upon "Inuit" lifeways (there were, in any case, no traditional Inuit models of governance on a territory-wide scale to advance as alternatives); rather, the process of the NIC involved real, if limited, choices by everyone involved. The NIC and the various groups and individuals with whom NIC Commissioners and staff interacted—including each other—eventually produced institutions of governance using, metaphorically speaking, the materials available.

Merritt put the matter clearly:

[A]ctually in terms of legal continuity, there were definite limits. Had to be a territory, had to have the features that constitute a territory within Canadian constitutional law and its longstanding practice. Well, what does that mean? That means you're going to have three branches of government. It means you're going to have a legislative assembly. It means you're going to have a commissioner. It means that the federal government is going to be represented through a commissioner.... We thought this was all creating a third territory...not inventing a form of government in Canada that doesn't look like a province or a territory but something else completely different. (John Merritt, interview)

On the other hand, there *was* room for design: the NIC wouldn't have been necessary, after all, if there had been a pre-existing template to apply:

In theory, you know within that legal architecture [there is] enormous scope to kind of design the administration, number of departments, size of departments, location of departments, titles of officials. ...[T]hat made for a kind of interesting—I wouldn't say schizophrenia—but there was sort of an interesting yin/yang to that. On one hand there's a high level of legal, formal discipline about this in terms of what this government can do. On the other hand, at a day-

to-day administrative flow-chart kind of way it's open-ended [John Merritt, interview.].

Even so, the context defined, to a very large extent, the outcome of the process. Again speaking metaphorically, the existing political and legal DNA ensured that “Nunavut” would be “a creature that Canadians will recognize”—even if, as I shall discuss in Chapter Five, it has its distinctly chimerical aspects.

In what follows, I shall not be tracing the nuts-and-bolts assembly process in which the NIC was involved. Rather, I shall be examining some key issues that arose during that process, the way they unfolded, and their significance in the construction of “Nunavut.” These include the vexed question of decentralization (or “deconcentration”) of government into Nunavut communities; the choice of a territorial capital; a proposal for gender parity/two-member constituencies; and the possibility of direct election of the Premier.

The NIC at work²⁴

On January 13, 1994, the considerable work of the Nunavut Implementation Commission commenced with its first meeting in Rankin Inlet.²⁵ This marked the beginning of an extraordinary wide-ranging conversation that included, at various times, NTI, GNWT and federal government officials and politicians (notably in a series of Nunavut Leaders’

²⁴ In the following, I indicate in the footnotes various archival materials held in the Nunavut Archives in Igloolik. In the second section of my bibliography will be found the complete references, listed chronologically, including catalogue numbers.

²⁵ NIC Draft Minutes, January 13-16, 1994. The first Commissioners included John Amagoalik as Chief Commissioner; Meeka Kilabuk, David Alagalak and Bill Lyall, nominated by NTI; Guy Alikut, Joe Ohokannoak and Kenn Harper, nominated by the GNWT, and Mary Simon, George Qulaut and Peter Ernerk (Irniq), appointed by Ottawa. Mary Simon stepped down in 1994 to become Canada’s Arctic Ambassador, and was replaced by Clara O’Gorman. Kenn Harper’s term was not renewed, and Guy Alikut resigned in 1997. Neither was replaced.

Summits), members and leaders in the Nunavut communities (numerous public meetings, talk-shows, etc.), and other interested parties.

What I found notable about this conversation was its over-all familiarity. Governance design was largely a bureaucratic exercise, couched in planning committee language immediately recognizable to anyone who has worked in Qallunaat institutions, as I have. The task at hand had its associated discourses; and it must be said in addition that much of the paperwork was generated by the very capable and largely Qallunaat staff. Yet anyone looking for easily discernible lines of cultural encounter (or oppression) in the process will be disappointed: Inuit activists, some seasoned by many years of political involvement, participated fully in the process. Even many of the vigorous public debates among the Nunavummiut, as I shall indicate later on in the chapter, had an entirely familiar ring.

While I shall return to this, in particular with reference to the proposal for gender parity in the Nunavut legislature, I would simply note at this point the confluence of Inuit and Qallunaat actors engaged in a common task—the replication, to a very large extent, of already existing political structures and institutions that offered sufficient promise to engage Inuit in their construction.

The NIC issued a staggering number of reports and papers (all in English) during its six-year life. In 1994 it published two key discussion papers, one on the design and operation of the government to be, and one on two-member electoral constituencies with gender parity. Two major reports were published in 1995 and 1996 (*Footprints in New Snow* and *Footprints 2*, respectively), and numerous supplementary reports covering the choice of a

capital (1995), the duties of the Interim Commissioner for Nunavut (1995)²⁶, telecommunications (1995), education and training (1995), infrastructural requirements (1995), staff housing (1995), the election of the Nunavut premier (1996), and a more comprehensive look at the political structure of Nunavut and its first election (1996). It sponsored a major conference on the future of work in Nunavut in 1997, drafted a *Nunavut Wildlife Act* in that year as well, and issued a further publication on the direct election of the Premier in 1998, as well as a discussion paper on the subject of the future of the Inuktitut language (“Education & Communication,” 1998).

Very early on, the NIC established working priorities and set up standing committees to address them. These included a committee to study the choice of a Nunavut capital; one to look at Nunavut government operations (“Institutional Design, Financing and Infrastructure”); a Human Resources Committee; a communications committee; and an internal management committee²⁷.

Many of the subsequent controversial moves by the NIC were already in embryo after only a few months. On July 25, 1994, for example, John Merritt, in a memorandum to John Amagoalik entitled “Unsolicited Ideas Department,” first broached the notion of ensuring equal representation of male and female members of the Nunavut Legislature: this became the full-fledged discussion paper mentioned, published in December.²⁸ The

²⁶ Jack Anawak was appointed Interim Commissioner in 1997.

²⁷ NIC Draft Minutes, February 26 and 28, 1994.

²⁸ NIC, “Two-member constituencies,” 1994.

contentious issue of government decentralization had already been addressed in the paper on governmental design, which appeared in June.²⁹

The latter set out principles to guide the process. These included “active involvement of the Nunavut public,” open exchanges among the organizations involved, and regular meetings “with a view to defining and confirming consensus.”³⁰ With respect to the form of the Nunavut government-to-be, it would be a public government, a responsible government along Westminster lines, with a relationship to the government of Canada that would respect “conventions and practices that have evolved, and are evolving, to reinforce the political autonomy of the North.” Its “jurisdiction and activities” would “take place against the backdrop of the Nunavut [Land Claims] Agreement,” and it noted in fact that “the planning process for the establishment of the NTG [Nunavut Territorial Government] must conform in all respects to the letter and spirit of the Nunavut Agreement, including those provisions dealing with public sector employment and government contracts.”³¹ In effect, although it isn’t stated explicitly, NTI, which was and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, is here recognized *de facto* as an instrument of governance; this became more overtly the case with the signing of the Clyde River Protocol between the government of Nunavut and NTI in October 1999.³²

Administratively, decentralization would be key: “conscious efforts [would be] made to distribute government functions and activities across the regions and communities of

²⁹ NIC, “Design and Operation,” 1994.

³⁰ NIC, “Design and Operation,” 1994: 4.

³¹ NIC, “Design and Operation,” 1994: 5.

³² See also the announcement of a review of the Protocol in 2001 (Government of Nunavut, 2001) and a further reaffirmation in 2004 (Government of Nunavut, 2004a).

Nunavut.”³³ Nunavut residents made it very plain to the NIC that they didn’t want “another Yellowknife.” It was not only the matter of a distant, indeed remote, seat of government that was of concern: residents of the Nunavut territory-to-be wanted an equitable distribution of government jobs to their communities—a “fair allocation”.³⁴

And what of those jobs? Under Article 23 of the Land Claims Agreement, “representative levels of Inuit employees” (about 85% of the total) were to be achieved in the Nunavut public service. Even in 1994 this was seen as a priority,³⁵ but that goal is far from being achieved: the figure today is 52% (Auditor-General of Canada, 2010).

It was proposed that the buildings in which these jobs would be housed would have “an architecture and interior design...sympathetic to the cultural identity and history of Nunavut. A small, fixed percentage of the value of all building contracts should be devoted to the acquisition and display of works by Nunavut artists”.³⁶

Two other elements in the paper are worthy of note. With respect to international relations, once again the Nunavut government would be located within a larger context: circumpolar relations would take place “consistent with Canada’s overall foreign policy.”³⁷ And the choice of a capital for Nunavut, the paper stated, “should seek to avoid methods of public consultation that would pit regions and communities against one another in a ‘winner takes all’ atmosphere.”³⁸

³³ NIC, “Design and Operation,” 1994: 10.

³⁴ NIC, “Design and Operation,” 1994: 11; Hicks and White, 2006: 6.

³⁵ NIC, “Design and Operation,” 1994: 12.

³⁶ NIC, “Design and Operation,” 1994: 18.

³⁷ NIC, “Design and Operation,” 1994: 8.

³⁸ NIC, “Design and Operation,” 1994: 21.

Nuts, bolts, stresses and strains

From the very beginning, little innovation was proposed. In a memorandum summarizing discussions at an NIC meeting in Arviat held September 6-8, 1994, research director Jack Hicks notes:

[T]he proposed political structure of the Government of Nunavut would be very much like that of the existing GNWT, with a Premier (or Government Leader) heading a Cabinet that operates according to the principle of Cabinet solidarity. Cabinet members would be assigned individual portfolios, with some Ministers holding more than one portfolio. The staff of each department would be headed by a Deputy Minister, and the Deputy Ministers would be led by a senior Deputy Minister.³⁹

That theme was repeated in a very interesting joint meeting later that September of the GNWT Nunavut Caucus, the NIC, NTI and the sitting MP for the region, Jack Anawak. The meeting was chaired by Nunavut Caucus member Titus Allooloo, who opened the meeting with comments to the effect that “the new government must be simple, building on existing structures that are known and understood by the people, and mindful of the current climate of fiscal restraint,” the latter caution reiterated by GNWT Premier John Todd as the meeting progressed⁴⁰.

The issues of gender parity, decentralization and the choice of capital were discussed at that meeting. John Amagoalik expressed concern that the latter could prove divisive, and that the federal government could overrule a decision.⁴¹ The parties agreed that NTI, the

³⁹ NIC, “Administrative Design Options and Models,” 1994.

⁴⁰ “Joint Meeting, Nunavut Caucus/NIC/NTI/MP,” 1994: 1, 2.

⁴¹ “Joint Meeting, Nunavut Caucus/NIC/NTI/MP,”: 5.

NIC and the Nunavut Caucus would each select three representatives to meet and develop recommendations with respect to a selection process.⁴²

Tension was evident between the federal government and the GNWT: the GNWT wanted responsibility for building the Nunavut infrastructure, and indicated that discussions were going on “at the highest political levels” on the subject of “wresting...some share of control from Public Works Canada”.⁴³

It was reported that “[i]n consultations to date, the general public seem to be more interested in what the new government is going to do, as opposed to what it will look like or where it will be situated.”⁴⁴ This was perhaps reinforced by a reported confusion in the public mind between the NTI and the NIC,⁴⁵ one not confined, incidentally, to ordinary members of the public.⁴⁶

In closing the meeting, the Chair “reminded those present of the importance of continuing the Inuit tradition of cooperation and working together towards a common goal.”⁴⁷

This meeting provides an excellent snapshot of the various boundaries of contestation that had arisen at this stage. The federal government, the GNWT, the NIC, the NTI, and

⁴² “Joint Meeting, Nunavut Caucus/NIC/NTI/MP,” 6.

⁴³ “Joint Meeting, Nunavut Caucus/NIC/NTI/MP,” 5.

⁴⁴ “Joint Meeting, Nunavut Caucus/NIC/NTI/MP,” 2.

⁴⁵ “Joint Meeting, Nunavut Caucus/NIC/NTI/MP,” 2, 6.

⁴⁶ In frustration, Peter Irniq wrote:

“I have decided not to participate or speak to the [economic development] conference being held here in Kangliqiniq [Rankin Inlet] this week. This is because of so much confusion and incompetency on the part of their Superintendent, Mr. —.

“... [W]hen I spoke to Mr — this morning, he tells me that he gets confused with all those organizations i.e. NTI, NIC, etc., and yet he is well-paid I am sure to take responsibility.” (Ernerk, P. [Irniq], letter, June 8, 1995).

⁴⁷ “Joint Meeting, Nunavut Caucus/NIC/NTI/MP,” 1994: 1, 2.

the general Nunavut public (itself hardly homogeneous, as Amagoalik's fear of division indicates) were all contending parties in the creation of the new territory. The invoking by the Chair of "Inuit tradition" underscores these divisions and also the fact that, by having to be made explicit, that "tradition" itself had become, at least to some extent, reified: what had once been uncontentiously lived was now expressed as a *rule*.

Further fault lines may be discerned in a submission that October from NTI to Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin. The NTI's position, as articulated in the document, was one of Inuit nationalism. It demanded the recognition of the Inuit as a distinct people with the inherent right of self-government, "within [the] existing state," in part to be realized through the creation of the Nunavut Territorial Government. While it was in agreement with the notion of public government, it demanded protection of Inuit "language, culture and practices," with "substantive review and renegotiation in the event of unexpected demographic changes,"⁴⁸ presumably referring to the possibility of Inuit becoming a minority in the territory. It insisted that sufficient federal support be made available to allow full Inuit participation "in debates over their political future,"⁴⁹ and to guarantee public services "reasonably comparable to that of other Canadians."⁵⁰ With respect to the NIC, both the federal and territorial governments were to pay attention to the Commission's advice: but the NIC in turn "must listen carefully to what Inuit have to say."⁵¹

⁴⁸ NTI, "Implementation of the Inherent Right of Self Government in Nunavut," 1994: 3,12.

⁴⁹ NTI, "Implementation of the Inherent Right of Self Government in Nunavut," 1994: 7-8.

⁵⁰ NTI, "Implementation of the Inherent Right of Self Government in Nunavut," 1994: 11.

⁵¹ NTI, "Implementation of the Inherent Right of Self Government in Nunavut," 1994: 6.

And NTI defined a clear boundary between itself and the future government of Nunavut: “The Nunavut Government, once established, must avoid the creation of additional regulatory bodies with responsibilities that fall within the jurisdiction of the land claims institutions.”⁵²

These tensions played out during the construction process—and some continue unabated to the present day. The various contending parties had their own interests at heart, as well as their common project. There was an over-all sense on the part of the NIC that the Minister of DIAND, Ron Irwin, had “final control” of things.⁵³ The federal government, on the hook for financing the project, was, from the NIC/NTI/GNWT perspective, annoyingly non-committal about the funds it was prepared to disburse.⁵⁴ It appeared that Irwin was going behind the back of the NIC as well, hosting his own meeting of Nunavut leaders: Amagoalik protested bitterly⁵⁵ and the NIC eventually received an invitation.⁵⁶

The Premier of the NWT Don Morin was concerned about the role of the NIC⁵⁷ and also with Irwin;⁵⁸ the NIC was treated on at least one occasion in an insultingly high-handed fashion by the GNWT through its Nunavut Caucus.⁵⁹ The GNWT expressed unease with some NIC recommendations in *Footprints 2*, and implicitly accused the NIC of inconsistency between that report and the earlier *Footprints in New Snow*: this prompted an indignant rebuttal in the form of a confidential memorandum to the NIC from staff

⁵² NTI, “Implementation of the Inherent Right of Self Government in Nunavut,” 1994: 9.

⁵³ NIC, Minutes, May 23-4, 1995: 4.

⁵⁴ Memorandum, Merritt to Amagoalik, October 3, 1995: 2.

⁵⁵ Amagoalik, letter, August 28, 1995.

⁵⁶ NIC, Minutes, September 12-14, 1995: 6.

⁵⁷ Morin, letter, May 23, 1996.

⁵⁸ Morin, letter, May 15, 1996.

⁵⁹ Hicks to NIC Commissioners and staff, Memorandum, May 14, 1996.

member Larry Elkin.⁶⁰ Meanwhile senior officials jockeyed for position with the new Office of the Interim Commissioner, causing NTI concern.⁶¹

Office of the Interim Commissioner

Because the role of the NIC was advisory only, the Office of the Interim Commissioner had been established by the federal government to make decisions affecting the transition of governance and other matters over to the new territory. In 1997, this office was filled by Jack Anawak, who remained in the position until early 1999, when he dropped out to run for a seat in the new Nunavut legislature (which he subsequently won).

As underlined in an NIC briefing note, “an Interim Commissioner will be the only person with statutory authority to bind the Nunavut Government with respect to any matter dealing with personnel, government organization, programs, and finances prior to April 1, 1999.” A few months earlier, the NIC had recommended, in a supplementary report following the publication of *Footprints in New Snow* a selection process and a mandate.⁶²

DIAND Minister Ron Irwin informed Anawak of his duties, which would include “implement[ing] the organizational model set out in Footprints 2.... You are to secure the agreement of the Parties prior to making any significant modifications to the model, including any modifications with respect to the following: the number of departments; the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) and the allocation of FTEs across

⁶⁰ “Review and Analysis of the Government of the NWT Response to ‘Footprints 2’,” February 13, 1997.

⁶¹ A. Campbell, letter, “Coordinating Committee of Officials on Nunavut,” November 14, 1997.

⁶² “Memorandum, Merritt to Amagoalik, October 3, 1995: Appendix A, issue #2: An Interim Commissioner for Nunavut,” August 18, 1995:.

departments; the location of offices in communities; and the allocation of FTEs across communities.”⁶³

Governance design

Those design features had been hard-won. The nuts and bolts of governance, including the number of MLAs, the number of departments and the distribution, more accurately described as “deconcentration” (Hicks and White, 2006: 2), of government within Nunavut, had been the subject of considerable planning and, on at least one occasion, much rancour within the NIC. Most of the staff were of the view that entire departments should be located outside the capital city, but one, a former Deputy Minister in the GNWT, won the day with the NIC Commissioners with the proposal that all Deputy Ministers be located in the capital.⁶⁴ This was precisely the centralization of authority that had been seen as a problem with the Yellowknife model (Hicks and White, 2006: 6-7), but it ended up as a recommendation in *Footprints in New Snow*.⁶⁵ It is fair to suggest, however, that this may have all been of less consequence to the ordinary Nunavummiut, whose interest, as already noted, was more immediately focused upon a fair distribution of jobs across the territory.

⁶³ Irwin, letter to Anawak, April 17, 1997. Anawak’s performance in the role soon came under fire: it appeared that he was unwilling to make any decisions that would apply once the new government was in power (Memorandum, Randy Ames to John Amagoalik, December 23, 1997; Harper, K., interview).

⁶⁴ The former DM was Larry Elkin (Jack Hicks, interview). Dennis Patterson, at the time a GNWT MLA, took precisely the same position in a letter to John Amagoalik (Letter, August 25, 1994).

⁶⁵ Note also Hicks and White’s original title for this paper, “Building Nunavut Through Decentralization or Carpet-Bombing it into Near-total Dysfunction: a Case Study in Organizational Engineering,” 2005. On-line: <http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2005/Hicks.pdf> [July 15, 2010].

The NIC, during its existence, dealt with a number of issues that had considerably more public reach. These included the number of seats in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly, over which they pondered for a considerable time, ultimately recommending 20 or 22 seats in its December 1996 report, “Nunavut’s Legislature, Premier and First Election.” But the resolution of this question had its twists and turns. After a proposal for two-member electoral constituencies with gender parity was unexpectedly defeated (see below), the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission, established by the GNWT, recommended a 17-seat legislature in a report published in June, 1997, but NTI pushed hard for a larger legislature in keeping with the NIC’s recommendation; at the January 1988 Leaders Summit, the three parties agreed on 19 electoral ridings (Hicks and White, 2000: 74-5, 104n).

Capacity-Building

The NIC also dealt with the crucial question of capacity-building for the running of the new territory. Its aims from the beginning were ambitious: the new public service of Nunavut was to be 50% Inuit from start-up,⁶⁶ and building management capacity was seen as a priority.⁶⁷

NIC researcher Randy Ames generated a comprehensive memorandum on building information technologies on June 16, 1997, which was intended to generate advice for the Interim Commissioner. In it, he argued for their importance in binding Nunavut

⁶⁶ Nunavut Conference, “Design of the Nunavut Government,” February 22-23, 1995: 4.

⁶⁷ Canadian Centre for Management Development, “A Nunavut Management Trainee Program,” February, 1995.

communities together.⁶⁸ And he expressed the fear that infrastructure monies available from the federal government were inadequate to the task.⁶⁹

Meanwhile the federal Nunavut Secretariat issued a progress report in that same month regarding on-going training for the Nunavut public service-to-be—specifically, to qualify Inuit for 600 new Nunavut government headquarters positions.⁷⁰

But NIC dealt with the issue of capacity most notably by organizing a conference on the future of work in Nunavut. The conference, held on March 3-5, 1997, included 150 participants in Iqaluit and, simultaneously, 100 other people taking part in community discussion groups. The conference was broadcast by Television Northern Canada to a wide viewing audience across the North.

The Preface to the final report of this conference⁷¹ sets the context:

On April 1, 1999, a new Nunavut Territory and Government will be created. Expectations are high, particularly in the area of employment opportunities with the Nunavut Government. The reality is that not enough government jobs will be created to meet the current demand for employment, and with another 10,000 or so Nunavut residents entering the workforce within 10 years following the creation of Nunavut, the NIC thought it both timely and important that governments, the private sector and Inuit organizations begin to look at options for better distributing employment opportunities in Nunavut.

...It was apparent from the ensuing presentations and discussions that Inuit society has been in turmoil since camp life was transformed to settlement living. Traditional values and the camp lifestyle that served Inuit so well frayed under the pressures of settlement living. Physical dispersion of families throughout larger settlements eroded daily family contact and cohesion; formal education of youth interfered with Elders performing their traditional roles of transmitting traditional

⁶⁸ Memorandum, Ames, R., "Refreshing the Screen," 1997.

⁶⁹ Memorandum, Ames, R., "Refreshing the Screen," 1997: 19.

⁷⁰ "Nunavut Secretariat, "Progress Report on Training," June 1997.

⁷¹ Final Report, Future of Work in Nunavut Conference, May, 1997.

cultural values; exposure to the outside world and access to material goods created a new set of demands, values and expectations; an increasing need for cash affected people's ability to live off the land and promoted a demand for employment; and with a decline in land based activities came a loss of spirituality and a sense of self worth that came from living on the land.

Today, people and communities are in a state of disequilibrium. Many live in overcrowded housing conditions; youth and adults abuse their minds and bodies with alcohol and drugs; spousal, child and sexual abuse is common; theft is not uncommon; suicide rates are extremely high, particularly amongst young Inuit males; competition rather than cooperation appears to be the norm; services traditionally provided free to others now require payment; culturally irrelevant formal education has eroded confidence and created a sense of worthlessness and a lack of self-esteem; a huge void exists between Elders and Youth; and there is an overriding feeling of despair amongst many. It is against this backdrop that people stated their views and measured their comments against what was said [by] presenters, panellists and what they heard from those in communities....

The conference, using the latest in communications technology, brought together a diverse group of people from all over the Eastern Arctic: “[h]unters and trappers; persons with disabilities; Nunavut Inuit and NWT politicians⁷²; Nunavut community mayors; federal Senators; educators; construction and trades people, Inuit organization and co-op representatives; and federal and territorial government officials and politicians....”⁷³

The conference set out needs rather than producing an action plan; as John Amagoalik noted, it “identified issues” and “put us back in touch with our common goals”.⁷⁴ It also placed a new focus upon the technology that had helped to make the conference a success.

⁷² In fact, only the deputy premier of the GNWT, Goo Arlooktoo, attended, and in a prepared speech noted that Inuit would have to adopt new values: punctuality, loyalty, honesty and ambition (Phillips, 1997).

⁷³ Final Report, Preface, 2.

⁷⁴ “To the Reader,” Amagoalik, June 30, 1997.

An NIC executive summary of the conference report boldly linked the future of work to traditional Inuit values:

The world is in the midst of a revolutionary shift from an industrial to an information-based economy. This new economy will require a lot less wage labour due to the advancement of technology and will involve a major transformation in how work is organized and distributed in society. Essentially, this means that the notion that everyone should have a standard, nine-to-five, year-round job is rapidly becoming obsolete. The concept of work in the future will be radically different than it is today.

Traditional Inuit values seem much closer to the emerging vision of the future of work than to the prevailing western industrial model. With the creation of Nunavut, Inuit may be able to avoid the worst pitfalls of the old model and assume a place on the leading edge of change.⁷⁵

Political contention

The NIC dealt with three thorny political issues in its research, consultations and deliberations. The first of these—a proposal for the direct election of the Nunavut Premier—attracted support, but never came to fruition. It was the subject of a NIC discussion paper in 1996,⁷⁶ which indicated at the beginning that the idea was popular as a means of “reinforcing accountability to the public and strengthening the hand of a Government Leader operating in a “non-party’ system,” but posed “practical difficulties.”⁷⁷

The latter would certainly have included the grafting of a presidential system onto a model of responsible government. How would a directly-elected Premier be held

⁷⁵ “Future of Work Executive Summary,” n.d.

⁷⁶ “Selection of a Premier in Nunavut,” July 10, 1996.

⁷⁷ NIC, “Direct Election,” 1996: 2.

accountable by the legislature? How could he or she be removed for wrongdoing? The issue was too thorny to grasp, and the NIC recommended in its December 1996 supplementary report that the first Premier be chosen by the legislative assembly under the consensus government model in operation in the NWT, but that the legislature “be given the jurisdiction to institute a system of direct election of Premier in the future” (NIC, “Nunavut’s Legislature,” 1996b: 2; Hicks and White, 2000:69). The three parties at the Nunavut Leaders Summit in 1998 agreed. In the event, the first Nunavut legislative assembly decided in June, 1999 to postpone the matter *sine die* (Bell, J., 1999).

The second issue, already touched on above, was the selection of a capital for Nunavut. As noted, it was sensitive, and the NIC hoped that the Minister of DIAND, Ron Irwin, would take the matter out of their hands and make the decision, something he was loath to do.⁷⁸ NIC’s inability to achieve consensus on a capital while at the same time maintaining reluctance to hold a plebiscite⁷⁹ was causing delays in the process, and finally the Minister’s hand was forced: he held a plebiscite on December 11, 1995 in which Iqaluit was favoured over Rankin Inlet by 60% of the voters.⁸⁰

The third issue was the proposal for two-member constituencies, with gender parity. As indicated above, the idea originally came from NIC staff member John Merritt and then developed into a full-fledged proposal by December 1994, buttressed by considerable research. This attracted the approval of the NIC Commissioners, and was enthusiastically supported by Chief Commissioner John Amagoalik: it found its way into *Footprints in*

⁷⁸ NIC, Minutes, May 23 & 24, 1995: 3.

⁷⁹ NIC, “Communiqué: NIC Emphasizes the Need for an Early Decision on the Choice of a Capital for Nunavut,” September, 12, 1995.

⁸⁰ NIC, “Choosing a Capital,” June 30, 1995; Hicks and White, 2000: 67.

New Snow (Appendix A-8) and was formally recommended to the three parties by the NIC in December, 1996, in its supplementary report, “Nunavut’s Legislature, Premier and First Election” (“Nunavut’s Legislature,” 1996b: 2).

Unlike most of the public debates on the creation of Nunavut, this one attracted considerable heat. It is interesting that the debate would have been, once again, so familiar to a Qallunaat audience. The Yes side promoted equality of opportunity, the No side (personified in the GNWT’s only woman member of the Nunavut Caucus at the time, Manitok Thompson) argued against special measures and in favour of the notion of gender-neutral merit.

Reference was made, of course, to various accounts of Inuit tradition as armament in the debates. John Amagoalik recalled⁸¹: “In the old days when we were living in camps, the father and mother always had equal value. Their work was considered to have equal value.” He went on to note that settlement disrupted this pattern of equality, echoing the views of archaeologist Peter Dawson noted in Chapter One (Dawson, 1995:71, 75).

Martha Flaherty, president of the Inuit women’s advocacy organization Pauktuutit, was evidently reacting to an opposing vision of the past, and made an excellent point about the hoary old “frozen in time” notion of culture as well, when she said: “We can’t romanticize the past by rejecting the idea because ‘it’s not our culture.’ Today, we watch TV, we ride skidoos. Gee, this is not ‘our culture’ either!” (cited in “Nunavut’s Legislature,” 1996b: 36).

⁸¹ Phillips, T. “Leaders embrace gender parity,” *Nunatsiaq News*, November 29, 1996.

For her part, Maniok Thompson emerged as what would seem to a Qallunaat well-versed in feminist debates, a classic conservative “queen bee.” She was quite willing to meet men on their own ground, but had little sympathy for women who didn’t enter the political arena: “I, for one, do not believe that it is right to put me, as a woman, in a position where, for the rest of my political career, I will only be able to run against women, because that is what gender parity means.”⁸² She agreed that there were barriers that prevented women from taking up the challenge of public office,⁸³ but said that if she could be elected, any woman could (Steele and Tremblay, 2005).⁸⁴

Thompson had the support of the Nunavut Caucus of the NWT MLAs, and of then-MP Jack Anawak, while the proposal for gender parity was strongly supported by NTI,⁸⁵ Pauktuutit and of course by the NIC (Hicks and White, 2000: 72). DIAND Minister Ron Irwin was in favour on condition that it be a temporary measure.⁸⁶ At the Nunavut Leaders’ Summit in Cambridge Bay held on February 16-17, 1997, GNWT opposition to the proposal was palpable. The Chair, GNWT MLA Kevin Ng, who expressed strong opposition to the idea,⁸⁷ refused to permit NIC members to speak.⁸⁸ Given the lack of consensus, it was decided that a plebiscite on the matter would be held to settle the question.

⁸² Bourgeois, A. “Gender parity to be decided by plebiscite.” *Nunatsiaq News*, February 21, 1997.

⁸³ Phillips, T. “The Royal Jelly.” *Nunatsiaq News*, November 29, 1996.

⁸⁴ The discussion at the Nunavut Leaders’ Meeting in November 1996, in which Thompson took full part, sets out the two sides of the debate in more detail: “Nunavut Leaders’ Meeting Commencing in the Town of Iqaluit in the Northwest Territories,” November 23-4, 1996.

⁸⁵ Phillips, T. “The Royal Jelly.” *Nunatsiaq News*, November 29, 1996.

⁸⁶ Bourgeois, A. “Gender parity law would be phased out.” *Nunatsiaq News*, May 9, 1997. The title of the article is misleading: John Amagoalik was politic enough at this point (literally days before the plebiscite) to promise a review two terms after the vote, while NTI supported a review after 12 years.

⁸⁷ Bourgeois, A. “Gender parity to be decided by plebiscite,” *Nunatsiaq News*, February 21, 1997.

⁸⁸ Bourgeois, A. “Cambridge Bay meeting gets a ‘3’ rating.” *Nunatsiaq News*, February 21, 1997.

The plebiscite duly took place on May 26, 1997, and the proposition went down to defeat 57% to 43%. Voter turnout was surprisingly light—39% (Hicks and White, 2000: 73, 74). Various explanations for both the vote and the turnout have been advanced: Inuit were out on the land at the time of the plebiscite, the public was put off by the tone of the debate, or perhaps it was not an important issue for ordinary Nunavummiut (Hicks and White, 2000: 74; Williamson, 2006: 58-9). Much of this appears to be little more than speculation, although the last point may be self-evident. Absence, in any case, is ambiguous. Recalling that Inuit traditionally avoided confrontation, however, the North American-style framing of the discussion might well have been off-putting to many.

Nine years later all had been seemingly forgotten, as Laakkuluk Williamson notes:

When I spoke to my informants about the gender parity proposal of 1997, only one of the 10 had ever heard about it. Although at the time of my interviews, all of them had completed at least grade 12 and many were attending a college designed to teach Inuit youth about political history, none had any exposure to the issue and many were confused about the implications. While they all agreed that women and men should be equal, not everyone was quite sure whether this had been the case in the past. Few had ever thought about the low number of women that currently sit in the Nunavut legislature (Williamson, 2006: 64).

By agreement among the three parties, after a recommendation to that effect by the NIC in December, 1996 (“Nunavut’s Legislature,” 2006b: 2), the election of 19 MLAs to the first Nunavut Legislative Assembly took place on February 15, 1999, so that with the proclamation of Nunavut a month and a half later a government would be already in place. Only one woman was elected—Manitok Thompson.

Artifacts of encounter

Over the years of planning for Nunavut, a number of odd and curious assemblages were created on the symbolic level that indicate the multiple lines of encounter that converged at the time. During the NIC's North Baffin tour in December 1994, John Amagoalik used the image of the *inukshuk*⁸⁹ to describe the Nunavut-to-be:

Using inukshuk as an example – the inukshuk needs a solid base. The solid base is the Land Claim Agreement. NIC is putting together the legs, body and the arms. It does not have a head yet – the head will be in place when the Nunavut Legislative Assembly is elected in January, 1999.⁹⁰

But when addressing schoolchildren in Resolute Bay, he explained the same notion by referring to a “Teenage Mutant Ninja Inukshuk”!⁹¹

Two further examples of the imbrication of extraordinarily disparate “cultural” elements: first, a Nunavut Leaders Summit held in Cambridge Bay February 16-17, 1997 that began with piping the delegates into the meeting hall and a rendition of “O Canada” in both English and Innuinaqtun.⁹² Second, a lively quest to develop a coat of arms, a flag and other symbols.⁹³

Scottish and heraldic traditions, a Qallunaat anthem and a popular North American children's cartoon were thus brought into conjunction with Inuit images and a project for

⁸⁹ Technically, Amagoalik was referring to an *inunnguaq* (Heyes, 2002: 143). Space does not here permit a detailed description of *inuksuit*, which, as Heyes notes, are “markers on the temporal landscape,” not merely effigies” (Heyes, 2002: 142).

⁹⁰ NIC, “North Baffin Tour,” 1994: 25.

⁹¹ NIC, “North Baffin Tour,” 1994: 31.

⁹² “Decisions 97,” 1997.

⁹³ *Footprints in New Snow*, 1995: 90; *Footprints 2*, 1996a: 16; “NIC, Minutes, March 4-6, 1998,” 5.

what some have called “self-determination.”⁹⁴ The essentialism bound up in the latter concept is here confronted by the ceaseless flow, translation and reinscription inherent in cultural processes (see Merry, 2006).

As for the traditional embodied knowledge of the Inummariit, little of that could be discerned in the schema within which *Footprints in New Snow* was framed: the organization of the report’s appendices began with a map followed by a short chronology of the territory from the Vikings onwards, locating Nunavut’s place in time and space in purely Cartesian terms.

My point is not to draw over-hasty conclusions from these very few observations of the continual flux of encounter of which a “culture,” particularly in a world of global communications, consists. I wish simply to illustrate some of the fusions and confusions that can arise as disparate elements jostle together, conjoined as they were by plan and happenstance, whether these are contending parties, bureaucracies and institutions, symbols or practices.

Not all such juxtapositions form lines of active contestation; some blend, merge, resolve or merely coexist. Some, however, remain in relatively stable and uncomfortable relation. Nunavut, more than ten years after it became a territory, remains very much an “agitated space” of ghosts and chimeras, of discomforts and articulations. The NIC in its introduction to *Footprints in New Snow* perhaps presciently wrote in 1995:

We have been this way before. Once, we were self-governing and self-sufficient. This past is like the hardened footprints we see in the hard snow during the early spring of each year.

⁹⁴ For example, NIC Commissioner Mary Simon, quoted in *Footprints in New Snow*, 6.

As we travel towards Nunavut, *which to us represents both the past and the future*, we are guided by the hardened prints in the snow. But we also find that a new blanket of snow has covered our land. We leave our footprints in this new snow. Footprints, which the next generation will follow. (*Footprints in New Snow*, 1995: i, emphasis added)

The past and the future are never easily or seamlessly conjoined.

On April 1, 1999, “Nunavut” was proclaimed. It was neither an end nor a beginning. “In the final analysis, the most compelling meanings of ‘Nunavut’ will be the ones defined, and constantly re-defined, by the people of Nunavut over generations to come” (*Footprints in New Snow*, 1995: 2).

Chapter Four

Makers and planners: an imaginary conversation

Note: This chapter is intended to bring together, in a constructed dialogic format, six accounts: from two members of the Nunavut Implementation Commission (Kenn Harper, a Qallunaak businessman and former teacher in the North, and Peter Irniq, an Inuk who was a GNWT MLA, played a number of other political roles, and subsequently became a Deputy Minister of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth in the Government of Nunavut); three NIC staff (Simon Awa, an Inuk who is now Deputy Minister of the Environment in Nunavut; and two Qallunaat, John Merritt, legal counsel to the NIC and presently legal counsel to the ITK, and Jack Hicks, who was Director of Research for the NIC); and the former Interim Commissioner of Nunavut (Jack Anawak, an Inuk who had been a federal Liberal MP for the Eastern Arctic, and later a Nunavut MLA and Cabinet Minister).

All elements of this “conversation” are quotations from interviews that I carried out in August, September and October, 2009: I have tried not to wrench them out of context in this verbal collage. The purpose is severalfold: first, to add the essential personal element to the previous chapters that dealt with groups, structures and organizations; secondly, to give a sense of the many entangled narratives, Inuk and Qallunaak, that are implicated in the notion of “Nunavut”; and thirdly, to outline in more personal form the context in which these narratives were constructed. My own interpolations appear in italics.

Let me start with you, Jack Anawak, and I'd like to hear from Peter and Simon on this...could you tell me a bit about growing up Inuit in the Eastern Arctic?

ANAWAK: Well, [*I grew*] up in a hunting gathering society when I was a kid, or when I was up to 12 years old, moving with the seasons. At the time in Repulse Bay there was only two buildings...the Roman Catholic Church and the Hudson's Bay.

But anyway all of a sudden we were overwhelmed by the fact that life had changed. And. English education was introduced through a residential school in Chesterfield Inlet, for Catholics. So we went through that.

We escaped a lot of the treatment that First Nations people got in residential schools. But we did get physical, sexual, emotional abuse. But our advantage over the First Nations was we went to Chesterfield in September, but went back home in May. And started again living off the land with our parents. And I think that's what probably saved us, a lot of us, from totally losing control over our lives.

IRNIQ: I guess I could start off by saying I was born in an igloo. So I came from an igloo to a highrise in less than 50 years. I went from Inuit oil lamps to diesel oil in less than 50 years. I was born in an igloo in 1947 and lived in an igloo for the first 12 years of my life. I was born east of Naujaat; Repulse Bay. Naujaat is the traditional name of Repulse Bay which means seagull fledglings.

I grew up watching my father hunting and fishing and trapping and my mother sewing her caribou clothing or sealskin clothing. I wore traditional clothes, such as caribou skins. I wore traditional sealskin boots sewn by my mother. And I ate raw meat, frozen meat; fish, which is much the same way my parents did, my grandparents did, my ancestors did for many thousands of years.

When I was growing up, we survived from the land. So I have always been taught to respect the land that I walk on; to respect the environment I walk on.

I lived the igloo life for the first 12 years of my life until I was taken forcibly from my parents by the Roman Catholic Church and the Canadian government so that I could be sent to a residential school in Chesterfield Inlet. I saw a bathtub for the first time. I saw a pair of shoes for the first time. I saw short sleeve shirts and I saw a pair of jeans for the first time in my life.

The whole idea of residential school was to assimilate the Inuit to become white men and women like the people in southern Canada. That was the whole purpose of residential school. So we were taught in English and to add, arithmetic. And we were not allowed to speak our own language. But luckily, many of us—my generation of Inuit—when we would go home in the springtime, we would continue to speak our own language with our parents and among ourselves.

I was sent to southern Canada in 1965 to work at a furniture factory wiping furniture—chairs and cabinets for radio and television—at Electrohome Furniture Factory in Kitchener, Ontario. You can imagine how much change that was from igloo to furniture factory in those days.

AWA: I was born at the wrong time, in the wrong place, on March 10, 1953. And that was one of the years where the wildlife were very scarce. And it was dead of the winter, even though it was March. And our sod house (*qarmaq*) in the camp where I was born didn't have heat because we didn't have seal oil for *qilliq*. And my mother, because there was no food, didn't have enough to feed me, breast milk to feed me. So what my

grandfather did was took some old bones, scrounged old bones, ground them to make a broth out of them and mouth fed me for ... I don't know how long.

At the age of 10, my parents were told by the federal government, that your kids have to go to school. So my parents were still living in the camp and we were off to school in Igloolik. And from there I went to Churchill Vocational School in Churchill for the next three years.

And if I might ask how the Qallunaat here went North?

HARPER: Well, I grew up in Ontario. Then I went north when I was 21 as a teacher ...and then I left teaching but remained in the North. I opened a small business in Arctic Bay (by its very nature it had to be small if it was in Arctic Bay). And did research and writing and language study and things of that nature. The business was to allow me to do all these other wonderful things I wanted to do. But of course I underestimated the fact that business takes up a great deal of time, too. And I was also very good at it, so I became very successful in business.

HICKS: I did my undergraduate studies in Egypt. And the last year I was there I just became interested in what was happening back in Canada with aboriginal peoples. And a number of fellow students asked me for my take on what was going on. And I had to admit I had no idea. I had never met an aboriginal person. So I decided that when I came

back I would like to get a summer job in the north and check it out, which I did. And that was 28 years ago.

MERRITT: OK; born in Chatham, Ontario, went to the University of Ottawa, got a law degree and history degree at Ottawa U. Graduated in '77, called to the bar '79. Looked around for a job; saw an ad in the paper: it was Inuit Tapirisat Canada, the national organization handling Nunavut's land claims issues, so I got hired as a very, very junior inexperienced lawyer. I was looking for a job to do something interesting. And so I started in 1979.

How did you all get involved in the creation of Nunavut?

MERRITT: The Commission was one of the institutional features that was intended to guide the design of the government. And I suspected it would be really fun to be there in the process to try to shape that government during that period. So I signed on.

ANAWAK: I played a role because I was president of KIA—Kitikmeot Inuit Association at one point. And Kitikmeot Inuit Association was part of that group called Inuit Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut. And so I was involved in that prior to becoming a Member of Parliament. But even the term “land claims” bothered the hell out of me, because it went like, well, we're here to claim some land. Wait a minute. What land are we claiming? The land we already have? When did we un-claim this land here?

In the early '70s, again they started the land claims. And at that time we had started the process, talking about separating from the Northwest Territories, because the government of the Northwest Territories was very insensitive to our needs and our wants in this part of the Northwest Territories. We had some demands. And some of those demands were cultural, inclusions in schools, all these other things. And the attitude of the government of the Northwest Territories was well, if there's money left over, we'll put it into cultural, education, some other things. If there's money left over instead of being part of the actual budget. So that was part of our problem. And so the movement started to divide the Northwest Territories into two.

And I remember, on the term "Nunavut," I was in Tuktoyaktuk and the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada decided to adopt the term "Nunavut" into the actual negotiations. And the people were saying well, "Nunavut" means "our land." What about all the Qallunaat who are living up here? Well, I said, it's a name, the term "Nunavut." And so actually I passed that motion to adopt "Nunavut" as in 1975, I think it was, in Tuktoyaktuk.

I remember in 1993, in June 4 of 1993 we passed the Nunavut land claims; the Nunavut Act and the Nunavut Land Claims Negotiated Act. At that time when we passed those two bills, there was a plan by the government to create an organization called Nunavut Implementation Commission. And that Nunavut Implementation Commission, comprised of 10 members, would be determining what the government of Nunavut was going to look like.

After I became parliamentary secretary [to *DIAND Minister Ron Irwin*], I was shown a list of Inuit, or what the [now-defeated] Conservative Party had suggested for the new membership list of the Nunavut Implementation Commission. And I looked at the list and I saw 10 names, nine of whom were either bureaucrats or not Inuit. So I said that can't be; this can't be, you know. So I said no. Let me come up with the names. So that original list of 10 names was nine non-Inuit and one Inuit. By the time I was finished, there was nine Inuit and one non-Inuit. And I had convinced John Amagoalik to take over the chair.

HARPER: The government of the Northwest Territories decided that the nine representative people should be territorial legislators and that they should form the NIC. I had nothing to do with NIC because it hadn't been constituted yet, but I thought this was terribly wrong. This was never meant to be a sub-committee of the territorial legislature. So I cried bloody murder and phoned a bunch of people, including my friend Dennis Patterson, who is now Senator Patterson and still a close friend. And so I got back the question well, how do you think it should be constituted? And I said well, the same way other allegedly representative bodies are constituted. Upon the recommendation of somebody, maybe you in the legislature can recommend people, Indian Affairs will then appoint. So that idea seemed to carry weight.

And then, lo and behold, I got a call saying well, would you like to be one of them? So I was appointed to the NIC. And I was the only white person appointed. I mean, many of

the staff were white but I was the only non-Inuit. I was the token honky on the NIC. So that's how I got there.

How did you get involved, Simon?

AWA: I think the history of that was when I first went to school through residential school like Igloolik. From what I could learn of the federal government process and territorial government process, maybe becoming an activist—if I can put it that way—stopped on me through my education, seeing the outside world; well, limited outside world at that time. But if Inuit don't do anything, just sit idle and be governed from a foreign place like Ottawa or Yellowknife, Inuit were not going to progress anywhere and speak for themselves. So that is where my interest came in that I need to do something for my fellow Inuit and Inuit for generations to come. I think that was the turning point where I started to get involved.

I was part of the land claims negotiations process back in '70s when I was a young man. I was one of the few workers responsible for informing and advising the public of the progress of the land claim negotiations for the federal government. And after that, I got involved with Inuit organizations. I was a member of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, I mean at that time, ITC. And I think it was after that that I was with the Land Claims Commission during the negotiations again. I took a break for a while from that process, from the Inuit organization, and worked for CBC for 14 years. And then, when I was working with the CBC, John Amagoalik, who was just appointed as Chief Commissioner for the Nunavut

Implementation Commission, called me up, because he knew I was involved in the land claims process and negotiations and involved with Inuit organizations. “We’re looking for an executive director for the Nunavut Implementation Commission.” So early ’94 I became Executive Director for the Nunavut Implementation Commission.

I think the majority or half [*of the staff*] were Inuit and half were non-Inuit. [*They*] respected the process and the decisions of the Inuit at that time and did a lot of work. In fact there was a couple of reports, *Footprints in New Snow* and *Footprints 2* and other smaller reports. So a lot of work was put into realizing Nunavut in these five years, 1994 to 1999. So I thought that was a great achievement, a huge achievement for the Commission to be able to do that: with many, many recommendations, with those reports.

The difficulty was trying to have three parties, federal government, territorial government, Tunngavik Federation, agree to some or all of the recommendations. A lot of our good recommendations were adopted: in terms of the size of the public service, the number of MLAs, the decentralized model of the government; were all adopted. It was an interesting⁹⁵ historical process that we went through.

HICKS: I gradually got increasingly involved in public affairs and politics. And ended up as executive director of ITC, the national Inuit organization. And then I left that position to focus on special projects like the Royal Commission [*on Aboriginal Peoples*], the

⁹⁵ In fact the final number of MLAs—19—was decided by the three parties after pressure from NTI to increase the 17 recommended by the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission (Hicks and White, 2000: 75).

relocation to the higher Arctic; stuff like that. And then I was offered the position of director of research for the NIC and I took it.

IRNIQ: I did not want to work at a furniture factory for the rest of my life. So I went to seek the permission of the government of Canada—Indian Affairs—and asked them if I could go back to school because they paid for my education. Canadians paid for our education at residential school. So they said yes and they sent me back to school in Ottawa in 1967, 68.

The economy took me to Churchill, Manitoba when I was taken on as an announcer operator for CBC in 1969 and 1970. Then from there: when I was here in Ottawa, I watched a lot of politics. I learned a great deal about the freedom of being Canadian because we weren't free as Inuit in my time. We had a colonialist government, we had an "apartheid" government that was in place for Inuit, and as a matter of fact for First Nations. So in 1966, '67, '68 and part of '69, southern Canada taught me that I was a Canadian; that I had a freedom to speak; that I had a freedom to do whatever I wanted to do.

I used to be surprised watching television here in Ottawa when Mr. Pearson used to criticize Mr. Diefenbaker. And all these other people that I remember used to criticize their Prime Minister, something that was not done to the Hudson Bay manager, something that was not done to a Roman Catholic priest in my time. If we did that, we would be in real trouble. We'd be punished severely by those people.

ANAWAK: A lot of things we were hesitant to do because we might displease the Hudson Bay manager or the RCMP or missionaries, because we were intimidated by the thought of doing something contrary to what the white people were saying. That was always there. And it's still there for a lot of the older people. I mean I still catch myself today, and out of respect to any white person, I still sometimes get into a position of thinking he must be right, or she must be right. He's Qallunaak, you know.

IRNIQ: I watched people like Mr. Pearson and Mr. Diefenbaker when they were prime ministers, as I did with John F. Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy and Ted Kennedy. So those were the people who were really my role models to enter politics in my later years. There was one person who also played a very big role in my life. And that was Bud Orange. He was an MP for the Northwest Territories in 1968 for four years. I decided to move back to the Northwest Territories. I got a job with the government of the Northwest Territories.

In 1970 July, we had an aboriginal rights meeting in Coppermine. And we were a bunch of radicals and rebels. We were mad at this point at the Canadian government. We were tired of being run over by the Canadian government about issues that directly impacted us. We were basically tired of being just "Eskimos." So we talked about the fact that we were tired of being just bulldozed over with issues that relate to wildlife harvesting. You know, there were quotas that were being placed by the Canadian government without any discussion or any consultation whatsoever with the Inuit.

We sent a telex to President Nixon, to the Prime Minister of Canada. And we also sent it to the President of Mexico, asking them to change this international law: as a matter of fact, we demanded that they change the law to allow us to hunt geese when they come in the springtime and not when they're leaving in the fall time. So we became brave Inuit at that particular meeting.

So a year later, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the Eskimo Brotherhood of Canada, was established under the leadership of Tagak Curley. Nunavut became a very big discussion at that particular period of time, starting in 1971.

In 1975, I first entered politics. I got in [*as an NWT MLA*]. I spoke on behalf of mostly Inuit. I spoke about a need to have better education; a need to have social services in the community; a need to have better housing; a need to have Inuit at higher levels of positions with the governments, both Canada—the Canadian government—as well as the government of the Northwest Territories.

Was that what you wanted for the government of Nunavut?

I wanted Inuit to play a much bigger role in the government of Nunavut. I wanted my culture to be recognized. I wanted my language to be recognized. I wanted a bigger role for elders of Nunavut, which is the way it used to be in Inuit culture for thousands of years. Most of all, I wanted a representation for young people of Nunavut because, after all, they form the majority of people. So as a result of that, we dreamt of a department

called Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. And I became deputy minister of that for a time. It is something that I still have a great deal of interest in, as an Inuk.

ANAWAK: The only reason Nunavut was created anyway, because [other things] didn't matter, you know. Language, culture; it was the reason Nunavut was created and the reason we wanted to have more control.

How did the work of the NIC proceed?

AWA: The groundwork and the detailed work was done by the staff. And those recommendations by staff were policy advice put forward to all Commissioners to consider. And of course some were rejected.

My role at that time was more of a coordinating role. And it was challenging sometimes: my role was to advise the commission of the work that we were doing and do my best to try and convince the Commissioners why I am advising them that way. Because I could see them as a political entity. A lot of advice also came from [*John Merritt*].

Chief Commissioner Amagoalik was quite influential the way he chaired and run the commission. He had his unique way of doing things.

[*The proceedings of the NIC were*] mostly all Inuktitut with an English translated service.

As I said, some of our staff were not Inuit, could not understand Inuktitut. But all

Commissioners were able to understand and speak Inuktitut, even Kenn who is very fluent in Inuktitut. But for the purpose of our staff and our legal staff, simultaneous interpretation would be provided. If not possible, then everybody—even the Commission and the staff—were able to perfectly function in English.

MERRITT: I was there for it all. I mean, it was a small outfit. The core staff was very small, maybe. There was a main office in Iqaluit and a little sub-office with two of us in Ottawa; seven, eight people. And so when we had meetings, everybody was there. And the other thing is, one of the strengths I think of the Inuit political movement, is that there's a real openness to interaction.

HARPER: We very quickly found out that there weren't a hell of a lot of ways that government could be made very different in a western constitutional democracy, you know under the Westminster model. There was not a lot of room for innovation, as we very quickly found out. But if we designed something weird and wild, we would lose the respect of the people that we were recommending to. And what we were suggesting wouldn't stand much chance of approval.

IRNIQ: What I wanted to do was bake a pie from scratch. That's what we wanted to do.

What did the people in the communities want?

HICKS: When we went on the community tours and asked people how do you want to see government done differently, we received no substantive feedback to effect other than don't put all of the jobs in the capital.

There was rhetoric at the abstract level about Inuit ways and culture. But when it came down to practice in terms of something concrete, people didn't have a position on whether we needed a department of finance or how finance should be structured or what the Public Service Act should look like.

None of that came up. Two things people wanted. A government they could engage with in their own language, that spoke Inuktitut. And, people had watched Yellowknife just get wealthier and wealthier as their own community did not. That was the overwhelming thing, was not to put all the eggs in Yellowknife.

How did that "deconcentration" – decentralization – work out?

HARPER: I was in favour of decentralization and I supported decentralization. But I think we got the model all wrong. It's not working. Jack Hicks argued for a model in which an entire department, including the deputy minister, would go to any one of the decentralized communities.

But the model that was chosen sort of put part of one department here; it put part of it there. It did stupid things like motor vehicles in Gjoa Haven. I mean, motor vehicles should probably be in the capital where most of the motor vehicles are. Certain health

functions like an audiologist, in Pangnirtung. And yet all the patients go to Iqaluit because that's where the hospital is and there's more audiology facilities.

AWA: The purpose of decentralization was twofold; to provide employment opportunities on the community level, especially in larger communities. Secondly, to have more community decision-making authority. Today, it's not working out that way. The decentralization is providing some employment but [*not a community*] decision-making process.

ANAWAK: They may argue the cost of decentralization. But this is the Inuit way of doing things. You share the wealth. Through decentralization, you're sharing it with 10 other communities outside of Iqaluit, in that those communities have a lot more jobs than they would normally have if they were not part of a decentralized community.

The design of Nunavut governance seems very conventional...

MERRITT: It would have been impossible to say let's have a territory that's put together in a legal, formal sense on an entirely different footing than the Yukon or NT, apart from the fact that a million people inside the federal government would have said, Hey; hang on, we thought this was all creating a third territory, not inventing a form of government in Canada that doesn't look like a province or a territory but something else completely different.

So it's not like the whole effort was geared towards a kind of radical de-constructionism. Although I think the people were mindful: do you want the capacity to reconsider these things once you've got the power? And that's maybe the real trick in Nunavut. Do you really want a social welfare law that started off in Alberta, went through Yellowknife and now you've ended up administering it?

IRNIQ: We used Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit—Inuit traditional knowledge—as our foundation of the government. The other thing that we did—that we wanted to do—was include people as part of the decision-making; as Jack Anawak used to say, a government for the people and by the people. A quotation that he took from somebody else, but it did matter. And that's what we wanted to do. A government that was more user-friendly than the previous governments that we were under.

HICKS: It was pretty much understood that dividing the Northwest Territories within a limited period of time meant a fair amount of duplication—status quo.

On the question of the design of the government, if you put yourself in position of the Commissioners back in '94, you had three people appointed by the GNWT; three by NTI; three by Canada; and then John Amagoalik as the outside person who styled himself the Chief Commissioner. Many of them had a history with the GNWT. None of them had a politics that brought any kind of coherent critique of the GNWT or the Westminster model to the table. They were all fairly comfortable with the GNWT. Some of them were former officials. Basically, the GNWT with an Inuit cabinet speaking Inuktitut; that was

what was in people's heads from day one. There were a few discussions of alternative approaches, but there was a recognition of the time pressures we were under. And a desire not to be seen as wackos.

AWA: My vision was that whatever NIC created, or whatever was adopted as a model for the administration for the government of Nunavut, a lot of economic benefits would go to the majority of the people which is Inuit; including employment opportunities.

The Commission was trying to stay away from radical recommendations. Like, for example, there was no recommendation that the government of Nunavut, or the Nunavut territory, that the main official language would be Inuktitut.

One departure from the norm was the gender parity issue...

ANAWAK: Oh, yeah; that. Well, the idea came from the Nunavut Implementation Commission. We had a great discussion on it. I was the MP. Having a dual constituency was not necessarily the best idea. It would have been nice if there were more women. But legislating does not guarantee a good government. It's just that we were going to get more women.

[*The turnout for the plebiscite was low*] because people are not into that. It was not an overwhelming issue for them. The overwhelming issue was getting Nunavut. I think women have had a bad start in the last three governments in Nunavut. But now there's a woman premier. I suspect there's going to be more women because they already serve at

cabinet levels, at education board levels, at all these other levels. It's just a matter of time. And again I don't think legislating a government is a guarantee of a good government.

MERRITT: Actually, first of all the Commissioners thought it was almost kind of silly season stuff, I think. But there was a very interesting evolution within the commission on that topic. And there were very thoughtful debates. And some people—you know, some males in particular—not just on the Commission but at a couple of the major meetings that were organized, particularly a very large one in Iqaluit [*February 1995*] said some very moving things. And I remember one woman came and said it was the first time she'd ever been invited to a public meeting to speak. And it was the first time anybody had ever asked her to reflect on what it means to be a woman and to be a member of society. And it was really stunning stuff.

The striking thing about that plebiscite was just how very low the turnout was. At that time there were still very, very high turnouts. There'd been very high turnouts in the two plebiscites across the NWT.

There were wild swings in terms of community voting patterns. Some communities were almost 95, 98% against. And other communities like Iqaluit, you actually had pluralities in favour. A friend of mine actually told me—and this is just an anecdote—that the strongest Yes vote was at the Baffin Correctional Centre. I remember at the time him saying that if you had a post-doctoral grant, the most exciting thing to have done in Canada in 1996 was to have gone up there and try to figure out why the inmates—the all-

male inmates at the Baffin Correctional Centre—voted more heavily for guaranteeing an equal number of women in the assembly than anywhere else.

I think there was confusion. I know all sorts of sub-themes crept in. I heard commissioners saying they were fielding questions which were completely erroneous; that only men could vote for men and only women could vote for women.

IRNIQ: I fully supported that, because I have always seen that Inuit woman's role, Inuit man's role were quite different in so many different ways. And both helped to bring up the children.

I saw much of this from my own upbringing with my mother and father. It goes back to my own culture. I've always felt that we should have more women to play a much bigger role in Nunavut at the political level. Well, Helen Mamayaok, who was the chief commissioner [*of the NWT*] at that time, explained it this way. If you have a glass like this, man might say it's half empty. Woman might say it's half full. So there are two ways of thinking by men and women.

AWA: This idea was very popular with the general public. And I think it was supported by the general public in most of the communities. However, during one of the conferences, some influential people persuaded a lot of the majority. And made a decision that no, there will not be a gender equality legislative assembly. As executive director it was very disappointing for me, because in Inuit tradition, it was argued at that

time, the survival of Inuit culture was because of man and woman working together in partnership. And part of the thinking was that both genders would have an equal voice in the legislature.

I don't know why the turnout was low. Maybe it was because influential people were voicing their opposition to gender equality.

I think at the end of the day, what finally settled the issue was the establishment of constituencies; the number of constituencies in Nunavut. Right now there are 19 ridings. And if you have gender equality, that would double the number of MLAs.

Or double the size of the ridings.

I think enlarging the size of the constituencies would result in maybe communities feeling that they don't have a voice in legislature. Right now, with the current situation, almost each individual community has their own MLA except for very few.

HICKS: At the first meeting, Kenn asked—I don't know if he said what drugs are you on but basically he thought we were completely out of our minds.

HARPER: When that idea first came to us, I thought it was the stupidest thing I'd ever heard of: gender parity. And I became so enamoured of the idea and such a proponent of it that *Nunatsiaq News* here actually named me Woman of the Year!

Two-member constituencies meant that you would have bigger constituencies. We thought this would be a good thing. Because we thought it would not necessarily be a good thing to have single community constituencies other than Iqaluit, which is big enough that it sort of has to go that way. And so we wanted the constituencies to be less local-centric and more, you know three-or-four-community-centric. And not just be sort of an echo of the mayor and council.

And, you know people were on the radio in Igloolik saying, you know when women start becoming the decision-makers, you know the end time is near or the second coming is nigh. And so we faced that kind of stupidity in places like Igloolik and others. And we lost. So that idea fell off the table. And it was a good idea. It was a very, very good idea which would have made for a different legislature than we have now. And a much better one, I think.

The [*plebiscite*] date was poorly chosen. And it was a one-off, the only thing on the ballot. There were no municipal elections or any other more compelling things to get people to come out to the polls. You know, people tend to vote in referendums if there are other things to go and vote for like municipal elections. But if it's a one-off referendum and it's a subject that they're not terribly interested in, they're not going to bother going.

IRNIQ: Jack Anawak [*said*] that people should be elected with their own merit. Manitok Thompson [*the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate*] did not support it, saying the same thing. It's true, but we wanted more women to play a bigger role in the legislative assembly. If we did establish that, today we'd have violence against women on the table in a much bigger way. That is something that should have been discussed more. If you had had half the women in the same legislative assembly, you would have a lot more discussion about women's issues. If we had had that in place, today we would have had more daycare facilities in each community.

[*The plebiscite*] was held in the springtime when all people were out on the land. And not a lot of people were going out to vote. Only 2,000 or slightly more people went out to vote when there should have been 10,000 people that should have come out to vote. The government [*of the NWT*] knew what they were doing, the Ministry under Manitok Thompson. They had this plebiscite in the springtime when people were out fishing on the lakes, geese hunting, enjoying the springtime. So not a lot of people went out to vote.

HICKS: Well, I think the main reason why the turnout was low was, the time difference between calling the plebiscite and the actual vote was quite short. David Hamilton, the clerk of the legislature in the NWT, said, look: in order for the newly-made legislation to go ahead and make preparations, we need to know what the ground rules are by such and such a date. And working backwards, we need to know these questions by the spring. So when the decision was made to go to a plebiscite, there was actually fairly little time to

engage the public. We never armed the public for an informed debate and vote on the subject because that was not the structure that had been set up.

I think [*another*] reason for the low turnout was, this was the only moment in the creation of—in the entire creation of Nunavut—where the Inuit leadership was openly and, to a certain degree, nastily divided on the question. It wasn't part of the vision. It appeared to come out of nowhere. And very heated and quite personal rhetoric. It hadn't been in anybody's experience. And it's also interesting that a lot of people just didn't think it was a priority, including a lot of progressive men and women. I think if it had been a month later, I think we would have won because I think the fog of disinformation was lifting. In all seriousness, another month; a little more time for the message to sink in.

What about the other questions of government design? Like the consensus model of government?

HARPER: Yes. That being the Inuit way, not the GNWT way.

Is there a difference?

HARPER: There are no differences. But the Inuit didn't say we are duplicating what the GNWT does. They said we want a consensus government because it's the Inuit way.

IRNIQ: When we were making the government of Nunavut, we said we should remain sort of a status quo with the current Northwest Territories that this government be a

consensus government; a consensus legislative assembly, which is the way Inuit have always done.⁹⁶

If you had to do it all over again, would you do anything differently?

ANAWAK: In thinking, what should have happened was the Nunavut Implementation Commission should have been given a blank page and said OK; create a government out of that, not a piece of paper that said here's going to be the Department of Finance, Public Works and all that. They should have just been given a blank page and come up with a government that would have been hard to dismantle, in a way.

I think there was a wonderful opportunity to put into place a style of government that other aboriginal groups or, in Canada's case, First Nations groups, could look up to while being a public government, being culturally appropriate. They missed that opportunity. I think we rushed the settlement and the planning of the territory of Nunavut too fast.

When I was minister of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, my idea was that everything would be in Inuktitut. We'll have English, of course. We'll operate mostly in English, but Inuktitut will be the official and the main language of Nunavut. That's what I'd like to see.

AWA: If I could go back to the drawing board, I think the way to move forward at that time was to empower the communities; empower whatever organizational structure they

⁹⁶ See Henderson, A. , 2006, on the evolution of consensus government in the NWT, and White, G., 2006, on aboriginal values in the Nunavut legislature.

may have within the community. Like, for examples hamlets, municipalities; they could be empowered to run almost like government programs.

I think the communities still have that mentality that we are not capable of administering our own local affairs until the government says so. I think I have that mentality. They have government mentality. To make a long story short, I think municipalities need to have more authority, administrative control and even run government programs on behalf of the government.

Have your dreams for Nunavut come to pass? What are your dreams for the future?

HARPER: The job hasn't been getting done. The money hasn't been effectively spent. The reign of Paul Okalik was basically a wasted decade of megalomania.

There's all sorts of innovative things being done in native education everywhere else in the world. We don't seem to be doing it. Kids are only in school five or six hours a day. The TV's on in every household with 100 channels and they're not talking Inuktitut. The reality that they see on Miami Vice or CSI, that's; they think that's the real world. They know they don't have the educational levels—and aren't going to have the educational levels—to get the good job and get the girl and get the car.

IRNIQ: Everything was working to the point where our dreams and aspirations were being met, right to the end of the Office of the Interim Commissioner. But when the

government of Nunavut was established on April 1, 1999; much of that dream disappeared. And now maybe some changes are going to take place because the new premier is looking at the report card of the last 10 years.⁹⁷

Peter, what would your Nunavut of the future look like?

IRNIQ: I would make some changes in terms of having more Inuit at the senior level of government of Nunavut. I would make sure that it represents 85% of Inuit with the public service. I would make sure that Inuit have a say in terms of their own education in a much bigger way, because education is extremely important. I would teach them about Inuit culture, Inuit residential schools, Inuit moving from the land to the communities. I would want to make sure that Inuit know more about their own past than they know about Eric the Red or something like that, you know. So I would make sure that there's much more Inuit content and the Inuit way of doing things. That's what I would make sure of because it's not happening right now.

If they could use more Inuit culture, the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit concept—then we'd have less problems within the government of Nunavut.

“Suicide issue” was never a terminology in our language when I was growing up. Today, it's the young people who commit suicide. My father used to say that only when people became very old that they used to commit suicide, when they felt useless to the society

⁹⁷ I examine *Qanukkanniq?*, that comprehensive 10-year review of the performance of the Government of Nunavut, in Chapter Five.

and the rest of the family members. And they were very infrequent. Now, it's the other way around. It's the young people. If you give the young people their past in their own culture, their own language, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, I think they would have more strength to live for the future.

In the future [*I would like us*] to go back to revisit that gender-equality legislature.

Imagine if you have a gender-equality legislature, the rest of the world would be looking at Nunavut.

I don't know if I want to go the same way as Greenland. They have about five parties and they never get along with each other.

Could you say a little more about Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit?

IRNIQ: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit means Inuit traditional knowledge, the Inuit way of life.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is the economy, for example, of the Inuit. Inuit

Qaujimajatuqangit is living with the animals. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is harvesting of animals. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is about raising children. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is about knowing the knowledge of your ancestors from thousands and thousands of years ago; about moving Inuit forward; always keeping their own traditional knowledge about things about the survival of the Inuit. That's what Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is about.

In 1957 there was a really big starvation of Inuit: communities like Whale Cove were established in that particular period of time to bring those people who were starving into

that community. So many people survived using Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit; using traditional knowledge. So it was important for us to put Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit as something that is written in stone so that it could be used as our foundation of governing Nunavut.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit never had a writing system. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is the concept that we Inuit learn from verbal culture to this day.

What do you think has actually been accomplished so far? What could be accomplished?

MERRITT: I think you can stand back from Nunavut and say wow: 30,000 people brought about the only domestic boundary change in Canada since confederation. That's impressive. And not only 30,000 people, but people who are getting out from under movement from the land into communities, having to figure out this more dominant society, having to do business in another language. It's a very impressive story.

But you know, my sense of all that is the land claims agreement and the territory; it's a tool kit, OK? Inuit have acquired a lot of theoretical political power. Look at the law-making powers in the Nunavut assembly. They're roughly comparable to Queen's Park [*in Ontario*]. I mean Nunavut could make an education act that was unique in the world. They could organize a welfare system that was completely different.

HARPER: The future might be as government workers and as miners and as oil workers and things like that. You know, we could make our communities prettier. Paint's not all

that expensive. We could clean up these places and make them a little more attractive to tourists.

I don't think we've explored [*information technology*] anywhere nearly enough. We have a reasonably effective Tele-Health system. So why can't we have an effective teleconferencing system where you don't have to get on a plane?

We've got lots of Inuit in government jobs. But where are the writers? Where are the poets? Where are the philosophers? Where are the thinkers? Greenland has all of these things, always has. Why don't we?

AWA: I think we came a long way. Surprisingly in a very short period, I should say that, even though the negotiations seemed to take forever. But Inuit never gave up hope that—using seal hunting through a seal hole in wintertime as an example, you don't know where the seal is. You don't know if the seal is going to come to you or go to somebody else who might be your hunting partner. Because you cannot see through the ice. You only notice when it breathes through the seal hole where you're waiting. However, if you wait long enough, at the end of the day the hunting party is going to have success whether it's you or somebody else that's finally going to get the seal if you have patience and wait long enough.

Nunavut has, to me, a very, very good and bright future in terms of retaining our language and culture and who we are. We may have social problems, housing problems. Those will be overcome in time, with patience like I say. I also think that down the road,

I don't know how many years from now—20, 50 years; whatever it takes—that Nunavut territory will be an economic power in Canada. That's what I see. That's what I could see.

Chapter Five

Ten years after

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

—*T.S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men"*

1) Nunavut governance today: an overview

On October 1, 2009, Eva Aariak, elected as an MLA and chosen as Premier less than a year previously, received a “report card” on the performance of the government of Nunavut, “*Qanukkanniq?*”⁹⁸ that she had commissioned earlier that year to mark the tenth anniversary of the political territory of Nunavut. The consulting firm North Sky Group conducted more than 2,100 interviews in 25 of Nunavut’s communities to ask the basic questions: What is going right? What is going wrong? And what can be improved? (*Qanukkanniq?*, 2009: 1).

The report is interesting not so much because of its observations of specific failings of Nunavut governance and its hardly groundbreaking recommendations for positive change, but because it so clearly maps some of the fault-lines present when the Inuit Tapirisat first sat down to negotiate with the federal government in 1976, and others that became manifest during the work of the NIC from 1993-1999. These include the bifurcation of the Nunavut talks (land claims and political territory), federal/territorial

⁹⁸ Bell, J. “Blunt report recommends sweeping changes to GN.” *Nunatsiaq News*, October 1, 2009.

tension over financing, the wage economy versus subsistence on the land, contrasting models of decentralization, and the continuing encounter of the embodied knowledge of the Inummariit and Qallunaat lineaments of governance design.

The vision of “Nunavut” is a dream deferred:

Often people described governance in Nunavut as a vision not yet realized and, at times, a vision derailed. Without doubt, the expectations most people had of Nunavut at its inception have not yet been met....(*Qanukkanniq?*, 2009: 2)

Nunavut governance was supposed to bring government (particularly in the form of job opportunities) to the people, a challenging enough problem, the report says, even for “seasoned and experienced governments.” Imminent division had, in many people’s minds, stalled community development in the early 1990s, and a number of experienced employees of the GNWT did not stay with the new government, at the very point at which new systems of operation had to be designed and implemented (*Qanukkanniq?*, 2009: 2).

And as the report notes, the old ways and the new were still in tension:

All of this occurred against the backdrop of the tremendous change Inuit society has experienced over the last 50 years. Inuit have moved from largely self-reliant families and communities with a vibrant language and culture to a modern ‘wage economy’ where English is the predominant working language, where few have ‘jobs’ of value and little to do, and many derive a meager livelihood from public income support. The 2009 Throne Speech to the Nunavut Legislature said it well: “People believe we have lost our sense of purpose and belonging – our cultural connection to our land and to our families and communities and our balanced way of living life.” This view was often confirmed in the last few months during the community consultations. (*Qanukkanniq?*, 2009: 2)

It is important to observe that the problem was not change in itself, and not loss, precisely, but more a sense of losing, generated by the *perpetuation* in the same communities of ways of being-in-the-world that are experienced as incommensurable and incompatible. Dis/placement and re/placement can never fully extinguish the past—if they could, paradoxically, there would be no sense of loss. The Inuit past remains, however, as a living presence, both literally (the presence of community elders) and in its various survivals and transformations (for example, Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit, to which I shall return, hunting, organized landskills programs, and of course the very languages spoken in the communities by the majority of the Nunavummiut, i.e., Inuktitut and Innuinaqtun).

The government of Nunavut was intended to stabilize the old within the matrix of the new:

[As] the vision was expressed in government documents to come later, from the *Bathurst Mandate*⁹⁹ to *Pinasuaqtavut 2004-09*¹⁰⁰, the GN would protect and embrace Inuit cultural values in the way it conducted government. Inuit would work in government at all levels; people would conduct the business of government in Inuktitut and English; decisions would be made with greater sensitivity to communities' needs; and people would participate in making those decisions and share in the responsibility for the outcomes. Many people said that this is the Inuit way.

Government spoke of this as wanting to introduce and weave *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* (IQ) into everything it did. Expectations ran high and many were impatient to make improvements in government programs and services of all kinds.

⁹⁹ On-line: <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/AILR/2000/11.html#Heading4> [July 4, 2010]

¹⁰⁰ On-line: <http://www.gov.nu.ca/english/pinasuaqtavut/> [July 4, 2010]

What people have told us is that their expectations have not been met. (*Qanukkanniq?*, 2009: 2-3)

The report points to the obvious material and social deficits that are in evidence in Nunavut—widespread poverty, dependence on welfare, a perennial housing crisis, an inadequate educational system—but the existential unease of Nunavummiut is also clear:

People spoke eloquently of the Inuit tradition of self-reliance. Inuit have survived through the millennia in some of the harshest conditions on the planet. Everyone had a role to play – a job – in the family unit to ensure that all were fed, clothed, and housed properly. Today, Nunavummiut lament that few people have ‘jobs’, in the context and by the standards of the modern wage economy, while many others are bored and lack purpose. People described the alienating effect this has on their communities and the extremely abusive and negative behaviour that results. (*Qanukkanniq?*, 2009: 5)

Government operational shortcomings have some of their roots in the model of decentralization adopted, and have added to that sense of alienation:

Decentralization was widely discussed and roundly criticized both within the public service and by the public. While many acknowledged that there was limited economic stimulus for some communities from decentralized jobs, the benefits ended there. Decentralization was often characterized as expensive and wasteful. Community people claimed that few local people were qualified and able to assume jobs in the decentralized operations other than in entry level administrative positions. For the most part, people from outside the community took the jobs and the preferred staff housing that went along with it. The anticipated benefits of bringing decision making closer to the people never materialized. (*Qanukkanniq?*, 2009: 8)

This echoes earlier findings (Millennium Partners, 2002), although Inuit employment in the Nunavut public service was higher in the communities:

A total of 340 positions were decentralized by December 2001, with incremental costs in the neighborhood of \$2 million. 209 positions have been filled and 131 positions remain vacant, for a vacancy rate of

37%. This compares to an overall GN vacancy rate of 22%. Inuit employment is significantly higher in these positions than it is across the government as a whole. Approximately 59% of the community jobs are filled with Inuit, compared to 42% across the Nunavut public service and 28% in the capital. This is in line with the expectation that bringing jobs to the people will increase levels of Inuit employment. (Millenium Partners, 2002: 2)

The experience of government, for many, has been that “No one ever answers the phone” (*Qanukkanniq?* 2009: 21). And the report uncovered, as well, a key structural difficulty in Nunavut governance, here illustrated by the problem of coordinating health delivery:

It is clear that the programming framework between NTI, Health Canada, and Inuit Organizations needs to be finalized to provide clarity and accountability. This would overcome confusion about who is paying for what, and which government is actually making decisions. A more coordinated approach to funding could result in more efficient service and program delivery. (*Qanukkanniq?* 2009: 27-8)¹⁰¹

Geographer André Légaré writes, in “Canada’s Experiment with Aboriginal Self-Determination in Nunavut: From Vision to Illusion”:

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.” Mary Inuktaluk, President of the Inuit Baffin Region Association, told Premier Okalik that “[p]eople 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.” Peter Irniq, Commissioner of Nunavut, recently said that “[t]he 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.” (Légaré, 2008: 366)

Meanwhile, the generation gap between elders and youth in Nunavut is a source of anxiety:

¹⁰¹ See also “Health Integration Initiative Report Released” (NTI, 2006), indicating once again the amount of coordination required in this area.

Nunavummiut told us many times about the urgent need to reconnect elders and youth. This need has arisen at the same time that communities have identified the need to develop leadership skills. Developing the tools to encourage the dialogue between elders and youth, and to develop leadership skills in youth, will contribute to community wellness. (*Qanukkanniq?* 2009: 22)

And, more particularly:

Nunavut faces a break in cultural continuity for the current generation if a dialogue is not struck between elders and youth. People spoke of their perception that elders are an underutilized resource, and that youth, without the benefit of guidance from elders, would move forward into adulthood missing critical understandings of their cultural heritage. Youth need to be nurtured, mentored, challenged, and connected with elders. (*Qanukkanniq?* 2009: 22)

Language, too—despite the passage, ten years after the proclamation of Nunavut, of the *Official Languages Act* placing Inuktitut and Innuinaqtun on the same footing as English and French (!) and the *Inuit Language Protection Act*—is another focus of popular concern. As Thomas Berger noted in his “Conciliator’s Final Report on the Nunavut Project,” schoolchildren are presently instructed in Inuktitut/Innuinaqtun up to grades 3-4: thereafter they move to an exclusively English learning environment. In his measured words:

In Grade 4, they are starting over, and they find themselves behind. Their comprehension is imperfect; it slips and as it does they fall further behind. By the time they reach Grade 8, Grade 9 and Grade 10, they are failing (not all of them, to be sure, but most of them). This is damaging to their confidence, to their faith in themselves. For them, there has been not only an institutional rejection of their language and culture, but also a demonstration of their personal incapacity. The Inuit children have to catch up, but they are trying to hit a moving target since, as they advance into the higher grades, the curriculum becomes more dependent on reading and books, more dependent on a capacity in English that they simply do not have.

In Nunavut this reinforces the colonial message of inferiority. The Inuit student mentally withdraws, then leaves altogether. (Berger, 2006: v)

And as former NIC Commissioner Kenn Harper noted in our interview, children also watch a good deal of television: “Kids are only in school five or six hours a day. The TV’s on in every household with 100 channels and they’re not talking Inuktitut.”

As the Nunavut report card states:

Across Nunavut, the fear of language and culture lost resonates with families, communities, and schools. People are frustrated at not being able to interact with their government in Inuktitut. Nunavummiut made it clear that preservation and promotion of Inuit language and culture is a priority. Nunavummiut are aware that each generation not immersed in the language grows further away from the Inuit culture and from self-reliance. (*Qanukkanniq?* 2009: 24)

Now, to some degree, of course, many of the criticisms of the GN contained in the report card might easily be found to be replicated by other citizens and other public employees about their own respective governments: the absence of effective interdepartmental coordination (*Qanukkanniq?* 2009: 40), a lack of tools, training and resources, poor communications internally and with the public, remoteness in terms of both access and decision-making, insufficient services, and so on. But Nunavut presents its own peculiar challenges in terms of the institutions of governance that were established through the land claim and the formation of the political territory.

Michael Mifflin puts the matter squarely:

[There was a] parallel public/Inuit governance structure created under the Nunavut Agreement. Essentially, there is a mismatch between responsibilities and capacity: the government is responsible for the delivery of public services such as health, education and employment but has few resources of its own and little power to carry on its duties.

On the other hand, the land claims organization—Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI)—was given ownership of all of the cash, lands, resource royalties and powers provided in the NLCA, but no responsibility in providing services to the people of the territory. (Mifflin, 2009: 92)

Jack Hicks, in his interview with me, dismissed Mifflin’s article as “incredibly stupid” for allegedly letting the “federal government off the hook” with respect to its obligations to the government of Nunavut to provide the necessary funds:

[T]he way to [proceed] is not to access the land claim capital which was provided to Inuit as a political payoff. I mean it’s part of the trading of a theoretical basket of aboriginal rights for a defined basket plus benefits. And the idea is not that you then hit the financial side of those benefits to fund public government. It’s completely backwards thinking.

But there’s more to Nunavut’s current difficulties than money: the agglomeration of various institutions of governance in the territory as a result of the trajectory that began in 1976 is in several respects simply unwieldy and uncoordinated.

The savvy editor of the *Nunatsiaq News*, Jim Bell, is blunter than Mifflin, calling the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement a “bloated cadaver” (Bell, J., 2009b). He quotes the late NIC staff member Randy Ames, who boycotted the April 1999 celebrations in frustration:

As a result of this process, Nunavut has been lumbered with an administratively and technically complex, and expensive set of management boards — something that would have been entirely unnecessary had the federal government agreed to Nunavut early on in the process. (Bell, J., 2009b)

The specific concern being expressed here is with the so-called Institutions of Public Government, jointly run by representatives of the NTI and the federal government. They are described in more detail by former co-chief land claims negotiator Brian Aglukark:

Not only did the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) lead to the *Nunavut Act* — the legislation that created the new territory of Nunavut — it also gave the Inuit five lands and resources co-management bodies, and considerable control in areas normally handled by the federal government. The co-management bodies (or Institutions of Public Government, as they are also termed) are the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB), the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC), the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB), the Nunavut Water Board (NWB), and the Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal (NSRT)....

The NWMB, NPC, NIRB, NWB, and NSRT have Inuit members who are appointed according to region by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI). This ensures that each region within Nunavut has proper Inuit representation. The co-management bodies also have appointees from the federal and territorial governments, and these members may or may not be Inuit. (Aglukark, B. "Inuit and the Land as One," n.d.).

The NTI's involvement in health delivery has already been noted. And meetings between the government of Nunavut managers and their unions to discuss changes to the *Nunavut Public Service Act* (more on this below) were attended seemingly as a matter of course by NTI representatives.

Barry Dewar sums up the governance dilemma thus:

Federal officials have expressed concerns that NTI is conflating treaty rights and obligations with broader socio-economic and cultural objectives that go beyond treaty implementation. The Government of Nunavut finds itself in the middle of a bilateral treaty relationship between the Inuit and Canada, where it has major implementation responsibilities, but where it is not recognized as a full partner and where it does not feel adequately resourced to fulfill its treaty obligations or the expectations of Inuit.

After 1993, NTI continued to have a political role in the transition process for the creation of the Nunavut Territory, which came into being on April 1, 1999. However, once the Nunavut government was in place, federal-territorial relations assumed a bilateral format between the Government of Nunavut and the Government of Canada, with no role for NTI.

Dewar suggests that NTI may come to have “a more formal role for NTI as the guardian of Inuit Aboriginal and treaty rights,” but:

This would require further clarification and separation of NTI’s quasigovernmental roles from the business and corporate roles of NTI and the other Inuit land claim corporate entities that control nearly 20 percent of the Nunavut land base and almost one-third of its high-potential mineral lands.

And he concludes:

There is currently no forum where the three parties in the “new partnership” between Canada and the Inuit of Nunavut (the Government of Canada, NTI and the Government of Nunavut) can transcend the traditional boundaries of treaty rights and federal-territorial relations to bring together their collective resources to address the challenges facing the Inuit of Nunavut. To unlock the full promise and potential synergies of Nunavut and the NLCA, there is a need for a dialogue on the future relationship between these two initiatives. (Dewar, 2009: 79)

Clearly the proclamation of Nunavut on April 1, 1999 did not mark the end of Nunavummiut history. Their representatives continue to advocate and contest to this day, using the available political and legal dispute resolution mechanisms familiar to most Canadians. NTI is currently embroiled in a massive lawsuit against the federal government for its failure to uphold its side of the bargain (NTI, 2006, 2010), prompted by Thomas Berger’s depressing final conciliator’s report on the implementation of the land claim (Berger, 2006). The federal government’s attempt to embroil the Government of Nunavut in the battle as a co-respondent failed (CBC, 2009). The “creature that

Canadians will recognize” is perhaps more exotic than originally envisioned—or not, at least in the sense of an organic, unified whole, a creature at all.

2) Elements of encounter: Nunavut’s agitated space¹⁰²

By “encounter,” I refer to the *bringing into relation* of differing values, beliefs and knowledges, through conversation (including negotiation), institutional structures and other means. There is a continuum of encounter: there are such differences even within a single family, or, over time, within a single individual. At the other end of the continuum, there are much more marked differences (such as the different epistemologies of Inummariit and Qallunaat noted in Chapter One, or language differences) that are often referred to as “cultural,” buttressed as they are by a shared sense of belonging to a community.

In this part of the chapter I shall be dealing with some aspects of “Inuit ethnicity” and its manifestations in the Nunavut legislature and public service. By “ethnicity,” I am referring to what amounts to a shift from a largely unreflectively practised “lived life” to what Nicole Gombay and Jean Briggs separately refer to as a kind of political exercise in identity-marking. When dealing with non-Inuit, they claim, Inuit “turn cultural traits into emblems” but among themselves, as Briggs puts it, these emblematic “cultural characteristics...recede back into the general pool of culture traits” (Gombay 2005: 426, 427; Briggs, 1997: 227ff).

¹⁰² Hight, 2003, but the term appears elsewhere. In any case, I believe the phrase is self-explanatory: a lived space of eddying tensions and contradictions.

Ethnicity can be constructed as a strategy for a wide range of reasons: to communicate to other groups (MacCannell 1984:380, 382), as a conscious effort to protect threatened lifeways from extinction (Mead 1976: 291), or as an expression of resistance (Mitchell, M., 1996: 23). Dorais believes that ethnicity is about control of resources:

Ethnic identity generally operates as a way to gain access to, or be alienated from, some economic, political or cultural resources. This is why it cannot occur in less complex societies (such as that of the traditional Inuit), where all resources are, presumably, equally available to everybody. Ethnic identity is thus strongly linked to politics, defined as the power to control and regulate the availability and distribution of resources” (Dorais, 1995: 295).

In fact a number of these factors might have been at work in the development of ethnic solidarity amongst Inuit observed by F.G. Vallee in the late sixties (cited by Mitchell, M., 1996: 134). I disagree profoundly, however, with Briggs and Gombay’s claims that Inuit ethnicity is predominantly practised outwards, as it were, if not with the distinction that the authors attempt to make between unselfconscious lifeways and the conscious deployment of emblems. The most powerful manifestation of Inuit ethnicity on the part of the Nunavummiut, in fact, is within the Inuit polity.

In the agitated space of Nunavut, wherein the notion of identity is under perceived threat, markers of identity are regularly deployed by Inuit among themselves. Indeed, the very name “Inuit” is an ethnic marker, an assertion of identity just as is the case with the name Nunavut (“Our Land”): the uncapitalized “inuit” means simply “human beings” (Gombay, 2005: 426, citing L-J Dorais).¹⁰³

¹⁰³ In similar fashion, the word “māori” (lower-case) in the language of the indigenous inhabitants of New Zealand means “ordinary,” and *te tangata whenua māori* means the ordinary people of the land, as opposed

The most obvious counterexample, however, is the mobilization of the prevalent, but relatively recent, notion of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ).

NIC Commissioner and former MLA Peter Irniq, as indicated in my interview with him, was certainly very clear on what the concept meant to him, but this isn't the case with everyone. "*Kisuungmat Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit?*" ("What is this 'Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit?") asked the elderly mother of a middle-aged Inuk woman. Although the phrase is plural, she used the singular: the lived principles, practices, knowledge and wisdom (*isuma*) of the Inuit people had, for her, become—a thing. As Janet McGrath puts it:

What she indicated was that Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit as a concept was being used in an entirely different way than what it would be in the Inuit language and culture. It was being treated like a noun and not a process, or verb the way it would be in Inuktitut....By developing the concept of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* in government outside of the elder's conceptual framework, its meaning was lost to an Inuk elder. (McGrath, 2003: 167)

"Inuit traditional knowledge," once embodied and experiential, has been transformed by the very act of naming and codifying it.

If there is one thing that sets the knowledge of Inuit elders on the land apart from the Cartesian, linear, conceptual knowledge introduced by Qallunaat, it is their intense focus on the practical, the here-and-now, the application of principles and knowledge to the specific, immediate circumstances of a problem. Inuit elders do not like generalizations

to the *pakeha* (European settlers). The upper-case "Māori" arrived as an ethnic signifier in the mid-nineteenth century. [Cheater and Hopa 1997:209]

(Oosten, 2005: 193), and prefer to speak from direct, concrete, lived experience. (Oosten and Laugrand, 2002: 24-5; Bordin, 2004: 44) “You see,” said the Inuit Aua to Knud Rasmussen in 1929, “All our customs come from life, and turn towards life; we explain nothing” (quoted in Rasing, 1994: 105).

In 1998, a year prior to the formal creation of Nunavut, a working group recommended the use of “Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit” to replace the concept of Inuit traditional knowledge (Oosten and Laugrand, 2004: 23f; Wenzel, 2004: 240f). The notion, according to Wenzel, was brought into being for a number of reasons: first, the belief that non-Inuit social and natural scientists understood traditional Inuit knowledge as a collection of environmental facts, and who therefore needed a corrective; secondly, that including language, beliefs and values in the concept would allow it to be used as a tool for policy development in the new territory; and third, as one supporter put it, non-Inuit would, by definition, have low IQ! (Wenzel, 2004: 241).

The Bathurst Mandate issued by the new Government of Nunavut the following year, which formulated a vision for the new territory, stated: “Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit will provide the context in which we develop an open, responsive, and accountable government.” As Oosten pointed out, however, “The Nunavut government is actively seeking to preserve *Qaujimajatuqangit*, but it is not easy to determine exactly what it is” (Oosten, 2005: 191f). It is an epistemology at best, a codified set of principles much like a mission statement at worst—a list of principles of varying length, e.g., six (Arnakak, 2003:177-80), thirteen (Wenzel, 2004: 241), eight (*Pinasuaqtavut*, 2004).

IQ is both emblematic and intended to be functional: the difficulty with the latter, however, is in its application. The government of Nunavut is a modified Westminster system, with imported procedural rules and structures. The Nunavut public service, governed by a *Public Service Act* that has not been translated into Inuktitut as yet, is a structured hierarchy, a set of top-down command-and-control systems (Timpson, 2006: 521), with numerous dispute resolution mechanisms, and fairly typical (i.e., adversarial) labour-management relations. In each institution, elders play only an advisory role. In the public service there is a council of cultural advisers known as *Nalunaijaijit*; in the legislature, there are twelve elders' chairs—but these are usually empty (McGrath, 2003: 172). Both the government and the public service are supposed to be governed by IQ.

White interviewed members of the Nunavut legislature, and found that MLAs had difficulty citing specifics when it came to IQ. None believed that IQ had been successfully integrated into legislative proceedings; some thought the attempt to do so would be unwise. One said that “IQ means something different to everybody” (White, 2006: 25-27).¹⁰⁴ Gold observes that “IQ...is not easily translated into English and its broad scope makes for an uneasy fit in government processes that reflect national governance processes” (Gold, 2007: 360).

¹⁰⁴ White had earlier found a serious disjunction, a “lack of congruence,” between the imposed Westminster-style government of the Northwest Territories and the aboriginal culture there (White, 1993: 322), but he took a more optimistic, if guarded, stance on inculcation of aboriginal values in the new Nunavut government in this more recent article, based upon his interviews (White, 2006a). Nevertheless, he found the similarly Westminster-style Nunavut legislature problematic in that respect, citing its concentration of power, unequal power relations, and notions of confidence and cabinet solidarity (White, 2006a: 29).

Public employees in Nunavut are divided, some wanting to focus on “IQ as past tense” and some wanting to set it in the “present and future tense” (Timpson, 2006: 526). Indeed, this Inuit lens is capable of being very widely applied. In *Pinasuaqtavut*, the government of Nunavut’s five-year plan (2004-2009), this is how IQ principles are to be applied:

Inuuqatigiitsiarniq (respect)	Government practices should promote impartiality
Tunnganarniq (welcoming)	Create a people-friendly workplace: no language or cultural barriers
Pijitsirniq (serving)	Staff to serve each other and the community to the best of their abilities
Aajiiqatigiinni (consensus-seeking)	Face-to-face meetings, direct communications; wide use of Inuktitut; silence does not mean assent
Pilimmaksarniq/Pijariuqsarniq (improving skills and knowledge)	On-the-job training; new ideas welcome
Piliriqatigiinni/Ikajuqtigiinni (cooperation)	Inuit and non-Inuit staff must work for mutual understanding to better serve the public
Qanuqtuurniq (problem-solving)	We must constantly explore many different opportunities to move forward
Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq (Stewardship)	This is a strong Inuit societal value that has sustained Inuit for eons and just as important today.

This is frankly little more than a mission statement—not an epistemology, not wisdom to be applied in the situational space of the Inummariit, but items in a document outlining a five-year action plan, framed in the most airily general terms imaginable.

In the words of a commentator in the *Nunatsiaq News*:

The phrase "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit," used to stand for something real and important - the accumulated knowledge of Inuit. But in two short years it's degenerated into, well, whatever anyone wants it to mean.¹⁰⁵

On the social front, one MLA accused local women's shelters of not observing IQ principles by refusing to allow access to abusive husbands.¹⁰⁶

With respect to the government's over-all IQ initiative, the August 2002 report of the government's IQ Task Force¹⁰⁷ stated that the government should preferably "incorporate itself into Inuit culture" rather than to "try to incorporate Inuit culture into itself." The Task Force called for a "cultural land-bridge" to be built between Inuit culture and the institutional culture of the Nunavut government (Timpson, 2006: 527). But the question is whether such a land-bridge is even theoretically possible (White, 2005: 2).

IQ, and the institutions that are supposed to be imbued with them, are products of encounter and contestation, and retain incommensurable elements brought into close and uneasy relation. Traditional principles, values, wisdom and knowledge, once deployed in situated, localized contexts, are now reified as a set of rules marking Inuit ethnicity, juxtaposed with imported structures of governance with their own institutional logic. One might regard IQ as not only demarcating a fault-line of contestation, but as a metonym for the agitated space that is Nunavut today.

¹⁰⁵ "Defining Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit," *Nunatsiaq News*, November 30, 2001.

¹⁰⁶ D'Souza, P. "Women's shelters ignore IQ, MLAs claim," *Nunatsiaq News*, March 1, 2002.

¹⁰⁷ The IQ Task Force was established in November, 2000 and issued its first Annual Report in August 2002 ("First Annual Report of the Inuit Qaujimajatuqanginnut (IQ) Task Force").

3. Foreign bodies and fault-lines: two case studies in Nunavut governance

I shall conclude this chapter with a re-presentation, read slightly against the grain, of two case studies that I carried out under contract for the Nunavut Employees Union (NEU) last year, a short one dealing with the *Nunavut Human Rights Act* and a more extensive one on the subject of changes to the *Nunavut Public Service Act*. Each illustrates the uncomfortable juxtaposition of a foreign body (in this case, an institution) with the human environment into which it has been introduced.¹⁰⁸

In the first case, a client-based governmental body (a human rights tribunal) has been situated at a considerable remove from potential clients, both geographically and in terms of public awareness, making it, at least up to now, virtually inaccessible. In the second, an imported adversarial labour-relations regime is at odds with the officially espoused IQ, and, in terms of wage-bargaining, the process is curiously out of synch with its outcome.

1. Human rights in Nunavut

The key issues here are the contents of the *NHRA* and the accessibility and effectiveness of the Human Rights Tribunal that it establishes.

A made-in-Nunavut human rights act was a subject of public discussion in Nunavut as early as 2001. In March of that year, then-Premier Paul Okalik stated:

[H]owever we structure the Nunavut Human Rights Legislation... the process should be efficient, less time consuming than other

¹⁰⁸ Contents reproduced by permission of NEU.

jurisdictions in Canada and most of all be user friendly, and as much as possible, not be intimidating.¹⁰⁹

In 2002, Bill 12 was proposed in the Nunavut Legislature to safeguard the human rights of the Nunavummiut and to provide a mechanism for doing so. It received second reading that November, and public consultation followed.

The Act passed and received royal assent on November 5, 2003. Most of the provisions of the Act came into force one year later. But only in 2006 did complaints under the provisions of the Act start to be received.¹¹⁰

A comparison of the Nunavut human rights regime with that of the other two territories does not reflect well on Nunavut. Annual reports from the Yukon and the NWT reveal active and effective community outreach and public education.

In the NWT, a program of community visits, presentations, workshops, advertising campaigns, audio conferences and publications is on-going. From April 1, 2007, to March 31, 2008, the Commission received 317 public inquiries and 33 new complaints.¹¹¹

In the Yukon for the same period, a similar program of outreach took place, including a significant training component:

¹⁰⁹ Nunavut Legislative Assembly (Hansard), March 23, 2001.

¹¹⁰ Canadian Heritage, "Measures Adopted by the Governments of the Territories – Nunavut," para. 655.

¹¹¹ Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission, Annual Report 2007-8, 6-9.

628 people received training on preventing or responding to human rights matters, primarily in the workplace, or advice on harassment and accommodation policy development, sometimes as a term of settlement. It has been one of the busiest and most productive years for the prevention aspect of our work on record.

On the complaint side alone, in 2007-2008 the Commission received 266 inquiries, 53 of which were referred to other agencies or organizations and 27 to the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The rest received advice and help on how to deal with their human rights concerns or issues.

In these and various other ways described in the annual report, the Yukon Human Rights Commission reached over 5000 people in 2007-2008.¹¹²

By contrast, the *NHRA* establishes a Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal, but, unlike every jurisdiction in Canada except for British Columbia, there is no provision for a Human Rights Commission (Ontario has implemented a direct access system to a Human Rights Tribunal, but has maintained a Human Rights Commission). Hence there is an absence of a community outreach and public education function.

The Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal has just gone on-line. It is located in Coral Harbour, and has been accessible by telephone and email. According to the Tribunal's Third Annual Report (2007-8), 66% of inquiries to the Coral Harbour office were either not covered under the *Act* or those contacting the Tribunal could not explain the grounds

¹¹² Yukon Human Rights Commission, 2007 – 2008: 9,11.

of their inquiry.¹¹³ In 2008-9, the Tribunal noted a 61% decrease in the number of notifications and inquiries received (7 and 34, respectively).¹¹⁴ Inquiries from the Kivalliq region may be exceptionally high, the Fourth Annual Report states, because Coral Harbour residents have direct access to the office.¹¹⁵ The average time a file is before the Tribunal is 1.73 years.¹¹⁶

In comparison with other jurisdictions, the *NHRA* falls somewhere in the middle with respect to recognized grounds of discrimination. Nunavut, however, is the only jurisdiction in Canada that has no equal pay legislation.

A few observations: first of all, decentralization (in this instance, at least) has made access to the office difficult unless one lives in the region. Perhaps the new website will improve matters, but it is too early to tell. Secondly, lack of resources may account for the absence of community outreach, but the fact remains that the office and its functions are remote from the Nunavummiut.

The human rights regime in Nunavut—the *Act* and the Tribunal—remains a foreign body. The Tribunal to date has not held a single hearing, resolving 100% of the few cases it has dealt with since inception through mediation—five cases in all.¹¹⁷ This is perhaps a classic case of an institution established *pro forma* with little or no real function. As in Douglas Adams' science fiction novel *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, from the

¹¹³ Travis, A., and Mary Stratton, "Justice for Nunavummiut," 2008, 37.

¹¹⁴ Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal, Fourth Annual Report, 2008-9, 5.

¹¹⁵ Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal, Fourth Annual Report, 2008-9, 6.

¹¹⁶ Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal, Fourth Annual Report, 2008-9, 1.

¹¹⁷ Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal, Fourth Annual Report, 2008-9, 5.

perspective of the average citizen of Nunavut the Tribunal might as well be located near Alpha Centauri.

2. Labour-management relations in the Nunavut Public Service

If we make institutions, institutions no less certainly make us. An institution—its purposes and the rules, roles, policies and planning required to accomplish them, its people and the highly structured relations between them—places constraints upon the expression of our own values. People in institutions, therefore, tend to accommodate themselves to the inherent logic of institutions and speak in institutional voices. As Graham White puts it, “Those engaged in organisational design or re-engineering understand that, just as values and behaviour condition institutions, institutions powerfully affect attitudes and channel behaviour” (White, 2006a: 8).

The Nunavut public service is a public service constructed along quite conventional Southern lines (via the NWT), with a Public Service Act that effectively replicated the *NWT Public Service Act*.

Not long after the formation of Nunavut, the *Nunavut Public Service Act* came under scrutiny for a number of reasons.

In 2001, a strike of members of the Nunavut Employees Union took place, with all the stresses and strains that strike action can cause. This generated demands in some quarters for increased employer powers (e.g., the right to lock out, forced final-offer votes), and, on the union side, for binding arbitration.

The issue of Inuit representation within the public service has been a contentious issue as well. A public service reflecting the population of Nunavut is mandated in the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*, Article 23, but the present composition of the public service is far from that goal, and at upper management levels even further away.

Concerns also arose with respect to the degree to which local culture could be realistically accommodated within the public service structure, despite a strong public emphasis on the application of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles in government and public service operations (as set out, for example, in the *Bathurst Mandate* and *Pinasuaqtavut 2004-2009*).

White has rightly described the difficulties of doing so in imported “Western” institutions, whether a Westminster-style government (White, 2006a) or land-claims boards (White, 2006b). Values of cooperation, consensus, and equality clash with hierarchical structure (with power concentrated at the top), formality, compartmentalized functions, and other features of a classic European bureaucracy (White, 2006b 407).

The already-referenced “First Annual Report of the Inuit Qaujimajatuqanginnut (IQ) Task Force” put the matter more strongly in 2002:

At present, the Nunavut Government is, through IQ, trying to incorporate the Inuit Culture into itself. We think the Nunavut Government should be trying to incorporate itself into the Inuit Culture (IQ Task Force, 4)

Departments seem to be trying to take individual elements of Inuit Culture and incorporate them into their activities. (A question that Inuit staff often hear from non-Inuit staff is, “What is the Inuit way of doing this?” or something like “Is there an Inuit financial or human resource system? ”) This approach—trying to break the culture down into discreet elements—turns the department into “the context” within which one “fits” discreet, cultural activities. (IQ Task Force, 7)

And so it is that we cannot develop an Inuit government by taking the IQ principles, extracting them from their cultural context (life on the land) and forcing them into a new context (life within the Government of Nunavut). Because the Inuit Culture is much broader than the government, we must incorporate the government into the culture.

This becomes quite clear once we understand that public governments—all public governments—have their own cultural characteristics. When we try to incorporate Inuit IQ into the existing Nunavut Government we create a “culture clash.” And, as is usual in all culture clashes, the dominant culture dominates. The Inuit culture is forced to take on the shape of the dominant culture, rather than the other way round. (IQ Task Force, 9)

At present there is a chasm—a cultural divide—separating the Inuit Culture on the one side from the Nunavut Government’s institutional culture on the other side. (IQ Task Force, 14)

The task of creating a new corporate culture rests first of all with Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly. They must define the corporate culture by determining how the Government of Nunavut can integrate itself into the Inuit Culture and reflect the relationships and values of that culture.

The first step is to reclaim the responsibility for defining the corporate culture from individual departments and making it a “corporate task.” The second step is to consult broadly with elders and other knowledgeable Nunavummiut outside government as well as with public servants inside government.

The responsibility for creating the new corporate culture rests also with senior management, particularly with deputy ministers. The traditional role of deputy ministers within public government is threefold: 1) to provide policy advice to the Minister, 2) to manage the department, and 3) to work cooperatively with Cabinet and with other deputy ministers to participate in and help government achieve its overall priorities. It is this latter role—a trans-departmental role—that has particular relevance to developing an Inuit Corporate Culture. (IQ Task Force, 17)

A number of reviews of the Nunavut public service have followed. A fairly standard legislative review (unpublished) was carried out in 2004 by Terriplan Consultants, a Yellowknife-based management consulting firm. It offered a lot of piecemeal suggestions and proposals, ideas for discussion rather than recommendations; there was a lack of coherent vision in the document. Almost in spite of itself, however, it succeeded in mapping the institutional fault-line that runs through today's Nunavut public service. For example, its very first proposal was that "[t]he Act should explicitly support IQ practices in the workplace." But this is followed by proposals that run completely counter to IQ. Granting the employer the right to lock out its employees, for example, or to force a membership vote, simply concentrate more power at the top, and assumes conflict rather than consensus-building as a given.

The consultants did, under "Next Steps," urge broad and extensive consultation. But there is little in the report that indicates that such consultation would run very deep. On IQ, once again, they state: "Human Resources, perhaps in association with CLEY [the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth] needs to prepare a Background Paper, that clearly identifies the IQ elements that the GN [Government of Nunavut] wants to support in the Public Service workplace." The IQ Task Force mentioned above, however, makes a persuasive case that IQ is a world-view, and a practice, not a series of discrete elements to be plugged into departmental activities.

The next review (unpublished) was carried out by Patterson and Associates in 2005:¹¹⁸ one of the consultants was Peter Irniq, and Dennis Patterson himself now represents Nunavut in the Canadian Senate. My late partner Marianne MacKinnon and I prepared a comprehensive response to this report for NEU (MacKinnon and Baglow: 2006). Perhaps this opening paragraph of a covering letter signed by NEU President Douglas Workman gives the flavour:

[I]t is our view that the Report unsuccessfully attempts to blend the traditional Inuit value-system (*Qaujimajatuqangit*) with a series of amendments that appear to be taken from “best practices” in other jurisdictions, in particular the Canadian federal one. The two are not compatible, and the Report ends up merely injecting, at various intervals, the notion of *Qaujimajatuqangit* into a framework that does not arise organically from it.

The authors of the Patterson Report foresaw a time when the number of Inuit in the public service at all levels would approach the requirements of Article 23 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, and Southern dispute resolution processes (grievances, arbitration) would give way to IQ-based processes. Yet the “ultimate” expression of the embracing of IQ values, according to the authors, would be a “cultural contract,” a kind of parallel collective bargaining process facilitated by *Nalumaijaiji* (elders appointed as advisors) but restricted to “non-monetary cultural issues.”

We noted as well that the report took it for granted that a standard bargaining mandate would be prepared for the employer side in the collective bargaining process (Recommendation 13). Yet IQ principles would dictate that openness and information-

¹¹⁸ Patterson and Associates: “Final Report on Management of Public Sector Employees - Amendments to the *Public Service Act* (Nunavut),” December 1, 2005.

sharing among the parties would make it unnecessary to construct an employer mandate.

As the Patterson authors themselves recommended:

Recommendation 10 THAT, in the spirit of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, the processes to deal with employment issues involving the public service of Nunavut should be regular, representative, collaborative, transparent, joint consultation processes aimed at consensus building about emerging issues.

My purpose here is not to fault the authors of the reports, because the institutional realities of a modern public service cannot likely permit an over-all recasting of the institution along cooperative, non-hierarchical IQ lines. They were wrestling in good faith with what is in reality a fundamentally intractable problem.

In any case, matters unfortunately did not proceed in the direction of consensus and cooperation. Human Resources pushed aggressively in 2006 for more management powers at the expense of the union, framing the whole issue as a zero-sum game. Subsequent bipartite discussions (actually tripartite, since representatives of NTI attended; and the union presence was dwarfed by the number of management representatives present) sputtered on and then came to a halt in early 2007.

The union played its role aggressively as well, proposing a binding arbitration process that is quite distinct from seeking consensus, and opposing a grievance/appeals scheme for excluded (non-union) employees because, unlike union members who paid for this in their dues, excluded employees would get it from the public purse.

Like the weather, everyone talked about IQ but nobody did anything about it. In effect, participants spoke within a classic labour relations frame from which they could not escape. Many of the proposed changes to the *NPSA* were simply lifted from other public service jurisdictions, as though various public service acts were having a discussion amongst themselves.

The adversarial labour relations system remains securely in place. Yet, in a relatively small jurisdiction like Nunavut, that system is self-contradictory. When it comes to collective bargaining, for example, NEU negotiates wage increases and improvements to various allowances, but these are then passed on to excluded employees and managers—and even to MLAs. It's as though a single group of people is bargaining furiously with itself, the end result being that everyone gets the improvements won at the table.

The energy and resources expended by both sides in this exercise cannot be underestimated. There are campaigns and mobilization on the union side, and preparations for work stoppages if all else fails; the development of complex negotiating strategies on both sides; the crafting of an employer mandate, and management preparations for maintaining a minimal level of service in case of a strike. There are conflicting appeals to the public, a considerable degree of anxiety, and plenty of hard feelings to go around. The importation of an adversarial labour relations regime as a key ingredient of the Nunavut public service, in other words, results in all “sides” obediently playing their oppositional roles, even when, standing back, it often makes little sense to do so.

Non-conflictual alternatives for dispute resolution do exist around the world (Bonta, 1996). Closer to home, IQ principles would seem to dictate a quite different approach to the current collective bargaining process: *Piliriqatigiinniq/Ikajuqtiigiinniq* (working together), employing *Ajiiqatigiinniq* (decision-making through discussion and consensus). This process would require *Tunnganarniq* (openness and inclusion) to work, and would encourage *Pilimmaksarniq / Pijariuqsarniq* (the development of new ideas and skills) and *Qanuqtuurniq* (innovation and resourcefulness).

Peter Irniq himself stated in our interview:

If we have to move towards more Inuit content of resolving the problems between the workers, for example, and the unions, and things like that; and the government in particular, government and union; then we should use *Nalunaijainiq*, the concept of finding resolution before the problem becomes very bad. [It was] practised in Arviat when I was a young boy, and there is no reason why it shouldn't work, shouldn't be allowed to work in the government of Nunavut also.

People had the discussion. People had the confrontation in a very big way. And once the confrontation was over, it seems like there was never any confrontation between the two people, for example. That's why Inuit have always survived the way they did for many, many thousands of years, because we had that finding resolution or finding solution concept between Inuit....Why not practise that kind of concept within the government of Nunavut between workers and the government of Nunavut?

But as of this writing, nothing has changed and no discussions are scheduled. The “foreign body” of a public service and its adversarial labour relations and IQ are juxtaposed along fault-lines that have been apparent all along in the construction of Nunavut.

Chapter Six

In/conclusion: foreign bodies



The Nunavut Legislature assembly room pictured above is described by York University communications officer Martha Tancock as “an airy igloo-shaped chamber built of British Columbia pine and decorated with Inuit prints, weaving and carvings, including a mace fashioned from a narwhal tusk” (Tancock: 2009).¹¹⁹ Where there was snow, now there is Southern wood; where there was ephemerality, now there is permanence; where there was no established location, there is now an *address*. In place of the implements of a hunting and gathering society lies a ceremonial European weapon, once used to guard the King’s person.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ And see “Aboriginal Architecture, Part 5,” (Muskeg Media, 2005) a portion of a documentary dealing with structures in Nunavut and the form of the igloo in wooden structures.

¹²⁰ See, for example, Meyrick, S.R., *A critical inquiry into antient armour, v.1*, John Dowding, London [1830]: 88.

In this chamber, nineteen duly elected members of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly deliberate. While their meetings proceed by discussion and attempts to reach consensus (there are no political parties), there is a Premier and a Cabinet in place performing the executive functions of a recognizably Westminster parliament.

One might be tempted to perceive the room as a memorial, almost a museum, and in one sense it surely is: the ghosts of several pasts seem certainly—present. And in Nunavut today there are other such articulations: an Anglican church in Iqaluit also built to resemble an igloo (and destroyed, ironically, by arson in 2005); inuksuit jewellery for sale by a parade of serious-faced carvers in the dining-room of the Frobisher Hotel in Iqaluit; Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit.

But, some will object, there are no ghosts here: nothing has died, only changed—in the case of the igloo, from a former transient habitation to remembrance and its reified memorialization; of the inukshuk, from index to icon; of IQ, from embodied knowledge to a set of written injunctions. They are not “survivals,” in the Tylorian sense. They retain functionality: to remind, to advertise, to represent, to prompt, to guide—even, in the case of the inukshuit, to be sold.

Of course literal ghosts, if the expression may be permitted, also conflate a past and a present: they re-present the dead in the here and now, but in unchanged form and transmogrified substance. The distinction here is between some unchanging essence of the past brought into disturbing relation *with* the present, and a past or pasts of differing

lifeways with their artifacts, memories and accounts, coexisting, ever-changing, and forming new relations, not always comfortably, *to make* the present. In the latter case, the “ghosts” move and change with the times, while nonetheless haunting the actual as irretrievably discarded, missed or abandoned possibilities.

In the above one might discern, too easily, a familiar “modern/traditional” binary. But it is more useful to regard the artifacts, and their associations, as *elements*, amongst others, in the agitated space of Nunavut. We can also observe another facet of the chimerical artifacts of encounter (the narwhal mace, the wooden igloo), as in the ones I mentioned in Chapter Three (for example, the “Teenage Mutant Ninja Inukshuk” used by John Amagoalik to explain the construction of Nunavut to a group of schoolchildren). This is the *importation* of elements in their construction: not only literal materials (wood, the silver of the mace, and so on) but structures, images and ideas (the Westminster system, the ceremonial aspect of the mace, TV cartoon fare, etc.).

I do not, however, refer to these elements (and the local ones that are conjoined with them) as “cultural.” I have been at pains in this study, in fact, to avoid, where at all possible, the modifier “cultural” to describe what lies, as it were, behind the lines of the encounters / contestations that have facilitated these and other similar juxtapositions and fusions. Indeed, my preference would have been to avoid the words “culture” and “cultural” altogether.

But if so—what, precisely, encounters what?

“Culture”

The debate over the term “culture” is hardly new in anthropology: see, for example, Christoph Brumann’s defence of the term more than a decade ago, and the subsequent discussion (Brumann, 1999). Is it a useful term, despite its historical and political baggage and the confusion between its non-specific singular¹²¹ and its plural forms? Or does it inevitably reify, order what cannot be ordered, define non-existent boundaries? Is “culture,” as geographer Don Mitchell puts it, an “essentially empty, untethered abstraction” (Mitchell, D. 1995: 103), a political means of creating “others” (Mitchell, D. 1995: 112; and see Abu-Lughod, 1995: S-14)? Is it a construct, as Donna Haraway puts it, “carved out of an unruly world as an object of knowledge....a unit perceived to have its own internal, architectural principles of coherence” (cited by Mitchell, D, 1995: 107)? Is it a “category of practice,” rather than a useful “category of analysis,” to use Brubaker and Cooper’s important distinction (Brubaker, R., and F. Cooper: 2000: 4-6)?

Unni Wikan sums up the contemporary “anti-culture” view:

‘[C]ulture,’ [is] a hegemonic concept that until recently and even today holds us in a straitjacket. Renato Rosaldo (1989) has set out the salient aspects of this essentialist structure: It was a monolithic formation of logically coherent parts with the observer as the authoritative adjudicator of what does and does not belong.

...Order reigned, at the expense of uncertainties, ambiguities, contesting visions, not to speak of the disorder and unpredictability of much of everyday life. Norms, rules and regularities carried the day to coalesce into a harmonious whole of pattern, consistency—in short, a culture. (Wikan, 1991:289)

¹²¹ That is, in its general usage, our implication in symbolic systems of representation, suspended as we are “in webs of meaning that we ourselves have spun” (Geertz, 1973: 5).

Brumann, however, wonders about the consequences of abandoning the term. How will we then come to grips with “clusters of habits”, “sets of certain learned features that are shared more extensively by people who interact with each other than between these people and others with whom they do not interact or among those others.” The term is expedient, he argues, a case of “communicative economy” (Brumann 1995: S8, S9).

Brumann does not attempt to reclaim the notion of bounded wholes. In fact, he does not reject the concept of a global culture, although he does introduce the problematic notion of a “layer” of culture (Brumann 1995: S23). It is this idea of a global culture, however, that may put paid to the notion of pluralizable “culture” as a useful concept. It returns us, in fact, to a generalized and indivisible notion of “culture.” Yet, as I shall indicate below, even that contains pitfalls.

Many anthropologists, unwilling to abandon the concept, began to talk about “hybridization,” or “hybridity” to describe cultural encounters and transformations—“the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices” (Rowe and Schelling 1991: 231, cited in Nederveen Pieterse 1993: 5). As Marie Gillespie puts it, “[a]ll cultures are lived, and therefore always in flux. In fact all cultures are ‘hybrid’, ‘syncretic’, ‘creolized’, or ‘impure’” (Gillespie 1995: 4). The notion is inextricably related to globalization and its rapid flows of information, resources, commodities and people. Ulf Hannerz writes of “flows, boundaries and hybrids,” albeit critically (Hannerz c1997). Sally Merry refers to hybridity as a form of cultural “vernacularization” (Merry 2006:46).

Hybridization/hybridity is related to, and sometimes made synonymous with, “creolization,” (Lie 2002: 20n), a term with its origins in the colonial experience, but which has become generalized to mean the “mixing” of two or more “cultures” in liminal/oid, inter-cultural spaces situated between the global and the local (Lie 2002: 39), spaces that have been called “borderlands” (Lie 2002: 15f).

But in my own view, this invention of more and more ontological categories to save the concept of plural “cultures” is haring down a false trail. As Hannerz puts it, referring to the term “creolization” (without, admittedly, fully subscribing to this objection himself):

One objection occasionally raised against the creolization concept - and other related notions may be confronted with it as well - is that such an identification of creole cultures as a particular category might simply push those features of essentialism a step back, implying that the cultural currents joined through creolization were pure, bounded, and so forth, until they were thus joined. (Hannerz, c1997: 14)

Hannerz argues, *per contra*, that at any point during these processes of encounter (the coming together, as he puts it, of “cultural streams”) there will always be degrees of creolization, more here, less there. But I am not certain that he has satisfactorily addressed thereby the problem that he poses.

The word “culture” in its pluralizable form contains two implicit notions; of boundaries, however permeable, and of a kind of organic interiority. The concept of boundaries, however, does not require, and in my view is obfuscated by, the concept of “cultures.” How are “cultural” boundaries, however leaky and porous they might be, qualitatively different from, for example, those between classes in the same village, or subcultures in the same city, or political factions in the same nation, or geographical regions of that

nation, all of which are assumed to share a “culture?” Even differences within a single family are continually contested and negotiated.

We need to replace these ailing metaphors of strangeness and separation, without suggesting to the contrary that global flows take place on featureless ground. In fact they encounter obstacles, are channeled through often difficult terrain, and they skip over parts of the world population entirely (Ferguson 2006: 14). Given the rapid and often unstable conjunctures that they produce, their “friction” and “sticky engagements,” (Tsing 2005: 6), their encounters with frontiers and borderlands (Tsing 2005: 43; Hannerz c1997: 6ff) their turbulence and eddies, we need a descriptive framework that is at once more general and more particular than one based upon “cultures,” their encounters, and their teeming hybrids.

In Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s concept of assemblages, elaborated in the work of Manuel DeLanda, may be found a radically different approach to the questions that I have outlined here, and one with considerable descriptive and analytical power. It begins with the rejection of a powerful metaphor that, in my view, has bedeviled discussions about “culture,” “society,” and other abstract categories to which we are inclined to award ontological status—what deLanda calls the “organismic metaphor” (DeLanda, 2006: 8ff).

Briefly, the metaphor compares concepts such as “society” to the human body—we are reminded, once again, of John Amagoalik’s representation of Nunavut as a human

effigy—and can be found full-blown in the functionalist theories of Talcott Parsons.

DeLanda notes that the explicit use of the metaphor has declined since, but persists in a subtler form, as “relations of interiority” between parts and wholes (DeLanda, 2006: 9).

In this conception, the whole that emerges from its parts is, as DeLanda puts it, “an inextricable unity in which there is a strict reciprocal determination between parts.”

Without these relations, it is argued, a whole would simply be an aggregate of its parts (DeLanda, 2006: 9-10).

The alternative, proposed by Deleuze and Guattari, and DeLanda, is the assemblage:

“wholes characterized by *relations of exteriority*”:

These relations imply, first of all, that a component part of an assemblage may be detached from it and plugged into a different assemblage in which its interactions are different. In other words, the exteriority of relations implies a certain autonomy for the terms they relate....In fact, the reason why the properties of a whole cannot be reduced to those of its parts is that they are the result not of an aggregation of the components' own properties but of the actual exercise of their capacities. These capacities do depend on a component's properties but cannot be reduced to them since they involve reference to the properties of other interacting entities. Relations of exteriority guarantee that assemblages may be taken apart while at the same time allowing that the interactions between parts may result in a true synthesis. (DeLanda, 2006:10-11)

Some other aspects of these assemblages—which have “neither base nor superstructure, neither deep structure nor superficial structure” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 90)—must be noted. First, while the elements in an organic unity have logically necessary relations, relations in an assemblage are *contingent*. Secondly, in Deleuze and Guattari's own words,

On a first, horizontal axis, an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a *machinic assemblage* of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a *collective assemblage of enunciation*, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies. Then on a vertical axis, the assemblage has both *territorial sides*, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilize it, and *cutting edges of deterritorialization*, which carry it away. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 88)

Territorialization, which need not refer literally to a territory but often does, refers to those forces that stabilize an assemblage, that, in DeLanda's words, "define or sharpen the spatial boundaries of actual territories," but also to "non-spatial processes which increase the internal homogeneity of an assemblage," which are always more or less heterogeneous (DeLanda, 2006: 13,11).

This analytical framework provides considerable insight into both the process leading to "Nunavut" and its instantiation as a territorialized assemblage. But to do so, we first need to shed some common assumptions, which here and there in the interests of brevity I may have reinforced. In addition, we need to be wary of narrativizing, i.e., constructing a "story of Nunavut."

For example, I have referred to the "Canadian state" on a few occasions, and to the "three parties" involved in the land claims negotiations. Here I have been referring in shorthand, first of all, to the manifestation of a remote power in the north in the form of the RCMP, social workers, medical personnel and the military; and then to the representatives of the Canadian government, the GNWT, and the ITC (later supplanted by the TFN/NTI), first at the land claims bargaining table and then overseeing the work of the Nunavut

Implementation Commission. These representatives expressed interests, manifested also in other fora and contexts. But the “three parties,” as I have indicated throughout this study, were hardly monoliths.

As for the “Canadian state,” from an Inuit perspective, certainly, “the King” (as the interests of “the state” were presented, for example, in *The Book of Wisdom for Eskimo*, 1947: 19)¹²² appeared as a personalized, unified power, and it is easy to fall into the trap of assuming that state actors are united in purpose. But as DeLanda warns:

Avoiding the use of concepts like “the state” is important not only because such reified generalities are not legitimate ontological entities but also because such notions are too monolithic, that is, they fail to capture the relations of exteriority that exist among the heterogeneous organizations forming a government hierarchy. (DeLanda, 2006: 85)

A unitary notion of “the state” does not explain, for instance, the obvious effects of the *Calder* decision upon government policy, nor the “beat the clock” mode in which the concluding negotiations and decisions took place before the federal election of 1993 (Dewar, 2009: 78, 79).

A second issue is the concept of a Nunavut “project,” a term I have used once again as shorthand to refer to the perception, by numerous actors, of their involvement in building or realizing something. It cannot refer, however, to the entire assemblage called “Nunavut”:

[W]e may acknowledge that individual actors are capable of making intentional choices, and that in some cases such intentional action leads to the creation of social institutions (such as the written

¹²² “The King is helping all the children in his lands. He is giving aid to the Eskimo children also and has instructed His [!] servants the Police to proceed in this way” (cited in Hicks, 2000: 49).

constitutions of some modern nation-states) , while at the same time insist that the synthesis of larger social assemblages is many times achieved as the *collective unintended consequence* of intentional action, that is, as a kind of statistical result. (DeLanda, 2006: 24)

Moreover, the notion of a “project” may contain assumptions about a supposed historical *direction*, as well as of the unfolding of a *narrative* that conforms to Aristotelian laws of probability and necessity, with an orderly beginning, middle and end.

Any narrative, including this thesis (open-ended or incomplete as it may be), runs the risk of deceiving the reader as it imposes an authorial intelligibility upon a welter of events, selecting, emplacing, weaving. While the imaginative narrative of a novel moves us along, as Paul Ricoeur notes, “by a thousand contingencies” (Ricoeur, 1980: 174), a narrative of “things past” tempts us into thinking in terms of simple cause and effect, of logical necessity: it defies the notion of contingency (see Minke, 1980: 546). As historiographer Haydon White puts it:

The notion that sequences of real events possess the formal attributes of the stories we tell about imaginary events could only have its origin in wishes, daydreams, reveries. Does the world really present itself to perception in the form of well-made stories, with central subjects, proper beginnings, middles, and ends, and a coherence that permits us to see “the end” in every beginning? (White, 1980: 27)

Louis Minke puts the matter even more clearly:

Stories are not lived but told. Life has no beginnings, middles, or ends; there are meetings, but the start of an affair belongs to the story we tell ourselves later, and there are partings, but final partings only in the story. There are hopes, plans, battles and ideas, but only in retrospective stories are hopes unfulfilled, plans miscarried, battles decisive, and ideas seminal. (Mink, 1970: 557)

Narrative, according to Ricoeur, is a "synthesis of the heterogenous" in which disparate elements of the human world - "agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, unexpected results, etc." are brought together and harmonized (Ricoeur, *Temps et récit*, cited by Carr, 1986: 119-20). Recalling the Deleuzian notion of "assemblage," it might be suggested that narrative constructs through that "synthesis" the very "interiority" that we are warned against.

Philosopher David Carr takes a contrary view—that human action is intrinsically narratively shaped—but must invent the categories of first- and second-order narratives to make his case (Carr, 1986: 31).¹²³ It is precisely the construction of those second-order narratives, however, that should prompt a critical wariness on the part of the reader.

If my account is taken to be a *narrative* of Nunavut, it is of necessity incomplete.

Nunavut did not begin on April 1, 1999; "Nunavut" did not come to an end. Concept, project, political territory, are all intertwined. But it may serve as a detailed analysis of three successive and related assemblages.

The first assemblage, which changed over time, included, *inter alia*, Inuit organized into the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, followed by the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut; Inuit

¹²³ "I am not claiming that second-order narratives, particularly in history, simply mirror or reproduce the first-order narratives that constitute their subject-matter. Not only can they change and improve on the story; *they can also affect the reality they depict* - and here I agree with Ricoeur - by enlarging its view of its possibilities. While histories can do this for communities, fictions can do it for individuals. But I disagree that the narrative form is what is produced in these literary genres in order to be imposed on a non-narrative reality- it is in envisaging new content, new ways of telling and living stories, and new kinds of stories, that history and fiction can be both truthful and creative in the best sense." (Emphasis added)

I would suggest that these second-order narratives might just as easily have negative effects on "the reality they depict." But in either case, the word "depict" is problematic.

communities; officials and politicians in the government of Canada and of the Northwest Territories; Dene and Métis leaders; and the land and resources of the Eastern Arctic, all brought into various relations in which territorialization and deterritorialization forces were evident. On the one hand there was the *Calder* decision that kept the land claims negotiators at the table, the push for an actual political territory to be linked to the resolution of the land claim, the living concept of “Nunavut” as “Our Land,” and plebiscites for division and demarcating a territorial boundary; on the other, the parallel process engaged in by the GNWT to achieve devolution, the Drury Commission and Report, the reluctance for some time on the part of the federal government even to discuss a political territory, and the struggle over the boundary.

The outcome of these contending forces was a second assemblage in which land claims negotiations (successfully concluded) were replaced by the Nunavut Implementation Commission. The process of territorialization continued; the boundaries of “Nunavut” sharpened. Other elements of that assemblage were the three parties, the legal framework, institutional models, the Nunavummiut public (related through consultation and two more plebiscites), and elements that Deleuze and Guattari call a Refrain—“any aggregate of matters of expression that draws a territory and develops into territorial motifs and landscapes” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 323)—such as a flag with an Inukshuk motif, a Nunavut coat of arms, and the official motto “*Nunavut Sanginivut*” (“Nunavut is our Strength”).

On April 1, 1999, that assemblage passed into a third: Nunavut. Present-day Nunavut is an assemblage that retains many of the same components, but not in the same relation. The GNWT was detached from it; a new governance structure was created, but not a homogeneous one: as I have indicated, there are fault-lines of contestation that manifest deterritorializing forces, including the importation of “foreign bodies” (I shall address this concept more fully below).

As DeLanda noted, components of an assemblage, by virtue of their capacities, may participate in both processes by exercising different sets of capacities (DeLanda, 2006: 12). In that respect the key demand of decentralized government has served, in part, to alienate as well as to consolidate, and may eventually be reversed to some degree by a territorializing move:

The Canadian experience has shown that organizations which choose to decentralize -- for all the right reasons -- are very prone to re-centralize after a few years of operating in the new milieu. It is not easy to manage far-flung offices at a distance from the center. (Millenium Partners, 2002: 5)

Another example is Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the very body that helped to negotiate Nunavut in the first place. As indicated in Chapter Five, the relations between the Government of Nunavut and NTI are fraught, to some degree. Dewar notes:

While Nunavut is characterized as an expression of Inuit self-government through public government, neither the creation of Nunavut nor the NLCA affected the Inuit inherent right of self-government. Nunavut may yet require further structural arrangements to institutionalize its role as an expression of Inuit self government, including a more formal role for NTI as the guardian of Inuit Aboriginal and treaty rights. This would require further clarification and separation of NTI's quasi governmental roles from the business and corporate roles of NTI and the other Inuit land claim corporate

entities that control nearly 20 percent of the Nunavut land base and almost one-third of its high potential mineral lands.

Nunavut and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement represent historic achievements, providing Inuit with economic opportunities and political levers to improve their socio-economic circumstances. Both have made major contributions to that objective and hold the potential to do much more. However, the difference between Canada's compartmentalized approach to Nunavut and the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement and the more holistic view of the Inuit remains an underlying source of tension in the ongoing relationship between Canada and the Inuit of Nunavut. There is currently no forum where the three parties in the "new partnership" between Canada and the Inuit of Nunavut (the Government of Canada, NTI and the Government of Nunavut) can transcend the traditional boundaries of treaty rights and federal-territorial relations to bring together their collective resources to address the challenges facing the Inuit of Nunavut. To unlock the full promise and potential synergies of Nunavut and the NLCA, there is a need for a dialogue on the future relationship between these two initiatives. (Dewar, 2009: 79)

NTI and the "inherent right of self-government" on the one hand; public government on the other: in this we can see the contingent relations between elements associated in an assemblage, and their complex relations, some stabilizing (such as Inuktitut/Innuinaqtun becoming official languages in 2009), others destabilizing. One thinks immediately of the unwieldy assemblage called Canada: its federal-provincial structure, Quebec *souverainisme*, its unelected Senate and the Royal Prerogative, its laws and treaties, etc.: a heterogeneous and historically contingent association of parts with sufficient territorializing forces to hold it together nonetheless.

I have already described some of the juxtapositions and articulations that have occurred in Nunavut as a result of territorialization. These elements do not always lend themselves to easy dissection by the critical observer. As Brad Weiss advocates in his study of Haya in Tanzania, for example, rather than regarding "traditional" ways of life as being

supplanted by the “modern,” and attempting to tease the two apart, it is more productive to regard both as conjoined or articulated in the web of cultural practices of a people’s lived world (Weiss, 1996: 25, 219). As in Nunavut, with its wooden igloo and its narwhal mace, the conjunction of disparate elements amongst Haya can be striking: the sudden appearance, for example, of “plastic teeth” among Haya children as a complex result of rapid social transformation (Weiss, 1996:155ff).

The notion of the “foreign body”—that which is imported into a pre-existing assemblage—might now be further elaborated. Foreign bodies can be either stabilizing or destabilizing, and sometimes both. Syllabics, for example, introduced by missionaries (see Kublu and Mallon [n.d.]), is now considered a defining Inuit characteristic (for those, at least, who do not use the Roman orthography of Innuinaqtun). Snowmobiles have replaced dogsleds; the relatively recent practice of Inuit soapstone carving was largely brought into being by the efforts of a Qallunaak, James A. Houston (Graburn, 1967: 29); and square-dancing, Scottish tunes and topographical maps are all familiar aspects of the Nunavummiut social landscape.

The introduction of the GPS tracking system, on the other hand, has proven double-edged. Aporta and Higgs tell an anecdote about a young Inuk man, sent out on the land to find a broken-down snowmobile; he was helpless until a GPS device was used to provide a map to the spot. Until recently, being lost on the land was “without basis in experience, language, or understanding” (Aporta and Higgs, 2005: 729).

GPS navigation generates straight-line movement that takes no account of the various features (and hazards) of the land. It could be used to complement traditional landskills. But as Aporta and Higgs point out, a sextant, compass or astrolabe required comprehensive knowledge of the land and sky, while, with the new tracking system, such engagement is optional (Aporta and Higgs, 2005: 744). A GPS device could be used as an enhancement of traditional wayfinding, or, as is perhaps more likely, it could be used to the exclusion of complementary skills, rendering the user disengaged from the world, and hence vulnerable.¹²⁴

One might also note the deterritorializing influence of yet another foreign body: television and its programming, noted by Kenn Harper in my interview with him, and in Amagoalik's cartoon image of the Inukshuk when addressing schoolchildren.

The two case studies that I examined earlier indicate that elements of governance, imported into the Nunavut context, remain foreign bodies, uncomfortably situated: a Human Rights office located far from the clientele it is supposed to serve; a public service labour relations regime that jostles with the values of Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit espoused by the Nunavut government.

¹²⁴ Against such deterritorializing effects, the Inullariit Society was founded in 1993 in Igloolik, with all Inuit over 54 as nominal members, to "preserve and promote Inuit culture, language, heritage and traditional values." The elders offered hands-on courses in land skills, including a gruelling program called *Paariaqtuqtut*, or "meeting on the trail"—a "400km journey over frozen rivers, sea, lakes and tundra" (Takano, 2005: 5, 1-2).

In this study I have in fact referred to the foreign body as a defining characteristic of Nunavut governance *per se*. But as I have tried to show throughout, this is not, metaphorically speaking, the introduction of indigestible material into an organism, but instead the inclusion of new forms, ideas, objects and institutions in an assemblage, the latter a far from seamless whole with its resident incongruities, lines of contestation, immiscible combinations and other destabilizing aspects, but a whole nonetheless. Over time, territorializing forces have worked to give familiarity to the unfamiliar, and the foreign, which can threaten and destabilize, can also become, in Merry's term, vernacularized (Merry, 2006: 44).

In Iqaluit, a Cabinet minister hurries to a meeting. And in Igloolik, a young woman in a prom dress dreams of the future. *Nunavut Sanginivut*.

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Appendix: Consent Form

Title of Project: Foreign bodies: the etiology of Nunavut governance

Investigator: John Baglow

Purpose of this project: To examine how the forms of governance in Nunavut—the legislature, the Public Service, etc.—came into being, with particular reference to the work of the Nunavut Implementation Commission.

Interviews: Your involvement with the NIC is directly relevant to my study. I am interested in your views on the work of the NIC and your reflections on Nunavut governance today. I am intending to conduct an open-ended interview that would cover the process of the NIC, its vision and its aims; a follow-up interview for further clarification might be required. No promise or guarantee of direct benefits to yourself has been made to encourage you to participate.

I will be audiotaping the interview(s).

The substance of the interview(s) that is used in the study will be attributed by name to yourself unless you do not want such attribution. During the interview(s) you may at any time go “off the record,” I shall cease audiotaping at that point, and those portions of the interview will be considered entirely confidential.

Hypothetically, it might be that my findings, which bear upon the formation of Nunavut institutions, could be seen to imply criticism of how the participants in the Nunavut Implementation Commission carried out their project. All such studies are, to some degree, critiques. But no more damage would be caused, in a worst-case scenario, than that caused an author by a critical book review.

You are free to withdraw from participation at any time, and to refuse to answer any questions that you wish. If you decide to withdraw, you may choose whether or not I may use the information with which you have provided me up to that point.

Do you wish your audiotaped interview(s) to be deposited with the Nunavut archives, and/or the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University? Yes _____ No _____

Consent: I, _____ having read the above, and having had all of my questions answered, voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Signature

Date

Should I have any pertinent questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

John Baglow (Investigator)

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