

*Tukisivallialiqtakka*: The things I have now begun to understand:  
Inuit governance, Nunavut and the Kitchen Consultation Model

by

Jackie Price  
B.A., University of New Brunswick, 2000

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

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Human and Social Development

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this thesis I evaluate the role of Inuit governance in Nunavut's political space. To do this, I critically examine the practice of political consultation, as it is a site where government and Inuit communities interact. This thesis begins with an overview of the government structure in Nunavut and its consultation process. It then shifts focus to discuss the principles and practices supported within Inuit governance. A political and conceptual gap will be revealed. In response to this gap, I introduce and explore the Kitchen Consultation Model, a community based consultation model inspired by the principles and practices of Inuit governance. This model provides Inuit communities with a political framework to support dialogue and interaction within the community, supporting Inuit communities in designing solutions to address their challenges. This thesis ends with a discussion on the role of Inuit governance within the broader Indigenous context

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## **Acknowledgements**

For their support, encouragement, inspiration and expectation, I'd like to thank my family, for who none of this would be possible. My thesis committee: Taiiaki Alfred, Jeff Corntassel, James Tully and Cheryl Suzack. My IGOV family, including each and every classmate, Susanne Thiessen, Sheila Watts, Lisa Hallgren and Vanessa Watts.

Thank you to the community of Arviat, who hosted me and welcomed me into the community and with great respect, shared their thoughts, vision and experience with me. I especially like to thank the Tagalik and van den Scott family for welcoming me into their homes.

I would also like to recognize my home communities of Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet, and my home territory *Nunavut*. Both communities, and the territory as a whole, have shaped my perspective, expectation and determination.

## **Introduction:**

It was when I was watching movies with my mom that I realized what I had to write about.

Mom and I were watching the “Nunavut: Our Land” video series. This video series is set in Nunavut, around the Iglulik region, and depicts Inuit traditional life in the mid-1940s. These movies were great to watch, especially with my mom, because they gave me another glimpse into her life.

My mom grew up “on the land” from birth to age 11 or 12, and although her life began after the time set in these videos, it was similar to what was being shown. Yes, in my mother’s days the Hudson Bay traders had a stronger presence, as did the ministers, the nurses and some government administrators, but they were far enough away that their presence was not constant, and family life continued as it had. Mom and I interacted a lot with these movies as we watched them, though we interacted more with each other. I kept asking a lot of questions, because the scenes showing every day life were so different to what I know. Mom answered my questions, and she also had her own commentary as the movies played. I learned a lot from her reactions. Sometimes she was so direct, she would say, “that’s true” or “my family did that.” Sometimes she was indirect, “we did something like that.” And of course, there were times when she acknowledged that an experience was not her own. I knew this because she would state, “my people, we never did that.”

My favourite videos in this series are the ones that take place in the winter. Winter was a different time in Inuit traditional life. I believe it is a time when Inuit strength, ingenuity, and intelligence are best expressed. The challenges resulting from extreme weather meant Inuit were more likely to live in larger communities to support

each other. This network of support was necessary and widespread, as the time between late winter and early spring was when starvation sometimes occurred. Although winter was more challenging than summer, Inuit did not think of it this way.<sup>3</sup> For Inuit, their life, the weather or the environment was not considered harsh or unforgiving. My mother and our ancestors lived good lives in this environment because of the supports they surrounded themselves with.

Inuit had a lot of supports in the winter. The dog team is a good example. The importance of dog teams cannot be underestimated, as expressed by Martha Nookiguark: “When the dogs started dying off, the Inuit would start to die next. That is often the case: the one would follow the other” (Bennett and Rowley, 287). How Inuit interacted with their dog team represents how Inuit dealt with responsibility. Responsibility was treated for what it is: an everyday activity that could be broken down into practical actions. With dog teams, Inuit knew how they could support the dogs to allow them to maximize their potential. When the dog team maximized their potential, they were a critical support for Inuit survival. In short, Inuit knew what had to be done, and fit their lives around this responsibility. The goal was always survival.

There were many scenes in these videos that included dog teams. I have always appreciated dog teams, but I did not know a lot about them. My mother has a lot more memories about dog teams because her family had strong teams. As the dog teams were shown in the movies mom explained different things to me. One thing she explained to me was a process called *illaisijuq*. Roughly translated, this term means “to comb.” What

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<sup>3</sup>Summer time, for Inuit, came with its own challenges. Summer time was the time to prepare for winter. This included preparing skin clothing for the winter, catching caribou and fish. The extent of this work was great, as Sowdloo Shukulak remembers, “Preparing fish at the *saputi* was tiring. In a good year the number of fish caught would exceed the women’s ability to process them. Sometimes women even fell asleep from exhaustion in the middle of cleaning a fish!” (Bennett & Rowley, 252)

were being combed were the individual lines that connected the harnesses on the dog to the *qamutik* (sled). As the common dog team formation in this region of the Arctic<sup>4</sup> is the fan formation, as the dogs run, the individual lines often cross and become tangled. The more tangled the lines are, the shorter the distance between the dogs and the *qamutik*. This makes things difficult for the dogs, and slows down travel. These lines would be untangled when a break was taken - *illaisijuq* was a common practice that occurred in the background of the film images. It began by disconnecting the line from the stationary object, the *qamutik*, and not from the dog's harness. From the *qamutik* end, a person would begin the work of detangling the lines. Although this process could be done by anyone, it was a process that a young person could engage in to help out. Combing the lines allowed a clean start for when the travelling resumed again. On the videos, this process was shown quickly, yet I focused on it each time because when it flashed on the television, my mom would say, "that's called *illaisijuq*."

I thought a lot about this process after seeing it. I understood this was a responsibility that had to be constantly undertaken, no matter how tangled the lines got. What struck me the most was the idea that the untangling occurred with the full knowledge that the lines would get tangled up again. In fact, tangled lines were not looked at negatively - how could they be? Tangled lines meant the dogs were moving, and movement came with tangled lines. The more I thought about it being practiced back then, the more it made sense to me in my life today.

Inuit in Nunavut have experienced a lot of changes in the past sixty years.

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<sup>4</sup> The fan formation is common in areas north of the tree line, as the individual dogs are able to navigate the uneven terrain individually, allowing them to collectively move the sled.

Colonialism has forced Inuit realities into new directions, without Inuit determining that direction. The impacts of these forces cannot be underestimated. Colonialism has forcefully changed Inuit lifestyle, particularly how its relationships are practiced. The missionaries, the Hudson Bay Company and the Government of Canada have systematically undermined the supports that made Inuit self-sufficient and Inuit today are living with the consequences of this reality. My generation, and even the generations before me, are in this place where we are unsure of what supports we need to survive, or even what supports we already have. This confusion is so strong and deep within us that one cannot help but feel anger and sadness. Feeling this way does not allow for *isumatsiarniq*, correct thinking.

The reason for this anger and sadness is because the new supports Inuit are forced to live with do not come from *Nunavut*, our land. Many would argue otherwise: “Isn’t the new territory named Nunavut? Don’t you have your own government and your own territory? What more do you need?” These questions will be answered in this thesis, and the final question “what more do you need” will be its focus. Although we do have government, the Government in Nunavut is not reflective of how Inuit do things. Inuit have always understood that these new political structures did not reflect the Inuit way, yet in the early years we believed that we could adjust those systems to better reflect the Inuit way. We have yet to be honest about the strength of these systems, and the continued effects these systems have on the every day life of Inuit.

Why is this so? There are many possible reasons, but I believe part of the problem is that we, Inuit, have not yet stopped and looked at where government has taken us. We need to gather to share our experiences honestly, and then collectively we need to

determine what our next steps are and what supports we need to do this. As this thesis demonstrates, government has not and cannot adequately facilitate this discussion.

This thesis will consider what supports Inuit need in order to move towards an existence that respects and practices Inuit governance. To answer this question, I will speak within the forum of political consultation, a site where Nunavut political authority and Inuit communities interact. Chapter one will provide the context of the present, beginning with a broad review of Nunavut's recent political history and the practices and processes of consultation supported by the Government of Nunavut. This will be contrasted with principles of Inuit governance, introduced and discussed in Chapter two. I argue a gap exists between government and governance, particularly in its relationship with people, and I explore one community-based approach to addressing this gap. The *Arviat Vision 2002* experience is a community partnership that explored the concept of community wellness, and used the strength of community consultation to build consensus around a vision and action plan. In chapter three, I outline my own territory based working model for community based consultation - a model I call the Kitchen Consultation Model. This model is rooted in the belief that consultation in Nunavut can be supported by Inuit governance and Inuit communities. This thesis will end with a discussion on the potential of the Kitchen Consultation Model as a site to regenerate Inuit culture for the future. To do this, I argue Inuit communities must once again be rooted in the respect for accumulated experience and modesty, and place the Inuit experience within the broader Indigenous experience.

## **Chapter One: Government in Nunavut & the Government of Nunavut**

*Nunavut* is an Inuktitut word for “our land”. For many, this phrase represents the acknowledgement of Inuit homeland. Yet, since April 1, 1999, Nunavut has also come to mean something else.<sup>5</sup> Through the passing of the *Nunavut Act*<sup>6</sup> and the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act*, legislation created and enacted by the Canadian government, Nunavut is also a defined boundary within Canada. This boundary is supported by a territorial government, designed in the shadow of the Westminster parliamentary system. Although Nunavut will always be Inuit homeland, it is this latter understanding that is continually being recognized and celebrated. This chapter will explore how this reality came to be.

To do this, a handful of documents are necessary for review. The *Nunavut Act* established Nunavut’s boundaries in Canada and legally established the authority of the Canadian federal government system in Inuit homeland. The *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act* affirmed Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) as “hereby ratified, given effect and declared valid”. Both acts establish Nunavut’s legal foundation, which is supported and privileged by the NLCA. Interestingly enough, the implications of Nunavut’s legal foundation are rarely discussed publicly. Instead, these legal entities are celebrated for their potential in strengthening Inuit and Inuit culture. This cause for celebration is directed especially to the Government of Nunavut (GN).

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<sup>5</sup> The dual meaning of Nunavut is also used to introduce Jose Kusugak’s “The Tide has shifted: Nunavut works for us, and it offers a lesson to the broader global community” in *Nunavut: Inuit regain control of their lands and their lives* (eds. Jens Dahl, Jack Hicks and Peter Jull).

<sup>6</sup> The *Nunavut Act* was the result of the Nunavut Political Accord, an agreement between the Government of Canada, Government of the Northwest Territories and the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut (representing Inuit) on October 30, 1992. The accord officially calls for the creation of the Nunavut territory as a new political boundary, and outlines the powers to be held by the GN and the Nunavut Legislative Assembly. The accord establishes timelines for completion and outlines the transitional steps needed to accomplish this. It also details how this will occur and includes specific reference to training and financial arrangements. The political accord can be found in appendix A-5 of Footprints 2.

I will examine the validity of this celebration by reviewing the GN's design, organizational structure and guiding principles. To do this, I will review the GN's two founding documents *Footprints in New Snow (Footprints 1)* and *Footprints 2: A second comprehensive report of the Nunavut Implementation Commission (Footprints 2)*. These documents were created by the Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC). Reviewing these documents will shed light on the relationship the GN was designed to have with Inuit. As both *Footprints* documents reaffirm the critical role of political consultation as a means to ensure Inuit participation, I will focus specifically on the technicalities of political consultation, as supported by NIC. This overview will then be compared with the current GN consultation processes to determine whether or not consultation practices have changed with the creation of Nunavut. To do this, I will review the highly acclaimed GN *Wildlife Act* consultation tour. By critically examining this consultation experience, and in understanding the context of Nunavut and the GN, I argue that the creation of Nunavut has not resulted in a different consultation process. I argue that the perceived relationship between Inuit and the GN is strong in practice, but conceptually weak, as political consultation constantly privileges government organizations over Inuit.

### **Nunavut's Legal Foundation**

The *Nunavut Act* and the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act (NLCA Act)* both received Royal assent on June 10, 1993, six years prior to the establishment of Nunavut and the GN. The *Nunavut Act* accomplished many things. First and foremost, this act defined Nunavut's boundaries and designated a majority of its land base as belonging "to her Majesty in right of Canada or of which **the Government of Canada has power to**

**dispose**<sup>7</sup> (*Nunavut Act*) (Emphasis added). This act also established the authority of the executive, legislative and judicial levels of the GN. The responsibilities of these governing levels, and their political dynamics, correspond with how government is practiced in Canada: federally, provincially and territorially. The *Nunavut Act* also identified the GN's authority over culturally significant issues, like language, via the territorial *Official Languages Act*, and cultural artefacts. Because these responsibilities are granted by the Canadian State, the GN's management and monitoring over these issues reflect the relationship between the GN and the Government of Canada (GoC). This relationship is affirmed and monitored through a mutual acknowledgement of land ownership and designation, financial reporting, and defined administrative processes. Issues such as land use, taxation, and resource development are imposed on Inuit through this legislation, and the directly impact on Inuit livelihoods and realities.

The *Nunavut Act* also created two political organizations, the Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC), and the Office of the Interim Commissioner (OIC).<sup>8</sup> NIC's designated responsibility was to recommend a design for the Government of Nunavut, and OIC's was granted the authority to carry out the recommendations of NIC. Both organizations were designed to report directly to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

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<sup>7</sup> Nunavut's land mass is approximately two million square kilometers. Inuit-owned land equals approximately 350 000 square kilometers. This means that approximately 17.5% of Nunavut's total land mass is Inuit owned and managed, the remaining 82.5% of the land mass is under the total control of the Canadian State.

<sup>8</sup> TFN, Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut, was the body that represented the interests of Inuit beneficiaries in the negotiation with the Canadian Government for Nunavut and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Once the *Nunavut Act* and the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* were passed, TFN ceased to be, and NIC became the new body representing Inuit. NIC's authority came from section 58 of the *Nunavut Act*. Part III, of which section 58 fell under, was legally repealed on July 1, 1999.

The purpose of the *NLCA Act* is outlined in its preamble: “to provide for certainty and clarity of rights to ownership and use of lands and resources and of rights for Inuit to participate in decision-making concerning the use, management and conservation of land, water and resources, including the offshore.” (*NLCA Act*) This act also establishes the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB),<sup>9</sup> a key political organization representing Nunavut beneficiary interests in matters relating to wildlife management and preservation.<sup>10</sup>

Both acts affirm Nunavut legal right to exist, as granted by the Canadian state, and acknowledge government organizations as key instruments in the administration of the territory. These organizations are responsible for representing Inuit in specific political matters of cultural significance. How these responsibilities are fulfilled deserves specific attention.

### **Governing Nunavut**

Nunavut’s governing framework is the NLCA. The NLCA is the means “through which Inuit shall receive defined rights and benefits in exchange for surrender of any claim, rights, title and interests based on their assertion of an aboriginal title” (NLCA, 1). The NLCA is a legal contract between its three signatories: the Government of Canada, representing the sovereign of Canada; Inuit beneficiaries in Nunavut, as represented by

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<sup>9</sup> NWMB is a co-management board that works to “ensure the protection and wise use of wildlife and wildlife habitat for the long-term benefit of Inuit, as well as other residents of Nunavut and Canada.” (<http://www.nwmb.com/>). NWMB coordinates information between the organizations that work with wildlife and it determines wildlife quotas. This work is supported through the board’s own research. Membership on this board includes nominees from the GN, the department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (federal government), NTI, the political organization representing Inuit beneficiaries of the land claim, or regional Inuit organizations under NTI. A full description of its mandate can be found in the NLCA, part 2 of Article 4.

<sup>10</sup> Nunavut Beneficiaries are those who are recognized as beneficiaries under the NLCA. This designation was designed to apply to Inuit in Nunavut, but it is important to acknowledge that this designation is based on a legal formula, and not on cultural practices.

Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN), an organization that ceased to exist in 1999. Post 1999, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI)<sup>11</sup> was created to represent Inuit beneficiaries in the implementation of the NLCA. The final signatory of the NLCA is the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), the public government responsible for the land base of the Northwest Territories (NWT), the jurisdiction from which Nunavut and the GN was carved. Once the NLCA was ratified, the responsibility of the GNWT was transferred to the GN.

This contract is often presented and celebrated as a means for strengthening Inuit and Canada's relations.<sup>12</sup> Not only did the NLCA reaffirm Canada's status as a northern country: "Equipping the people of Nunavut with a territorial government of their own will reinforce Canada's sense of being "truth north, strong and free" (Footprints 1, 1), it also presented a favourable public image: "Canada's creditability in the eyes of the international public has been a great deal enhanced by the commitment to Nunavut" (Footprints 1, 6). Perhaps more importantly for Canada, Nunavut represented a positive situation in Canada's relationship with aboriginal peoples: "For Inuit and other residents in Nunavut, the creation of the Nunavut Territory and Government is an enormous opportunity to take charge of political institutions that will focus on the unique society and physical environment of Nunavut while preserving the common bonds of shared Canadian citizenship." (Footprints 1, 97)

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<sup>11</sup>The responsibility of NTI is great, not only are they the bureaucratic organization to represent Inuit interest in political matters, both at the territorial and federal level, NTI also holds the trust monies granted to beneficiaries through the NLCA.

<sup>12</sup> There was a lot press attention to Nunavut on April 1, 1999. See Hicks and White "Nunavut: Inuit Self-determination through a land claim and public government?" P\page 78-83. For an overview of the positive arguments for Nunavut, see Part A: the creation of Nunavut in Conciliator's Final Report: Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Implementation Planning Contract Negotiations for the Second Planning Period ([http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/agr/nu/lca/lca4\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/agr/nu/lca/lca4_e.html))

Although this is how the relationship has been presented, one cannot dispute the overarching authority of the Canadian state in this relationship. This fact is obvious, as this relationship was secured once Inuit surrendered their aboriginal claim to the territory, thereby legally securing Canada's claim to Nunavut's land base, which is supported by the individual articles in the NLCA. The majority of articles focus specifically on land and resources,<sup>13</sup> expressed by descriptions of administrative processes that guide the NLCA signatories in land access and use. In holding the legal title to the land, the Canadian state also secured its right to determine the administration of the land. Inuit are greatly limited by this arrangement, and the majority of Inuit politicians are legally required, and politically inclined, to follow the agreement's lead. Individual Inuit interested in interacting with the issues outlined in the NLCA must depend on the governing organizations established by the NLCA to represent Inuit.

The majority of governing organizations created specifically by the NLCA are co-management organizations. Co-management organizations are administrative sites that represent the NLCA signatories, and support the work of implementing the claim. These organizations include the NWMB<sup>14</sup> and other Institutes of Public Government (IPG's).<sup>15</sup> In reviewing the mandates of NWMB and the IPG's, as outlined in the NLCA, strong patterns emerge. Each mandate outlines the full scope of activity and responsibility of the

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<sup>13</sup> Other major areas of focus include the financial relationship between the GN and the GoC. The NLCA provides passing reference to Nunavut's social development, archaeology and archives, and overlapping claims, and also outlines the various administrative processes necessary for supporting the claim.

<sup>14</sup> NWMB's role and definition are introduced in the *NLCA Act* and these responsibilities are further detailed in Article 5 of the NLCA, "Wildlife".

<sup>15</sup> IPG's are sites where the NLCA signatories are represented in the administration over issues regarding land and resource use and access. Other IPG's include The Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC), Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB), Nunavut Water Board (NWB) and the Surface Rights Tribunal (SRT).

governing organizations.<sup>16</sup> As all three NLCA signatories must agree on the mandate of the governing institutions, these mandates shape the internal functioning of the governing organizations, which reflect the organizational design of the NLCA signatories. The mandate also defines the organization's membership system, which is a mixed membership system. This membership system guarantees secures the right of the GoC, the GN, and the organization that represents Inuit beneficiaries, to nominate or appoint a fixed number of members to each of these co-management boards, for a time agreed upon and specified in the mandate.<sup>17</sup> The benefit of a complimentary design and membership system is apparent when governing organizations begin doing the work they are mandated, which secures their financial support.

The organization's financial framework is described in its mandate, with particular emphasis on the funding source and financial reporting requirements. Funding is either secured from a single NLCA signatory or from all signatories in some proportional scheme. Once again, since the NLCA signatories provide secured funding, they define what decisions the organizations make and what form those decisions may take - whether an audit, report/study or formal resolution. In turn, this requires that the NLCA signatories define the necessary requirements for receiving information from the governing organizations. The NLCA signatories unequivocally recognize and privilege the information produced by these organizations.

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<sup>16</sup> NIC's mandate is outlined in Part II of the *Nunavut Act*, OIC's mandated can be found in part IV of the *Nunavut Act*, and the NWMB mandate can be found in Part 2 of Article 5 "Wildlife" of the NLCA. NPC's mandated is described in Article 11, NIRB's in Article 12 and NWB in Article 13, of the NLCA.

<sup>17</sup> For example, NWMB board's membership consists of one member is nominated by each of the three regional Inuit Associations, 1 member nominated by NTL, GN, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Environment Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service. 2 alternate members are nominated by Makivik Corporation and an independent chairperson is nominated by the existing board members. ([www.nwmb.com](http://www.nwmb.com)).

Governing organizations have a secured authority and opportunity that individual Inuit do not have. Individual Inuit, and even individual Nunavut communities, do not have this authority because they exist outside these organizations. Although Inuit and Nunavut communities can interact with these organizations, largely through elections, employment or consultations, this interaction occurs on the terms of the governing organizations. It is Inuit that must approach these organizations and make their case, and it is the organizations prerogative to respond to these cases in a manner they see fit. Once again, as the mandates are legally secured and granted through the NLCA, the NLCA signatories recognize the work of governing organizations. Acknowledging this political reality from an Inuit perspective reinforces the importance on how these political organizations interact with Inuit. There are many organizations that interact with Inuit communities, and although the organizations created by the NLCA are influential, no other governing organization is as prominent as the Government of Nunavut.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Government of Nunavut**

Once the commitment was made to implement the NLCA, a political shift occurred. All the hard work and enthusiasm used to secure the NLCA was directed to the GN. The GN became, and continues to be, the symbolic measure for Nunavut.

The GN is the vehicle for representing Inuit experience within Canada and to the Canadian government. This reality is expressed in *Nunavut: Inuit regain control of their lands and lives*. This book was the first comprehensive book, post-1999, on Nunavut, and is a collection of essays from recognized Inuit politicians and researchers whose work

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<sup>18</sup>It is important to remember that the NLCA does not focus on the administration of the GN, as the GN is a public government. NIC was given the mandate to design the administrative structure of the GN. Article 4 “Political Development in Nunavut” legally grants the right to create Nunavut and the GN.

focuses on Nunavut and/or aboriginal studies. In its introduction, its editors write: “However, the commitment of Inuit to working within the society and politics of Canada to solve their problems, and of the federal government in Ottawa and wider Canadian public to work with Inuit to solve them, may be the most important element of the Nunavut story” (Dahl et al, 13). Given that the reality of Nunavut was, and continues to be, different from the Canadian state, in terms of demographics, geography, infrastructure, history and cultural experience - government was, and continues to be, the common bond between Nunavut and Canada.<sup>19</sup> The GN was the site of this relationship and since both parties wanted to represent this relationship as strong and efficient, the GN had to be strong and efficient.<sup>20</sup>

Words used to describe the GN include “simplicity” or “streamlined”, and emphasis was also placed on accessibility. Community government was meant to have access to the GN, as were Inuit, through the GN decentralization plan.<sup>21</sup> This was the

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<sup>19</sup> This dynamic reinforced the Canadian state’s belief that the federal system was practical and superior. This is well represented in “the Creation of Nunavut” by the Privy Council Office. In its overview, it reads “On April 1, 1999, the map of Canada significantly changed for the first time since Newfoundland joined Confederation in 1949. The Northwest Territories was divided into two parts with the creation of the new territory of Nunavut in the east. It has been said that the sign of a healthy federation is its ability to grow and evolve over time in order to accommodate the changing aspirations and wishes of its citizens. By these criteria the Canadian federation is indeed healthy. For the first time in fifty years the map of Canada was redrawn, not as a result of conflict, but peacefully and democratically.” (Canada, Privy Council)

<sup>20</sup> This expectation was supported by both Inuit and non-Inuit in Nunavut, who supported Nunavut’s ‘separation’ from the Northwest Territories. Public support for the division of the NWT was determined by a territory wide plebiscite on April 14, 1982. Overall, 56% of the NWT voted in favor for dividing the Northwest Territories, effectively creating Nunavut. In the eastern part of the NWT, the “Nunavut” part, 86% of the voters were in favor of the split. At the time of this vote, no boundary was determined. In the years that followed, boundary discussions did challenge the support of the new territory. (As reported in *Nunatsiaq News*, November 26, 1982. See *Nunatsiaq News* April 1, 1999 special edition).

<sup>21</sup> Decentralization was designed to spread out the political and economic benefits of the new government beyond the territory’s capital, Iqaluit. Decentralization meant other Nunavut communities had the potential of benefiting from the GN boom through the distribution of government divisions in various communities. Access was the goal – in making the government accessible to people in communities, it would provide infrastructure presence and employment, thereby making the government more people based. Decentralization has inspired many debates. Questions were raised on the effectiveness of its implementation, see “Building Nunavut through Decentralization: Evaluation Report” (Available at: <http://www.stats.gov.nu.ca/evaluation%20documents/01%20decentralization%20E.pdf>). There are discussions about its financial reliability, see the 2005 Auditor General’s report to the Legislative

vision expressed in *Footprints 1*. This document discussed, in broad terms, the practicalities of creating a new government. It identified the need for infrastructure, telecommunications and training. The new buildings, the telecommunications, and training plans were the physical manifestation of the new political infrastructure in Nunavut. The idea was that with the necessary physical infrastructure secured, political focus, enthusiasm, and energy could then be directed to creating appropriate and effective territorial legislation and public policy.<sup>22</sup> The importance of having access to these government processes was well understood by NIC: “Rather, the social and cultural well-being of Nunavut will be most significantly determined by broad legislative and budgetary priorities set by the Nunavut Government” (Footprint 1, 64).

The authority of legislation cannot be denied. Law creates the framework that government works within; it secures legitimacy and defines responsibility. Since governments understand their own effectiveness through structure and definition, it can be understood that strong laws make effective governments. Since the GN was envisioned as being effective and efficient as a government and in its representation of Inuit culture and realities, the vision was that Nunavut law would be capable of achieving these two goals. The importance of these two goals inspired a massive “made-in-Nunavut” public campaign, a campaign that began before 1999,<sup>23</sup> and continues to be

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Assembly, which recommends the re-centralization of financial services in the GN. (Available at: [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/reports.nsf/html/200602nla\\_e.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/reports.nsf/html/200602nla_e.html))

<sup>22</sup> This argument was reinforced in my interview with David Akeegoak.

<sup>23</sup> The Nunavut Implementation Committee (NIC) was responsible for recommending to the Government in Canada. Perhaps its most public recommendation was the gender parity constituency system – dubbed a “Made in Nunavut Solution for an Effective and Representative Legislation” (NIC 1994, Iqaluit)

used by government departments and agencies today.<sup>24</sup> The continuing importance of made-in-Nunavut legislation for the GN will be explored later in this chapter.<sup>25</sup>

In *Footprints I*, NIC cited discussion papers, public consultations and internal research as its sources for its recommendations on the GN design and organization.<sup>26</sup> NIC's recommendations were well defined, and argued that the GN should function within a structured framework where the executive power (cabinet) would remain unchanged and where its central agencies/departments would be physically located in Iqaluit. The GN was to be simple administratively, and the departments would be functional, efficient and effective. The GN was to have fewer departments than the GNWT, and fewer government boards and agencies, yet, the level and scope of territorial government programs and services was to remain the same. The GN's plan for decentralization was to be implemented "as far as practicable", and the GN would respect and work around existing regions with proportional government job allocation provided to each region (*Footprints I*, 23).

To complement this vision, NIC outlined the principles that guided the GN's administrative design. The principles included: democratic, responsible and public government. Good intergovernmental relations with the Government of Canada, to be supported and reflected by the physical location of joint management boards for wildlife

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<sup>24</sup> For example "Made in Nunavut Midwives" (NN May 12 2006), "Made in Nunavut X-ray technicians (NN August 11/03), "Made in Nunavut School Books (GN PR October 4/04), "Made in Nunavut Official Languages Act" (LA PR September 12 2002) and "Made in Nunavut Elections Act" ([www.elections.nu.ca](http://www.elections.nu.ca) PR Feb 16/04).

<sup>25</sup> This is publicly represented in "Pinasuaqtavut" a document representing the Nunavut's second legislative assembly's commitment and goals. In this document is a commitment to create three "made in Nunavut" legislation: the Official Language Act, the Parks Act and the Education Act.

<sup>26</sup> *Footprints II* complements the foundational focus of *Footprints I*. *Footprints II* refers to *Footprints I* in its discussion of the GN's guiding design and operation, yet *Footprints II* focuses more on the implementation of these principles. *Footprints II* focuses on operation, and includes topics such as decentralization, infrastructure, telecommunications and training.

(i.e. NWMB) and federal fishery departments (Department of Fisheries and Oceans in Nunavut). The GN would respect the vested authority and jurisdiction of the NLCA in both letter and spirit, as well as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The GN was to work towards financial stability, through the acknowledgement of the GoC's fiduciary responsibilities and a formula financial agreement between Nunavut and the GoC (Footprints 1, Appendix A-7).

In reading its design and the guiding principles, it is apparent that the vision for the GN was good government. The GN was designed to be no different from Canadian governments. It is also apparent that the GN took very little inspiration from traditional Inuit culture. In fact, the strongest reference to Inuit culture came from its link to socio-economic benefits, which were also well articulated before 1999. In *Footprints 1* NIC argued:

[t]he conclusion of the Nunavut Agreement had three favourable socio-economic impacts on Nunavut: it created additional investor confidence; it supplied Inuit – some 80 to 85% of the population of Nunavut – with a tangible package of economic benefits and opportunities; and, through Article 4 of the Nunavut Agreement, it brought about the necessary commitments to establish the Nunavut Territory and Government (Footprints 1, 61).

The benefits of economic opportunity and potential were key messages directed to Inuit. Inuit were told their access to financial opportunities, particularly through employment with the GN, was guaranteed by the NLCA.<sup>27</sup> This argument represented the perceived seamless link between political self-determination and economic self-sufficiency. The

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<sup>27</sup> This argument was supported by the NLCA, specifically Article 23 & 24. Article 23: Inuit employment in Government - stated that 85% of the GN's employees must be Inuk (a representative level of the population). Article 24: Government contracts - is meant to support Inuit firms and business in their quest to be awarded government contracts.

argument was that by creating favourable opportunities for Inuit to succeed economically through employment, Inuit and Inuit culture would be strengthened.<sup>28</sup>

For all the discussion in *Footprints 1* on the importance of principles and socio-economic benefits, as 1999 came closer, NIC's emphasis and enthusiasm shifted.

*Footprints 2*, published in 1996, three years before Nunavut, and one year after

*Footprints 1*, returned its focus on the physical aspects of government. In it NIC wrote:

The central priority in the time available prior to Nunavut Government start-up should be ensuring that the Nunavut Legislature and Government are equipped with a set of serviceable organizational and administrative tools – a workable organizational design, legal continuity, competent personnel, the uninterrupted flow of essential government services. Equipping the Nunavut Government with a rich research file on pressing topics for Day 1 should not be dismissed as a frill, but such an effort would best be viewed as supplementary to the core needs of getting Nunavut's Legislature and Government up and running in good working order (*Footprints 2*, 252).

It is likely that NIC's rationale was that legislation, policy and budgets could not be supported without defined and determined processes and sites of operations. The quote above, and the entire *Footprints 2* document, reaffirm the argument that government infrastructure is necessary for governments to exist and function.

In designing the GN, NIC's reinforced the authority of governing institutions as key brokers of political power in Nunavut. NIC's goal was to design an effective government. In reviewing the technical design of the GN, it is obvious that the GN was not designed to reflect Inuit cultural principles.<sup>29</sup> The GN's structure was set, and this meant Inuit had to adjust to this structure. This relationship requirement interacts awkwardly with Inuit traditional culture, as expressed by Joe Karetak of Arviat:

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<sup>28</sup> This thesis will not argue the merits of this argument, as I have addressed it in my undergraduate thesis titled "Colonialism: The Never Ending Story, An examination of Nunavut, its Land Claims and the Inuit Culture". I concluded that "although the Inuit population is empowered politically and economically, it would be incorrect to assume that the Inuit are also empowered culturally. Political and economic empowerment occurs through western means...." (Price, BA honors thesis, 45, Unpublished).

<sup>29</sup> Inuit cultural principles will be explored in the next chapter.

Inuit culture is very unique in that it will avoid and prevent conflict as much as it can. So if there is any compromising occurring, and one side does not look like it is going to compromise, then the compromising is being done on the other side, which is often the Inuit side, by the Inuit. So if there is a price to pay, then Inuit are willing to pay the price, in order to stay along with their belief, that is, to avoid conflict as much as possible (Karetak interview).

It is necessary to determine the validity of the above statement, as there are constant points of contact between the GN and Inuit. To do this, I will examine one site of this interaction, the political consultation process, to better understand this dynamic<sup>30</sup>

### **Nunavut Political Consultation, Pre-1999**

In bringing forward its recommendations on the GN's structure and administration to the Minister of DIAND, NIC was confident that its recommendations represented the wishes and vision of Nunavummiut.<sup>31</sup> In the preface of *Footprints I*, NIC writes: "The report is built on a solid foundation of extensive public consultation in Nunavut and a confident sense of the preferences of the Nunavut public" (Footprints 1, iii). To fulfill this mandate, NIC used a variety of public consultation strategies.<sup>32</sup> I will focus specifically

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<sup>30</sup> Currently in Nunavut, public focus and support centers on a push for Inuit culture within the GN. This is represented by the various Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) initiatives being supported by the GN in its attempt to bring Inuit culture into the GN. IQ is the Inuktitut equivalent term to "traditional knowledge". The GN department, Culture, Language, Elders and Youth (CLEY) is the lead department in terms of coordinating the GN's work on IQ. Two initiatives the department supports include Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit and Tuttarviit. "The Katimajit is made up of non-governmental members who have expertise in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and how it may be implemented throughout government. Tuttarviit is an interdepartmental group consisting of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit coordinators from each Government of Nunavut department. These bodies are supported by the department's Director of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. Tuttarviit draws on the Katimajit as a resource and develops Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit related initiatives for the Government of Nunavut." (CLEY website) (<http://www.gov.nu.ca/cley/home/english/iqintro.html>)

<sup>31</sup> Nunavummiut means "people from Nunavut." This distinction is different from being Inuk (single) or Inuit (plural). Nunavummiut is not based on a person's connection and responsibility to a culture, but rather, a person's connection to a geographical location. Inuit do fall under the classification of Nunavummiut, but being Nunavummiut does not necessarily refer to Inuit.

<sup>32</sup> NIC held two Nunavut wide conferences to inform its initial framework, which was attended by NIC members and elected officials from the Nunavut region. The June 1994 conference informed NIC's approach and determined the principles guiding the design of the GN. The February 1995 meetings pre-tested some tentative recommendations and allowed feedback. These meetings were supported through other means, like territory-wide radio shows, pre-recorded meetings broadcasted on local television, the distribution of printed information and the website, through reporting of media outlets and general meetings with other government and business organizations (Footprints 2). And as highlighted earlier, in the work

on the community consultation tour, as this is the site where NIC interacted directly with Inuit and Inuit communities.

Four travelling NIC panels visited 25 Nunavut communities between December 1994 and January 1995.<sup>33</sup> Funding for the travel was provided by the Canadian government. This financial responsibility was secured through the Nunavut Political Accord and the *Nunavut Act*. In the majority of communities, the visiting panel scheduled one day for their visit and conducted three separate meetings: a meeting at the local school with interested students and teachers, a meeting with the hamlet council, and a general public meeting. To successfully complete all three meetings, a set schedule was followed (*Footprints I*, A9-3). These meetings began with general introductions of the visiting panel, NIC, the *Nunavut Act* and *NLCA Act*. Focus then shifted to possible GN design options, like decentralization and gender parity. Government responsibilities of particular importance and interest, like education, were discussed as well. Government logistics, such as the selection of Nunavut's capital city, the number of MLA's in the Nunavut legislative assembly and territorial and electoral boundaries were introduced, with various scenarios discussed. After the visiting panel made its presentation, community members were free to ask questions or make statements.

Appendix A-9 of *Footprints I* "Report on the NIC Community Consultation Tours. December 1994 - January 1995: A Summary of What Was Said" outlined the community's feedback to the panel, and NIC's response to this feedback. In reading this report, clear patterns emerge. Communities consistently:

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leading up to *Footprints 2* which represented NIC's shift in focus on government logistics, NIC conducted specific focus group consultations with government organizations and boards, elected community leaders and GNWT bureaucrats.

<sup>33</sup> In order to visit all communities in a short period of time, NIC had two traveling panels. Each panel focused its visit to a particular cluster of communities.

- requested additional background information on the various issues introduced by the NIC panel;
- inquired as to how they could access additional information in the future.
- shared personal and community experience, options and perspectives, based on individual and localized knowledge, and influenced by the community's geographical location.
- spoke on behalf of their community and region when asking about government benefits, like employment, training and infrastructure. This influenced their response to government "overriding factors", such as the selection of Nunavut's capital city, government design and financial arrangements.

When considering the wide scope of topics, the timeframe to complete this work, and the secured financial support, NIC supported, in its opinion, a successful and extensive consultation tour. There is no doubt NIC benefited from its interaction with Nunavut communities. With this being said, it is important to acknowledge that in consulting communities, NIC's responsibility and authority were absolute. It was NIC that visited each community, and determined who would be consulted, when and where. Although community members were willing to interact with the NIC panel, to do this, community members had to conform to the time restrictions and set processes determined by NIC. NIC asked the questions, collected the information and was responsible for transcribing the minutes of the meetings. NIC's authority was also expressed in *how* NIC interacted with communities. Once community voice and experience were collected, translated and transcribed, from Inuit communities, NIC took this voice to the GoC for action, as required by their mandate and funding arrangements.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Section 59 of the *Nunavut Act* reads: "The Commission (NIC) shall establish programs, which may include holding of public meetings, to inform the residence of Nunavut of its activities".

In the relationship between NIC and the GoC, the GoC's authority was absolute. NIC was created and mandated by GoC legislation and the GoC had significant input in deciding NIC's membership. NIC's financial support came from the GoC, therefore NIC's financial reporting was directed to the GoC. Not only did the GoC direct NIC's logistics, but also it directed *how* NIC's fulfilled its mandate. Since the vision was to create, in Nunavut, a government that was an active member of the Canadian federation, the GN was design to fit within the federal system. The GN's administration system reflected the Canadian government, proven by its guiding principles. The GoC system was familiar to NIC members, either through their work with the NLCA negotiation process with TFN or throughout their work with the GNWT. This practical experience, no doubt, guided the GN design. Although there are logistical and technical differences between the GN and GNWT, the framework and the structure are similar, set by the example of the GoC. The GN privileges federalism and the Canadian system of government, and this privilege influences how the GN interacts with Inuit. Although NIC was given some room for creativity in the design and/or restructuring of government departments, all the pieces NIC had to work with were already determined. No new thinking was necessary.

What are the implications of this privilege in Nunavut? As this thesis focuses on political consultation, I will examine how the GN conducts political consultation to determine how it informs and engages with Inuit on important political matters. To do this, I will review the made in Nunavut *Wildlife Act* consultation process. This act was a

priority for the first elected Nunavut Legislative Assembly, and to date, it is the most celebrated consultation tour in Nunavut.<sup>35</sup>

### **Nunavut Political Consultation, Post-1999: The Nunavut Wildlife Act**

The GN was committed to a strong Nunavut *Wildlife Act* for many reasons. Wildlife still plays a central role for Inuit culture and livelihood.<sup>36</sup> This act was to be the first piece of legislation that recognized and included Inuit cultural principles, or Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit, a goal that symbolized the overall intent of Nunavut<sup>37</sup>. As well, a majority of elected politicians, and government bureaucrats responsible for wildlife in Nunavut, were male, and were enthusiastic to support hunters in their communities and in Nunavut. These realities complemented the general need to update this act “grandfathered” from the Northwest Territories,<sup>38</sup> created in 1978 (Discussion paper 1). The Nunavut *Wildlife Act* would clearly define the responsibilities and processes for wildlife management and protection in Nunavut. Specifically, this new act would comply with the NLCA, clarify the roles of the various political organizations in Nunavut, and it would respect various national and international agreements regarding wildlife.

The responsibility for creating the act was the GN’s, as the governing organization responsible for the creation and administration of legislation in Nunavut. Representing the GN was the Department of Sustainable Development (DSD), yet, both NTI and

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<sup>35</sup> Under the principle of *Inuuqatigiittiarniq*, Healthy Communities, the Bathurst Mandate, which is a platform of the first legislative assembly of Nunavut, it states that Departmental Business plans and activities will give priority to “Develop, with our land claims partners, a new *Wildlife Act* that recognizes the co-management regime of our resources”.

<sup>36</sup> A lot of Inuit still hunt. This is a common reality amongst communities. Also see “The Nunavut Wildlife Harvest Study”, August 2004: final report, available at [www.nwrcc.ca](http://www.nwrcc.ca). In 2001, the GN commissioned a study on how to collect Harvesting data and statistics: “Assessment of Options for Collecting Statistical Data on Wildlife Harvesting in Nunavut”, prepared by Peter J. Usher and Lorraine Brooke, in September 2001.

<sup>37</sup> This act received royal assent on December 5, 2003.

<sup>38</sup> Although April 1, 1999 was the GN’s first day of operation, many programs and policies and all of Nunavut’s legislation was carried over from the Government of the Northwest Territories. The rationale was once the GN departments became functional, then the departments would work to adapt the programs, policies and legislation to Nunavut realities.

NWMB had a strong stake in this legislation as well, as spelled out in the NLCA.<sup>39</sup> In response to the presences of the different political stakeholders, a partnership was secured and formalized in December 2000 with the terms of reference (ToR) for the Nunavut Wildlife Legislation Working Group (WLWG). The WLWG mandate was to create and oversee the creation of a new “Made in Nunavut” legislation focusing on the management and preservation of wildlife in Nunavut. The ToR defined the working group’s membership, meeting times, financial obligations and authority structure. In addition a two year timeline, from the beginning of the consultation process to the introduction of the legislation, was agreed on. The ToR also identified the guiding principles of the working group: Openness and Transparency, Cooperation and Partnership, Consultation/Aajiqatigiigniq, accountability and efficiency and effectiveness (DSD ToR).

To support a strong piece of legislation, a strong community consultation process was promised. DSD oversaw the logistics of the community consultation process, and coordinated the communication and interaction of the working group. Like the NIC consultation process, this consultation process was extensive. Twenty-five Nunavut communities were visited. This was a huge logistical challenge and financial commitment, as all communities in Nunavut are accessible only by air. The initial timeline proposed for community consultation was ambitious, July 2000 - April 2001. However, it was not until October 2001 the former Minister of DSD, Peter Kilabuk, announced in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly that the community consultation for this act would begin in January 2002.

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<sup>39</sup> The Nunavut Legislative Assembly also had a role in this bill. As practiced in the Westminster Parliamentary system, whereas the government bureaucracy creates legislation, it is the responsibility of the regular members of the legislative assembly to review the legislation and recommend it for royal assent.

The consultation process began with a pre-consultation process, which involved a meeting of community wildlife officers in Rankin Inlet in January 2002. The goal of the pre-consultation process was to prepare wildlife officers on the consultation processes and topics. Members of the working group and community wildlife officers discussed the technicalities of the legislation and identified community concerns regarding wildlife management and preservation. This process was later repeated once the community wildlife officers returned to their home community and met with their hunting and trapping organizations (HTOs).<sup>40</sup>

Wildlife officers were responsible for preparing community HTO's on the act and the issues. The community wildlife officers and HTOs were the point of contact for the communities. They were responsible for introducing and discussing the legislation and the influence of the NLCA, as well as the different role political organizations had in the management and preservation of wildlife in the community. While this occurred, DSD began distributing posters, pamphlets and its discussion paper: "Concerning the Development of a New Nunavut *Wildlife Act*." Pre-recorded radio announcements were sent to all local community radio stations. These materials, and the timing of their release, were part of the broader communication plan outlined by the communication firm responsible for public relations.

In April 2002, the new minister for DSD, Olayuk Akesuk, announced in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly that community consultations were to begin. In his Minister's statement he explained that two consultation panels, made up of representatives from all three political organizations, would be travelling to all 25

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<sup>40</sup> Each Nunavut community has a Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO). An HTO is a community based organization that oversees harvesting in the community, particularly hunting quotas. [www.nwmb.com](http://www.nwmb.com).

Nunavut communities. These meetings were to take place from April 15 – May 16, 2002. At this time, Mr. Akasuk also expressed the success of the tri-organizational relationship to date.

And so the community consultation began. There was a pattern to the community visits. For 22 of the 25 communities, the community consultation began with a meeting between the expert panel and the local HTO at 1 pm or 2 pm. This meeting was then followed by a community phone-in show, scheduled for 4 pm. Then at 7 pm, a community public meeting was held. For the three regional centres: Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay, the community consultation visits followed the same pattern as the other communities, but were scheduled over two days and included an additional meeting with the local business community. As summarized by DSD in their consultation report, on average 50 people attended the community meeting, the average length of the meeting was five hours, and in total, 130 hours of meetings were conducted. These meetings occurred in Inuktitut and were translated into English (DSD report, 1).

When the community consultation process was over, there was general silence from the GN and DSD specifically. There was limited interaction with communities, as work began “in house”.<sup>41</sup> From June 2002 – March 2003, the department worked on drafting the act, made a presentation to a Nunavut Wildlife Symposium in October 2002, and provided information on Non-Quota Limitations, an issue dealt by the act’s regulations. These were mailed to community HTOs in December 2002.<sup>42</sup> This silence was questioned by members of the Legislative Assembly. Regular member Hunter Tootoo asked the Minister of DSD when the department would release its consultation

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<sup>41</sup> It is likely that additional “focus group” meetings were held among the political organizations or between specific political organizations and specific community representatives supported “in house.”

<sup>42</sup> See “History of The Nunavut Wildlife Act Consultations” poster, DSD.

report. Mr. Tootoo was concerned that the report would be released after the act was introduced to the Legislative Assembly, effectively preventing communities from responding to the department's use of community direction. The department, through Minister Akasuk, responded by saying the department would work to compete and distribute the report before the act was introduced (Hansard, November 25, 2002).

Ten months after the community consultation tour was completed, on March 28, 2003, a draft *Wildlife Act* was introduced into the Legislative Assembly for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading. Shortly after, as per the legislative processes, on April 19, 2003, the Standing Committee (SC) responsible for reviewing the legislation made a public call for public submissions, via press release, on the *Wildlife Act*. The SC was interested in hearing concerns from the various wildlife stakeholders, as well as thoughts and feedback on the draft legislation.<sup>43</sup> In the press release, the SC stated “it's important that this process not be rushed – this is a key opportunity for the people of Nunavut to express their concerns and thoughts on this critical legislation” (PR release, April 9, 2003).

Nine days after the SC call for review submissions, and one month after the *Wildlife Act* was introduced in the Legislative Assembly, the DSD Minister released the consultation report in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly.<sup>44</sup> The consultation report

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<sup>43</sup> Some concerns had been raised in the proceedings of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly. For example, in March, 2003, a member statement and question were directed to the Minister of DSD about incorporating Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit directly into the Wildlife Act, but also how the act will impact or respect relationships amongst hunter, hunter education and Inuktitut terminology. Also, in response to a question about Federal Government authority, via the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) over marine big game, DSD responded by stating that the GN will work with the GoC for it to understand the importance of respecting IQ with all of Nunavut's wildlife. The Minister did warn the MLA that the GoC does not change quickly (Arvaluk, Oral Question).

<sup>44</sup> Concerns over the amount of time it took the department to release the consultation report were raised by the members of the Legislative Assembly. In November 2002 the DSD Minister was asked when the consultation report would be released, and the MLA expressed concern that the draft act was created before communities were given a chance to review the findings from the community consultations. The MLA was concerned that there would be no opportunity to gather further community feedback. The Minister

summarized what the expert panel heard from the community. It provided an overview on six of the major issues surrounding the bill, an overview of the community's feedback and the working group's response to that feedback. Five other issues were also highlighted in less detail. These points were well spaced over a six page document that was translated from English into Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun<sup>45</sup> and French. In the accompanying press release, the Department also highlighted that "the information (collected in the consultation process) will also be useful when drafting the regulations and policies included in the Nunavut Wildlife Act" (Press Release, April 28, 2003). This consultation report, like the discussion paper, was mailed out to all Nunavut residents and was made available at community hamlets, HTOs, with the community wildlife officers, and available on-line.

At the beginning of September, 2003, the SC responsible for reviewing the Wildlife Act reported their findings. The SC held three meetings, one in each of the three regional centres (Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay). Their main focus groups included community HTO members, NTI and NWMB, all of who were directly involved in the community consultation tours with the department. HTOs expressed frustration that they were not given the time, opportunity or resources to properly review the bill, thereby preventing the stakeholders from making effective recommendations. This argument was reinforced by concerns raised by the other two stakeholders, NTI and NWMB. The sentiment was that due to a limited timeframe the HTOs couldn't gain a "comprehensive understanding of the contents and implications of the bill" (Legislative

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responded by stating his department would work to get the consultation report, with translation, out for before the Act was released (Tootoo, Oral Question).

<sup>45</sup> Inuinnaqtun is a dialect of Inuktitut that is common in western Nunavut, and it is written with roman orthography instead of syllabics. It is a dialect that is working on revitalization. There has been considerable debate on how to best support the language's revitalization.

Assembly Press Release, September 1, 2003). Concerns were also raised over the translations of the bill. In light of this response, the SC recommended that a cooperative and consensus environment could be supported amongst the working group by holding another meeting among all stakeholders. This meeting was held in Iqaluit from September 30 to October 2, 2003 and included members of the working group, members of the legislative assembly, community HTOs and Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWOs) representatives. In December 2003, the *Wildlife Act* received its third reading. For the next year and a half, the department worked on formalizing the necessary regulations to accompany the new legislation. On July 9, 2005 the act came into force without the necessary regulations. The regulations specify the rules of the legislation and “must be in place for the Act to function” (NTI press release June 3 2004).

Formal work on the regulations began with the public renewed commitment of the Nunavut Wildlife Legislation Working Group. In June 2004, this group signed another Memorandum of Understanding to “set the terms of reference for the development of the Regulations to be included in the Nunavut Wildlife Act” (NTI press release, June 3, 2004). Public interest and scrutiny was high for the regulations process because of the high profile work of the *Wildlife Act* itself and because regulations directly interact and impact the communities. In recognizing the intense public interest on the regulations process, Nunavut’s three Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWOs)<sup>46</sup> were added to the existing relationship between NWMB, NTI and GN. The addition of the RWOs to the

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<sup>46</sup> RWOs are the regional representative body of the community HTOs; the RWO’s membership consists of a representative from each community HTO in its region.

working group was one strategy to access and secure additional community perspectives.<sup>47</sup>

In light of the extensive consultation process for the act itself, the regulation consultation process was substantially shorter. Its initial timeline was January to May 2005, a timeframe the department of Environment<sup>48</sup> believed would allow the act and regulations to receive royal assent on July 9, 2005. As of March 8, 2005, the consultation process had not begun, with translation and coordination amongst the political organizations cited as reasons for this delay (Arreak, Oral Question March 18, 2005 & Alagalak, Oral Question). On April 26, 2005, Minister Akesuk announced in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly that the regulations were in draft form and ready to be shared with the communities, but once again, translating the regulations from English to Inuktitut was cited as delaying the initiation of the consultation process with the communities. Regular members in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly were quick to ask the Minister for a timeline. Regular member James Arreak asked, “Now that the translations are almost complete, why is it that it took so long and gave us such short time to consult with the people?” (Arreak, Oral Question April 26, 2005). On May 3, 2005, regular member, Peter Kattuk also raised the question of timelines. Minister Akesuk responded: “I believe that in two weeks we’ll start touring to the communities in regards to the draft regulations. I am not too sure when they will be completed” (Kattuk, Oral Question). Also, the minister did not identify which communities would be visited. Later

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<sup>47</sup> Examples of regulations include setting the quotas for community hunts, what animals would be designated as requiring protection, and the rules surrounding hunting techniques for big game.

<sup>48</sup> March 10, 2004, Premier Okalik announced that the restructuring of some GN departments. The former department of sustainable development was split into two departments, the department of environment, and the department of economic development and transportation (<http://www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/English/news/2004/march/march10.shtml>).

that year, in November, Minister Akesuk announced that the working group had completed its regional consultation.

For its regional consultations, the working group held meetings in each of the three regional centres. Delegates from the region, mainly community HTO representatives, travelled to their center to attend these workshops. These meetings continued into 2006, with the last meetings scheduled on September 25 - 28, 2006 and October 23 - 25, 2006 in Iqaluit. The department continues its work on the regulations.

It is painstakingly clear that two different consultation strategies were used in the *Wildlife Act* experience. The legislative consultation process was extensive and engaging, and the working group and territorial organizations consistently provided public updates to the communities. This created opportunities for the working group to receive feedback from the communities, and worked within scheduled and publicized timelines. The legislative consultation process also made good use of existing community infrastructure, both physical and political, within the community. Community HTOs and wildlife officers were the point of contact in each community, and they received the necessary training and support from the working group and territorial political organizations.

In contrast, the regulation consultation process did not include visits to individual communities; instead regional meetings and other focus group meetings were held with selected community representatives. The working group and political organizations failed in keeping communities informed on their work, strategy and timelines (Younger-Lewis, July 8, 2005). Limited political or educational support was provided to communities, which limited the community's opportunity to engage with the range of topics necessary. This sentiment was clearly expressed in the Department of Environment's own consultation report:

In general, the workshops were a provision of information, answering of questions, and explaining concepts. Much of the time was spent explaining matters that are already in legislation or regulations, and not on new materials or regulations that are being proposed. A large portion of the workshop time was spent with delegates making comments and otherwise describing wildlife issues and concerns that are not subject to regulation, or that do not require any regulatory response.

The differences between the two consultation strategies are more striking when considering the relationship between legislation and regulations and individual communities. Legislation guides government and other political organizations by setting the parameters for its interaction. The *Wildlife Act* specifically “implement[s] the wildlife management regime outlined in NLCA, such as reinforcing the roles of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, the regional wildlife organizations, and the hunters and trappers organizations”(Younger-Lewis, July 8, 2005). Regulations also guide political organizations and its public servants, but in a different way. Regulations set the parameters of the relationship between political organizations and communities, and they interact directly with communities and community members. For example, the *Wildlife Act* regulations “outline who is allowed to hunt, how much they can hunt, and how they have to report their harvest” (Nunatsiaq News, May 20, 2005). And yet, the legislative process received the majority of the government’s attention, energy and publicity.

A substantial time lapse occurred between the two consultation processes. Although the department and working group representatives may have supported a constant dialogue over the life of the two processes, communities were not part of that dialogue. Communities and community members were not given the opportunity or support in time, energy and information to maintain their relationship post-legislative consultation. The GN and working group were not consistent in their actions between the two consultation tours, even though each topics were of similar nature, be it with a

slightly different focus. Communities were not given the opportunity for being educated on the regulations process and impact. I argue that the failure to support an interactive regulation consultation process proves that even if the legislative consultation process was extensive, it did not establish any sort of community communication infrastructure or lasting relationship. Communities were not empowered in their discussions and interaction throughout the legislative process. Although the consultation process was extensive, it was issue specific, and once the issue changed slightly in focus and technicalities, the consultation process failed. The government that clearly benefited from the consultation process, and once it received its information, the relationship stopped functioning. Therefore, the *Wildlife Act* consultation was not meaningful for Inuit communities.

### **Conclusion:**

Information gathering is the goal of the GN's current consultation process. The information being gathered is community perspective, experience and vision for the future. Yet, once the GN gathers this information, the GN removes it from the community context and "uses" it elsewhere, mainly in the capital of the territory, Iqaluit. I conclude to this truth logically. In Nunavut, the GN initiates the majority of its consultation to inform its own legislation, policy, or budget processes. The executive divisions of each department (policy and finance)<sup>49</sup> are responsible for setting and supporting individual departmental policy and budget, and each department's executive division is located in Iqaluit, as are the executive departments of the GN (Executive and

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<sup>49</sup> Although the GN's decentralization strategy has placed some policy divisions (consumer affairs) and financial responsibilities (payroll or medical travel) of various government departments in other Nunavut communities, the core decision-making responsibilities of each department, and the core functions of the GN's Department of Finance and Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, are located in Iqaluit.

Intergovernmental Affairs, Finance, Human Resources and the Department of Justice). The executive departments are responsible for providing central support and advice to all GN departments and to the territorial Cabinet and the Financial Management Board through in-house processes.<sup>50</sup> The Nunavut Legislative Assembly is also located in Iqaluit, and is responsible for formally questioning and approving GN legislation and budget allocation. This reality begs the question: how can a community grow and learn from its own experiences when its own experience and vision is removed from the community and “used” elsewhere?

The GN has its own system that functions within its own understanding and style. It is an interstitial system based on continuing processes, and requires definition and predetermined practices. It is goal specific and oriented, and it initiates action to meet predetermined goals. In fact, the work necessary to initiate and support small changes requires huge amounts of time, work and money. The NIC experience has proven that a lot of time, energy and work can focus on processes and logistics. The GN also teaches communities that when political organizations do interact with communities, they require political and physical infrastructure, a defined communication and political strategy, and a lot of money.<sup>51</sup> Also, since the GN functions primarily in English, additional time and resources are needed to interact with Inuktitut speaking communities.

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<sup>50</sup> These mechanisms and process are similar to other governments that are modeled after the Westminster government. Cabinet and the Financial Management Board are responsible for setting the budget and policy priorities for the entire government. The Legislative Assembly provides formal approval.

<sup>51</sup> The legislative consultation process was expensive. The budgeted estimate for the consultation materials specifically was estimated at \$327,560. Add to this the cost of air travel and accommodations, as well as logistical support, like translations equipment and translators for 25 communities, plus the logistical support for political organizations. One can imagine that the total costs associated with the legislative process could range anywhere between \$750,000 to & \$1,000,000. The financial consequences of this extensive consultation tour on future legislative proposals are great. Will equally important topics receive an equal amount of attention and support? As the *Wildlife Act* consultation experience is held up as the ideal experience, will it ensure financial support for future proposals? Other priority legislation includes the *Education Act*, *Official Language Act* and the *Inuktitut Protection Act*. To complicate this more, Nunavut

How Inuit communities have responded to these realities provides insight into what communities have to offer within the consultation process. As shown in the past thirty years plus years, Inuit communities have a lot to say. Communities understand their realities, are aware of their own experience and do have visions for the future, all of which are political in nature. Also, Inuit communities have also proven their willingness to interact and engage in all types of conversations that are initiated by governing organizations. Communities are not afraid to ask for more information and demand their participation in political processes. The regulations process of the *Wildlife Act* has proven that communities can slow down or stop political processes if they feel they are not rightly involved. Yet, experience has also proven that if the governing organizations do not have the commitment and enthusiasm for engaging with various parties, it increases the likelihood that the political venture will not be as successful or engaging.

Perhaps the strongest lessons communities can provide are lessons of memory. Communities have a history and a way of being that existed before the Canadian government or the NLCA. Communities have memories of times when Inuit lived their cultural traditions and principles, when Inuit governance was respected and practiced. In exploring the principles that guide this political system, the limitations of government political systems in Nunavut have become clearer. This debate will make space to create a vision of political infrastructure where communities and the GN meet and interact on equal footing, and where meaningful consultation can occur. In the next chapter, I will explore Inuit governance, and offer my own understanding of meaningful consultation from an Inuit governance perspective.

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has many capital needs, such as a territorial cultural school and a territory wide Inuit heritage facility, which would house Nunavut and Inuit artifacts currently held in NWT. Nunavut also needs public housing, correctional facilities, schools, health centers, and community and recreational facilities.

## **Chapter Two: Inuit Methodologies**

The technicalities of the Government of Nunavut's consultation process were described in chapter one to illustrate how the GN interacts with Inuit. In reviewing the technicalities, I argue the relationship between the GN and Inuit communities is directed by the practices and principles of the GN. In this chapter I argue Inuit have their own system, style and structure for supporting relationships, a system that I will refer to as Inuit governance. To explore the principles that guide Inuit governance, I will identify and describe three essential themes that illustrate the practices and responsibilities encoded within Inuit governance. I will also discuss the dynamic between principle and action from an Inuit governance perspective and argue the existence of an ideological gap between this perspective and the GN's.

In recognizing this gap I will examine one response to this gap. Arviat Vision 2002 was a community-led, community supported consultation project that focussed on community wellness and economic development. This process actively and meaningfully engaged community members in building consensus and confidence around the question, "how can we support community wellness?" I believe this experience is an example of meaningful consultation and represents the ability and potential of Inuit communities to direct political processes and support community empowerment.

### **Summary of Literature on Inuit Governance**

To explore traditional Inuit governance and its principles, I actively engaged in discussions and literature. I conducted a number of interviews with community members in Arviat, Nunavut to learn about their understanding of Inuit traditional principles, their perception of the community's relationship with the GN, and the Arviat Vision 2002 experience. Not only did these discussions help me understand traditional Inuit

governance directly, but in hearing community members questioned the GN's rational, the more I learned how community members understood community governance.

To inform and complement these discussions, I reviewed various written sources. For sources specifically on Inuit culture and history I referred to published sources that privileged Inuit voice, experience and memories. I consciously chose not to use anthropological sources, such as works by Franz Boaz or Knud Rasmussen. My decision to exclude these sources was informed by Marino Aupilaarjuk, who was quoted as saying: "I would like to add something. I know that there are mistakes in what Rasmussen wrote. Therefore, I think Inuit should be the ones doing the teaching" (Oosten & Laugrand 2002, 83).

My literary review began with the *Interviewing Inuit Elders* book series. This book series explores Inuit culture through interviews on specific topics like childrearing, health and law. The interviews occurred between Nunavut Arctic College students and respected Inuit elders from various Nunavut communities, all of whom lived a significant part of their life "on the land." The practices described in this book series complement the stories told in the *Nunavut: Our Land* film series produced by Isuma productions, an Inuit production company based in Iglulik, Nunavut. This video series recreates the daily practices, interactions and responsibilities of Inuit camp life in the 1940s.

The *Inuit Perspective on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* book series focuses on changes brought to Inuit lifestyle by colonialism, and explores how traditional practices have adapted or changed as a result of this new colonial reality. The discussions brought up in these books complement two films produced by John Huston, *Diet of Souls* and *Nuliajuk: Mother of the Sea Beasts*. These videos focussed on the impact spiritual change had on Inuit culture, and explore the role of traditional Inuit spirituality after the introduction and

institution of Christianity in *Nunavut*. Secondary sources were also used to explore the resiliency of Inuit against colonial realities. *Saqiyuq: Stories from the Lives of Three Inuit Women*, edited by Nancy Wachowich, and Shelagh Grant's *Arctic Justice* tell stories of Inuit acts of daily resistance as a part of Inuit reality, a reality that challenges the popular understanding that Inuit political resistance is best represented by the NLCA negotiation process.

I also reviewed a selection of unpublished interviews from the Iglulik Oral Histories Project that focus on traditional Inuit leadership. As these interviews were conducted with elders from the Iglulik area, they remind this research that governance is a reflection of the where people live, and is negotiated amongst the people who live within a community. This perspective was supplemented with *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut*, edited by John Bennett and Susan Rowley. *Uqalurait* is a collection of quotations taken from already existing interviews with Inuit from different regions of Inuit homeland. This book shows that despite location, Inuit share common principles of living and governance.

In understanding that Inuit political and cultural experience fits within the larger Indigenous context, Taiaiake Alfred's *Wasase* invites readers to consider the continuing destructive influence colonial structures have within Indigenous nations. *Wasase* acknowledges that strengthening Indigenous peoples, and not colonial systems, will strengthen Indigenous governance. This strengthening will simultaneously inspire, and be the inspiration for, a regeneration of political and cultural systems that reflect Indigenous teachings and relationships. In returning to a life that lives governance, understanding where you are from influences what you say, a lesson expressed in Keith Basso's *Wisdom Sits in Places*. Also, Steve Wall's work in *To Become a Human Being*,

*The Message of Tadodaho Chief Leon Shenandoah* reminds readers that individual choices and action do reflect collective responsibilities.

The ideas that emerged from formal interviews and literature were supplemented with informal discussions I had with trusted family members and friends, individuals who also have a strong passion and commitment to Inuit traditional principles and practices. It was within these conversations that I was able to work through my own reflections.

These sources and discussions supported my exploration into the in-depth, collectively held knowledge of Inuit. Midwifery, child rearing, food preparation and weather prediction were all processes that Inuit engaged in and worked to understand. To understand the process, Inuit constantly analyzed the experience in order to identify any system or pattern.<sup>52</sup> Once patterns were identified and understood, Inuit would respect the presence of the pattern and adapt their individual and collective practice to it.

It is easy to think that Inuit governance is natural to Inuit. This romantic notion is far from the truth. Inuit study their environment and their interactions with the land, weather, animals and other individuals. Inuit need to be alert throughout their experiences, providing Inuit the opportunity to understand the technicalities of the experience. This alertness is necessary, as I argue knowledge is created through intellectual reflection on action resulting from practical experiences or experiences

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<sup>52</sup> It is important to acknowledge that seeking patterns does not assume the constant presences of a logical order to situations. A pattern could include the constant presence of hardship, or unexpectedness, therefore requiring individuals to not react emotionally. Taboos and *maligait* (to be explained in the following section) represents this. For example, if a menstruating woman shared clothing with a member of a hunting party, then hardship could occur. Martha Tunnuq recounts the story of a man who fell into a cold river and could not be resuscitated because “his mother was wearing a pair of pants that had been used by someone who had been menstruating while wearing those pants.... That’s the reason why he died...I am not sure if this happens today” (Bennett & Rowley, 373).

resulting from natural occurrences.<sup>53</sup> As both the technicalities of an experience, and the knowledge gained from it are shared amongst Inuit through dialogue and interaction, this ensures that individuals are aware and open to different experience, realities, and perspectives.

### **Inuit Principles of Governing**

In exploring Inuit governance, the importance of the relationship between governance and principles became clear. Principles provide the intellectual framework from which all situations and experiences are understood, guiding individual conduct and interactions within relationships. This is important, as the foundational structure of Inuit governance is relationships. For Inuit, principles were respected for their practicality, as expressed by Joe Karetak:

Inuit even tell you not to harm little animals or something bad will happen to you. It's the philosophy. I am not worried whether it is true or not, the fact that it is a philosophy is what I focus on. By being fair to smaller animals, it allows you to be fair to yourself and others a lot more (Karetak interview).

Principles are constantly present through symbolic expressions, such as axioms. Ideally, this presence is represented through individual actions. The benefits of a direct relationship between principle and action is logical, as practices, when initiated or inspired by collective principle, reinforced the importance of the principles. Also, individuals who represent their respect for principles through actions support an environment where principles are consistently visible, both physically and intellectually. It is important to recognize that this ideal, while constantly supported, is held along side an awareness of the everyday, including the patterns and nuances of the land, weather,

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<sup>53</sup> By natural occurrences, I am referring to practices and systems that occur without direct direction or support from humans. Examples of natural occurrences include weather systems, animal migration, and cosmic patterns.

animals and people. To individuals, such patterns were not always logical, nor predictable; therefore, the role of the collective is to maintain the presence of the principles regardless of practicalities or fluctuations. Collective reflection, accumulated experience and the constant respect and expectation of the principles maintain the presence of principles which secures the intellectual framework. Collective support is necessary as individual actions do influence the collective wellbeing. The guidance of principles is necessary for Inuit, particularly in their relationships with metaphysical forces.

### **Our Land:**

Indigenous ways of being recognize the land as the source of all existence. Marino Aupilaarjuk, a well respected Inuk elder argues: “The living person and the land are actually tied up together because without one the other doesn’t survive and vice versa” (Bennett & Rowley, 118).<sup>54</sup> This understanding is shared among Indigenous peoples. Vine Deloria Jr. refers to this reality as metaphysics, a term that expresses “the realization that the world, and all its possible experiences, constituted a social reality, a fabric of life in which everything had the possibility of intimate knowing relationships because, ultimately, everything was related” (Deloria & Wildcat, 2). The land also inspires knowledge, an argument expressed through place names.<sup>55</sup> Keith Basso writes: “The point Charles wished to make is one he made before – that whenever one uses a place-name, even unthinkingly, one is quoting ancestral speech – and that is not only good but something to take seriously” (Basso, 30). Relationships and knowledge guide Inuit in

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<sup>54</sup> Also see John Huston’s *Diet of Souls*.

<sup>55</sup> In Nunavut the responsibility of place names has been mandated to the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC). This IPG is responsible for land use planning in Nunavut, a responsibility that includes “building and maintaining an extensive database of geographic information, which includes topographic maps as well as specific themes” which includes place names ([www.npc.nunavut.ca](http://www.npc.nunavut.ca)).

their interactions with others and themselves, therefore the land is central to understanding and respecting Inuit governance. Yet, it is also important to recognize that Inuit relationships and knowledge also guide the land, as expressed by Margaret Uyauperk Aniksak: “The earth is shaped by people’s thoughts. That’s how I look at it” (Bennett & Rowley, 119).

In recognizing the influence of, and responsibility to, the land, understanding the governance of a specific area must begin by respecting its geographical reality. In *Nunavut*,<sup>56</sup> Inuit homeland, the land and weather are extreme in a challenging way. Both the land and weather continually maintain their unapologetic presence, proving their strength and authority definitely. People not of *Nunavut* use the word “harsh” to express *Nunavut’s* environment as it is a challenging landscape that both deserves and commands respect. It is a territory that sits north of the tree line, and this reality often inspires the comment that in *Nunavut* there exists a stronger sense of distance and vastness. Everything is open, and as you travel the land you notice all changes, whether they be subtle or dramatic. For Inuit, this reality is what makes *Nunavut* so beautiful. This openness reminds individuals that there is no hiding, and that change is obvious. Living and learning from the land means individuals must remember that honesty is necessary, because truth is always around you, and just as the land continues, knowledge also continues. Inuit have also understood that the land belongs to no one as it was free to be used by all people respectfully. This requires that all actions, whether individual or collective, be accounted for. This respect for the land is obvious when hearing Inuit describe *Nunavut*, as Rosa Paulla does: “the land is so beautiful with its high rivers and

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<sup>56</sup> *Nunavut*, when italicized, refers to the Inuktitut use of the word, our land or Inuit land. Nunavut, when not italicized, refers to the territorial jurisdiction within Canada.

lakes waiting to be fished. It has great mountains and images form as if you could be caribou among them” (Bennet & Rowley, 118). For Inuit, *Nunavut* is beautiful and full of resources and potential.

Inuit also respect the patterns and realities of *Nunavut*, proven by the huge collective memory and continuing presence of traditional survival skills. Weather prediction, the knowledge of cosmic movements and animal behaviour, clothing preparation and architectural design are tangible evidence of the impressive and extensive range of Inuit traditional knowledge. This knowledge exists within the rhythm and realities of the land, as Joe Karetak explains: “Inuit survival was based on the least amount of impact on the environment ... We [Inuit] are really vulnerable to nature, we have no chance against it without some kind of mechanical structure, infrastructure or social order. We had to define social order” (Karetak Interview). Therefore, the patterns of Inuit governance also fit within the land’s reality. Once again, in respecting the physical differences across Inuit homeland, how Inuit governance is practiced is also diverse. Each community lives its own knowledge, and this diversity was represented practically as Ulayok Kaviok remembers, “in the old days, Inuit could tell where someone was from by looking at their skin-clothing styles” (Bennett & Rowley, 317). Although similarities exist amongst communities, there is a consistent acknowledgement of diverse practices.

The necessity of respecting diversity in practice represents the simultaneous respect given to the individual and to the collective. This lesson is well represented in *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut*. This book is divided into two sections: Inuit Identity and Regional Identity. The “Inuit Identity” section explores the practices and rationale that guided Inuit traditional life, and speaks to the common cultural truths on

topics such as animals, the family and justice. This section explains that despite location, Inuit share common principles and realities. The “Regional Identity” section focuses on the lived experience of specific groups of Inuit throughout all seasons of a year, and explains that although Inuit live within a common experience, there are differences to be respected. The book’s methodology, and the knowledge it shares, reminds readers that although the majority of Inuit realities are similar, difference must also be respected.

**Maligait:**

*It was only because my mother and father went through many hardships that we survived. They only survived because they followed the maligait of the Inuit. If they hadn’t followed the maligait, our lives would have been more difficult.*

- Marino Aupilaarjuk (Oosten, Laugrand & Rasing, 13)

*Maligait* has a number of translations. In its literal form, and within the context of Canadian colonial authority, *maligait* translates to law, specifically, Canadian law. This is not the context from which Aupilaarjuk speaks of. The term Aupilaarjuk speaks of means “things that had to be done” and represents the force that Inuit lived by. Although the term customary law is used to describe the meaning of *maligait*, this interpretation does not express its depth and range of authority. Aupilaarjuk explains further:

When I think of paper I think you can tear it up and the laws are gone. The maligait of the Inuit are not on paper. They are inside people’s heads and they will not disappear or be torn to pieces. Even if a person dies, the maligait will not disappear (ibid. 14).

*Maligait* are rules that govern Inuit in their relationships within the metaphysical world. Respecting *maligait* is a requirement that flows from traditional Inuit spirituality, or shamanism. Inuit spirituality recognizes the constant presence of spirits and respects the authority of spirits to challenge Inuit physical survival. Spiritual authority exists within an intrinsic spiritual network of relationships that guides Inuit existence, which included Inuit, the land, weather and the animals. Therefore, any individual who

disrespects *maligait* affects the spiritual balance of these relationships, challenging individual and community well being. For example, not respecting *maligait* led to negative consequences, such as constant extreme weather or the absence of animals,<sup>57</sup> in fact, many Inuit elders advise that not respecting *maligait* will shorten one's life (ibid. 13). Therefore, *maligait* demands respect.<sup>58</sup>

Respecting *maligait* requires individuals to be constantly aware of their surroundings and actions, and when necessary, be critical of their own conduct. This awareness was not only held at a theoretical level, it was practically applied. For example, if a known *maligait* was not followed, and hardship was being experienced, it was the responsibility of the individual to confess their wrong doing.<sup>59</sup> The likelihood of a public confession increased with the assistance of an *angakkuq* (shaman)<sup>60</sup> as the *angakkuq* had the ability to identify what wrong had been committed by whom. Yet, it is important to recognize that an *angakkuq* could only amend the spiritual upset once a

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<sup>57</sup> For example, as remembered by Aupilaarjuk: "We have always been told not to abuse wildlife because we believe this causes hardship to the animals. We were told not to make fun of wildlife so we and our children would have a good life. We were constantly told this" (Oosten, Laugrand & Rasing, 33).

<sup>58</sup> Respecting *maligait* increased the likelihood of favorable conditions. For example, as remembered by Frank Analok "Before [cutting] up a seal, Inuit would get a handful of drink water from [their] mouth and pour it in the seal's snout ... It was done to be thankful for a catch, because in the future the seal would be coming back again ... In this way the seal would be renewed" (Bennett & Rowley 54). Also, respecting *maligait* increased the likelihood an individual would live a long life.

<sup>59</sup> Traditional Inuit governance includes many lessons, rules and responsibilities on dealing with those who broke *maligait*. Although it is an impressive and important discussion, it will not be discussed specifically in this thesis. For information on dealing with and preventing wrong doing, see book two of the *Interviewing Inuit Elders* book series, "Perspectives on Traditional Law" and book four of the *Inuit Perspectives on the 20<sup>th</sup> century* book series, "Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: Shamanism and Reintegrating Wrongdoers into the community." Also, in *Uqaluirait*, see sections: "the family", "gathering", "justice", "external relations", and "shamanism".

<sup>60</sup> Although the shaman had this ability, individuals were not to rely on a shaman; instead, individuals were disciplined into respecting *maligait*. This reality is represented in Inuit spirituality, which was respected by Inuit, but guided and protected by *angakkuq*, or shamans. Both of John Huston's films *Diet of Souls* and *Nulijuk: Mother of the Sea Beasts* do an excellent job of introducing individuals to the practices and principles of Inuit shamanism. Also see the section of shamanism in *Uqaluirait* and book two and four of *Interviewing Inuit Elders*: "Perspectives on Traditional Law" and "Cosmology and Shamanism".

confession was made, an *angakkuq* did not just “fix” the problem, an individual had to first admit their wrong doing to the broader community.

It was not uncommon for individuals to break *maligait* and cause hardship with no intention of doing so. For example, if a young woman suffered a miscarriage and chose to hide it from her family and husband, this action often resulted in hardship, such as the scarcity of animals. Although fear or shyness may have inspired this secret, such actions would still result in hardship, and only a confession would restore harmony.<sup>61</sup> Lessons such as this remind individuals that the relationship between intent, action and result are not necessarily cumulative. Even if an individual did not intend to cause hardship, if hardship occurred, the individual was still responsible to address their action to remedy the wrongdoing. In situations like this, direction from elders or *angakkuq* was sought.

In situations where hardships occurred and no known *maligait* had been broken, individuals would work to remedy the situation by first assessing their own actions in order to determine a strategy to negate the negative or offensive action. Finding a strategy required strong contemplation, reflection and creativity, as hardship could result from the smallest action or detail. This is well expressed by Jose Angutingurniq:

There was a belief that the fish would not return along their natural route if the *kakivak* (fishing spear) breaks and it is repaired inside the tent. In those days Inuit had all kinds of unwritten laws that they had to follow. They were not allowed to repair their fishing implements inside the tent out of fear that the fish might not want to spawn as a result. At Arviligaarjuk, which is near the ocean, someone once

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<sup>61</sup> This reality is expressed by Rosie Iqallijuq: “One woman had a miscarriage but as she didn’t want to follow certain taboos, she told no one. The people were starving, so they started to chant. The woman was the cause of their starvation because she had to follow certain taboos but she didn’t. She had a miscarriage and she was bleeding but she never told anyone. They were starving and she didn’t want to confess. The shaman said that she was bleeding and that she had eaten something, like a caribou head [author’s note: the identification of this action likely represents the breaking of another taboo]. She confessed quickly and told everything. The shaman said that everything was going to be all right and after the chanting, everything went back to normal. The next day the men went hunting caribou and some went seal hunting. They came back with seals and a caribou and all of a sudden they could catch game. That is what I witnessed and I was amazed. I thought to myself, the shaman must be very wise.” (Bennett & Rowley, 2008)

repaired an implement inside his tent, and therefore the fish did not go up the river to spawn. An old man carved two small wooden fish, a male and female. When he put those two carvings in the river to encourage the fish, that very evening they started travelling upriver to spawn (Bennett & Rowley, 372).

### **Leadership:**

*Maybe he became a leader because he was able to direct people and he was able to talk to people when there were disputes. Even when there were disputes in other camps, people went to him or requested his presences, and he would talk to them. He would tell them how they should behave. It was his way of helping others that made people consider him a leader.*

- Imaruittuq responding to the question “Have you heard how Ittuksaarjuat became a leader?” (Oosten, Laugrand & Rasing, 119)

Inuit governance functions within the mutual responsibility of physical survival and a disciplined existence. The land provides the necessary resources which ensure physical survival, and in understanding *maligait*, the land also provides lessons on how to live a good life. While this mutual responsibility is supported by community members, guidance is provided by leaders.

Inuit governance supports various leadership roles simultaneously. To understand the role of leadership within Inuit governance, leadership within the family must first be explained. While relationships are the foundational structure of Inuit governance, the central relationship is the family.<sup>62</sup> Leadership within the family is shared amongst the older generations - the “grandparents” and “parents” generation.<sup>63</sup> The sharing of leadership was successful and effective as it was supported by constant interaction, an

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<sup>62</sup> The importance of the family in Inuit governance is represented in Jaypeetee Arnakak’s Family Health Model. In this model Arnakak outlines “four basic axioms or principles: The family is the primary life-support system of its constituents; the family belongs to a larger network called community and society; the family is the means of transferring knowledge, skills, language and values; and the family is the fundamental economic unit.” (Arnakak, presentation)

<sup>63</sup> Understanding leadership from a family dynamic makes sense as families who had the skills to live independently did so. This is remembered by George Agiaq Kappianaq: “We lived on our own because my father did not like to live among other people. Because he was a skilled hunter, we were able to do so. After he became less able to hunt, we started living with others. After my brothers and I started hunting, we went back to living on our own, and my father didn’t need to hunt anymore.” (Oosten & Laugrand 2001, 20)

understanding of each member's strengths within various fields of responsibility, an appreciation and recognition of each other's experience, a sense of responsibility and commitment to the family, and of course, a strong relationship foundation. To ensure all members of the family become highly independent and productive individuals, family leadership commits itself to sharing accumulated experience with those with less experience, supported through childrearing.<sup>64</sup> In essence, family leadership works to ensure all family members become leaders in their own right.<sup>65</sup> As children mature and represent their growth through experience, family members also began respecting individual discretion, as expressed by Zipporah Piungittuq Inuksuk: "people left all the major decisions to their parents and the elders, but they had a lot of freedom to do as they pleased" (Bennett & Rowley, 96). The freedom given to family members is respected in a manner similar to *maligait*. As the experience of others could only guide and not direct individuals, if an individual chooses to not follow direction then they are responsible for accepting and addressing the consequences of their actions.

The roles and responsibilities of familial leadership were also reproduced within the broader community, through leadership roles such as camp leader, elder and

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<sup>64</sup> The importance of childrearing was reinforced in my own discussions with Louie Angalik, an Inuk elder from Arviat. He stated: "Inuit culture's greatest focus was on child rearing ... To ensure survival, and to live well, you needed some ethics to guide you ... to be able to survive well, to be able. That was always Inuit's greatest focus, and by being a (good) human being enhanced that possibility and it secured you, because other people were willing to help you". (Interview) The practice and experience gained through the support of the family was used to support broader collective interaction.

<sup>65</sup> Childrearing was approached with clarity of purpose and vision: "If the child clearly knows that he is loved, he will listen to you because he hears that he is a nice person and that he is a very good child.... You have to balance discipline and love when raising them" (Briggs, 53). This was supported through practical action. Children were in constant close physical proximity to family and family members constantly interacted with the child. This proximity encouraged children to mimic the roles of their family, and this was how children played. Family members constantly observed the actions of children, allowing family members to determine when play transitioned to small chores and responsibilities. Although the actions changed, the principles the child learnt remained the same. For example, "selfishness was not tolerated, and young hunters were taught to take care of all camp members" (Bennett & Rowley, 87). Interacting with children this way allowed them to practice and gain experience.

*angakkuq*. An excellent discussion on the relationships between the various leadership positions in traditional Inuit camps can be found in *Inuit Perspectives on the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: Shamanism and Reintegrating Wrongdoers into the community* and *Interviewing Inuit Elders: Traditional Law*. Camp leaders were recognized for their ability to support the community's physical survival with their hunting skills and highly sophisticated understanding of animal migration (Bennett & Rowley, 95). Elders were revered for their accumulation of experience, reflection and knowledge, and were therefore responsible for selecting and mentoring the camp leader, for food distribution and matters of justice and child rearing. *Angakkuq* provided spiritual leadership and were responsible for maintaining the relationships between the individual, the community and the spirit world.

All leadership roles support the community in their own way, and are both supported and supplemented by local individuals recognized for their expertise in particular fields such as child birth, health matters or weather prediction. Although each leader practiced their role definitely, their authority as leaders is not exclusive. A leader's authority is respected for as long as the community continues to respect and recognize the leader, and a leader's direction is respected as long as it falls within the leader's area of expertise. For example, Zipporah Piungittuq Inuksuk explains "the only decisions the (camp) leader had to make concerned moving families to the seasonal hunting grounds" (ibid, 96). In recognizing the absence of a defined sphere of responsibility, community leaders interacted amongst each other respectfully, and in a manner not based on hierarchy. Camp leaders took advice from elders, and like *angakkuq*, elders could sense when a taboo or *maligait* had been broken. It was an *angakkuq*'s responsibility to interact with spirits when a wrong doing occurred, and it was the responsibility of the elder and

camp leader to instil the importance of not breaking *maligait* or taboo. Elders looked to camp leaders for food and shelter, while a camp leader could go to an *angakkuq* to help determine the cause for extreme weather or to find animals. Leaders were also free to approach another leader if a mistake had been made. Lucassie Nutaraaluk explains: “If the elders disagreed with what the leader was deciding, they could say anything they wanted to him. The elders would not be afraid to speak to the leader, and point out what they disagreed with” (Oosten, Laugrand & Rasing, 121). Community leaders also interacted with their community constantly, a means that ensured accountability, as expressed by Imaruittuq:

In the old days, when we were totally dependent on wildlife, I would make the decisions concerning hunting. Hunting decisions were not my wife’s responsibility, but if she knew I was making a bad decision, she had the obligation to tell me .... If a person who is older is making a decision and you think it is wrong, you have the obligation to tell them (Oosten, Laugrand & Rasing, 50).

Leaders have many similar traits which they exemplified. Leaders are modest, disciplined, respected, experienced and are trustworthy. In understanding leadership within Inuit governance I argue it is not the identification of traits that is important, instead it is the reasoning behind the traits. For example, modesty requires and supports a particular style of confidence. A modest individual has the ability of being proud of their accomplishments without needing recognition. This is not to discredit the importance of mutual support and recognition within a group, but instead, modesty represents a confidence that signifies individual meaning and the recognition of authorities larger than the leader. This is expressed well by Donald Suluk:

A modest person would play down his own accomplishments, be overjoyed and thankful for his catch, and would not gossip about his fellow human beings in his songs. This type of person is the kind who followed the advice of his grandparents and parents (Bennett & Rowley, 39).

Donald Suluk singles out the importance of singing, as singing provided individuals with the opportunity to express tension within a relationship, as remembered by Mikitok Bruce, in his description the role of *pihit* (lyrics/songs): “Some *pihit* contained words that could help others to lead a better life. Some seemed to imply resentment to someone ...” (Bennett & Rowley, 107). Leaders who have an internal mechanism for dealing with stress are respected as they do not express their stress publicly.

Modesty is also a preventative strategy. Modesty decreases the likelihood of being reacted to negatively. As understood from traditional Inuit spirituality, in extreme cases, being boastful increased the possibility of being hexed. Felix Pisuk described *ilisiqsiniq* (hexing a person):

I have heard about *ilisiqsiniq*. I was told not to be vain so I would not be *ilisiqtaujuq*. I was not to say I was a good hunter. I was not to tell stories about my hunting exploits before I had been asked about them. Then it would be difficult to *ilisiqsijuq* me. If some people felt that they had an ability, such as being able to run fast and they were vain about it, then they might end up not being able to run. I was also told not to be proud about my dogs or about anything at all. I was not to act in a vain manner. I have tried not to talk about my abilities, my exploits and what I have done before I have been asked” (Oosten & Laugrand 2002, 128).

Modesty requires individuals to be thankful for their existence and experience. Being thankful is necessary because in *Nunavut* individuals are vulnerable to natural forces. It is a vulnerability that inspires learning and creative design, as well as skill improvement. To learn and to be creative, individuals need a strong social network, meaningful interaction and an internal discipline. Although community leadership exemplifies these traits and abilities, community members also represent these traits individually.

### **Lessons and Reflections on Inuit Principles**

*“I am not saying my life was much better than yours, but I certainly want to pass on the importance of having strong family relationships and respecting rules.”*

- Uqsuralik Ottokie (Briggs, 28)

*Nunavut*, *maligait* and leadership are three themes that exist within Inuit governance. *Nunavut* is a metaphysical force that influences Inuit life. Forces like the land, weather and animals are respected by Inuit, and it is understood that these forces cannot be manipulated. Therefore, Inuit study and interact with these forces, and such experience guides the formulation of Inuit survival knowledge. *Maligait* is an example of such knowledge: every day life and interactions are guided by spiritual laws. *Maligait* reminds Inuit that through discipline and the structure and support of the family, Inuit are able to live within the extreme land and weather. Yet, it is important to remember that physical survival is not the only goal for Inuit, Inuit expect life with metaphysical forces to be harmonious, an expectation that also requires Inuit collective life to be harmonious. Various leadership roles worked with community members to support a harmonious state of being. Since conflict challenges harmony, harmony was supported by preventing conflict and by dealing with issues when conflict or hardship occurs. This was supported by gathering, as gathering is an important function and strategy within Inuit governance. The importance of gathering is well represented by food sharing.

In her Masters thesis *Conversations with Nattilingmuit Elders on Conflict and Change: Naalattiarahuarnira*, Janet Tamalik McGrath explores the practices and injunctions of dealing with conflict and change, as practiced by the Nattilingmuit in pre-

settlement times.<sup>66</sup> This thorough and important discussion identifies relationships and a disciplined existence as fundamental supports within Inuit governance, and argues that “by far ...the approach to dealing with conflict seems to be that of prevention. The notion of preventing conflict, sharing material needs and surviving were intertwined” (McGrath, 77). In understanding food as a material need, the prevention of conflict and survival were supported through food sharing.

Inuit recognize food sharing as a welcoming gesture to the community,<sup>67</sup> well remembered by Isapee Qanguq:

When the dog teams returned they had big loads of meat... After they completed the task of storing the meat, my grandfather Inuutiq went outdoors; as he got to the entrance he started to shout in a loud voice: “Tamuattuaaq, tamuattuaaq, avagusukkama, tamuaattuaaq.” [Something to chew, something to chew, it is my wish to share it, something to chew.] Everyone came so that our home was packed with people. (Bennett & Rowley, 87)

Food sharing is an expression of thankfulness either for a successful hunt or for the arrival of visitors; therefore, food sharing is often spontaneous and fun. Food sharing is practiced faithfully and constantly, so much so that it almost seems obligatory. Yet, families share their food willingly and with kindness. Inuit understand and appreciate that celebrating with food strengthens the feeling of collectiveness and community. It is a practice whose end results reaffirm the usefulness of the practice.

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<sup>66</sup> As McGrath explains “The Nattilingmiut were one of the last groups in the Canadian Arctic to become settled into communities initiated by the federal government” (McGrath, viii). Their homeland is now referred to as the Eastern Kitikmeot.

<sup>67</sup> Food sharing also determined the size of the community. Winter and late spring were times of the year when securing food was most challenging. It was also the time when communities were larger. In the summer/autumn times, individual families went off to live in their own camps, the reasoning explained by Baptise Niqqiq: “The reason there were so many camps was because it was difficult to get food for people and dogs if they lived together in the summer. During winter they would live a lot closer to share meat. When wintering, people could camp together as long as the caches were within a half day’s travel” (Bennett & Rowley, 247).

Food sharing is not dependant on quantity of food available. Instead it is rooted in the importance of sharing. Even when food was scarce, families are still expected to share food. The willingness to share food in hard times is an acknowledgment that the scarcity of food is experienced by everyone, and not only selected families. Noah Piugaatuuk remembers: “Animals are easy to get, but on the other hand there are times when they are very difficult to catch ... This is known to have happen from time immemorial” (ibid., 87). Inuit also understood that the scarcity of food challenged harmony as expressed by Margaret Uyauperk Aniksak: “Our ancestors were pretty mean when they were in shortage of food or partly starving. Hunger made them into mean people” (ibid., 89). Individuals or families unwilling to share food are often looked at with suspicion and dealt with cautiously.

Collectively, gathering provides families with the opportunity to become comfortable with each other. Consistently interacting allows community members to understand each other’s patterns of behaviour, and allows individuals to accumulate their own knowledge of how the community interacts. Individually, gathering is a time for individual accountability,<sup>68</sup> as social and collective responsibility is reaffirmed, providing individuals with the guidance to conduct themselves with awareness and confidence.

Gathering creates a space where individuals can reflect on knowledge shared or gained. By reflecting on experience, individuals grow intellectually and emotionally. The word *isuma* represents the strength and discipline of an individual’s emotions and mind. Individual growth is determined by the development of *isuma*, and a respected individual is an individual with a strong mind and solid reasoning. In his book *The Other*

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<sup>68</sup> For example, the knowledge surrounding, and gained from, *maligait* was shared with the broader community to ensure the community benefited from the experience and to prevent additional hardships.

*Side of Eden* Hugh Brody explains *isuma* as “the capacity for sense and reason that grows a s part of becoming an adult” (Brody, 44). Jose Angutinngurniq explains the influence of *isuma* in his reflection on *isumaluutit* (bad thoughts):

I want to say a little bit more about *isumaluutit*. If I had a tendency towards bad thoughts, it would come back and be really strong. If you wished someone to die and that person did not die, that thought could come back to you or to your children. *Isumaluutit* are said to be very strong. We have been told not to use *isumaluutit*. Young people should know this because if they were to *isumaluktuq*, this could come back to them or to someone they care about (Oosten & Laugrand 2002, 130).

In building a strong mind, and being able to conduct oneself with disciplined emotions, conflict is prevented because individuals understand community interactions and reactions rationally, instead of personally. In supporting a knowledgeable community, individuals have the confidence to work through interactions personally, and do not need to involve the broader community in tense situations.

Although conflict prevention is meticulously supported within Inuit governance, not all conflict is preventable. In times when peace is not in the community, the utility of gathering can be refocused to address issues. Dialogue through face to face interaction is understood to be an effective and practical way of working through problems,<sup>69</sup> as explained by Hubert Amarualik:

They all would talk about what was wrong and what was expected. Everyone had a chance to express his or her side of the story (*aniaslutik*). Once this was over, they were able to restore harmony and strengthen their mutual bonds and family kinship ties. Everyone felt better afterwards (Bennett & Rowley, 99).

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<sup>69</sup> Face to face interaction still has a place today, as expressed by Aupilaarjuk: “I have said all kinds of things to people in Kangiq&iniq once a week by phone. It is hard to deal with someone by phone. If you have someone right there in front of you, it’s easier. I have people come to my house when they are in need of counselling. Sometimes if there is someone else there, like my wife, they are unable to talk. When they are totally alone with me, they start talking. I don’t ask them questions. They tell me what is bothering them on their own” (Oosten & Laugrand 2002, 193).

In times of conflict or hardship, community leadership is responsible for supporting the community. Leadership determines how a conflict should be addressed, either through indirect or direct means. Leaders understand when directness, instead of indirectness, is necessary to deal with problems quickly and efficiently, to prevent the same issue from arising again in the future. This is well articulated by McGrath: “Whether conflict was addressed directly through talking, or admitting wrongdoing to a shaman, or indirectly through competitive games, once it was dealt with, as Arnahaaq explained, ‘the problem was left behind’, as if erased from memory” (McGrath, 76). Inuit reacting “too” directly to conflict are looked at cautiously, as a quick reaction can also be considered too reactionary or childish, and reflective of a way not experienced of interacting with people. Reactionary practices often signify the need to develop more disciplined emotions and more structured thinking.

### **The Gap: Challenges to Inuit Methodologies**

In examining the GN’s founding principles and its logistics in supporting consultation, I argue that Inuit governance is not being publicly supported in Nunavut. I come to this conclusion logically, as the GN does not support relationships in the way Inuit governance understands and supports relationships.<sup>70</sup> Although the GN and Inuit governance both exist within Nunavut’s political space, they are fundamentally different political systems. These differences are best represented in how each system receives its

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<sup>70</sup>The GN is responsible for supporting Inuit culture within its structure. There is no definite understanding in what this support requires, therefore, this definition is largely based on each department’s own understanding and support of culture. The GN privileges its own processes, structures and people. An example is the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Taskforce, now known as Katimajit. It is an advisory committee specifically to the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth (CLEY). Also created is a similar group, Tuttarviit, a committee made up of a single representative from each government department. Tuttarviit and its 12 person membership is responsible for assisting “in developing Inuit relevant programs and policies” within the GN (Katimajit, Winter 2004).

authority, as this determines the system's authority, and it determines how the system interacts with individuals outside the system.

	<b>GN</b>	<b>Inuit Governance</b>
<b>Authority</b>		
<u>Guiding Principles</u>	Democracy, responsible and public government, good relationship with the Government of Canada, vested authority and jurisdiction of the NLCA, Financial stability and respecting the co-management boards	Metaphysical, The Land, Spiritual Balance, People – both individual and collectiveness, discipline, consensus
<u>Sites of authority</u>	Government of Canada via: Legislation (Nunavut Act & NLCA Act), Financial (Transfer Payments), Governing authority (NLCA)	Maligait, relationships, family, spirituality, experience, leadership, willingness and support given by people, action
<u>Proximity to people</u>	Limited, based on organized visits	Constant, close proximity
<b>Interaction with people</b>		
<u>Means</u>	Consultation	Gathering/Food sharing
<u>Inspiration /reasons for</u>	Public Interest, legal responsibility, money allocated, politically popular	Necessary for community well-being, means of conflict resolution, constant affirmation of community
<u>Means of support</u>	Formal: Set schedule, timelines, set structure, Agreements needed to work with other organizations,  Direct: visiting panel made up of bureaucrats goes to community, community to respond to panel's discussions and questions	Informal: Food sharing, games, gathering is constant/ whenever people are together  Indirect: Works with the community, leadership and community to decide who must interact
<u>End Result</u>	Report & Products that guide government in its function. i.e. legislation, budget, definition	Spiritual balance, Harmony within individuals and amongst community members

In the absence of a visible and viable public infrastructure system that supports Inuit governance in Nunavut, Inuit foundational principles cannot be promoted nor supported at the broader political level. I argue the GN does not have the systemic capacity to support Inuit governance. The majority of Nunavut's political space privileges institutional supremacy over people. Inuit governance cannot be effectively supported if Inuit do not support it, and if Inuit are not supporting it, then Inuit communities are not disciplined in their support of it. The privileging of political institutions like the GN and the NLCA is so visible in Nunavut that Inuit communities are responding to this privilege with political apathy - an inactivity which affects the function and rhythm of the broader community.

I argue remembering and re-establishing Inuit governance in Inuit communities will support community empowerment in Nunavut. Community empowerment is achieved once communities are responsible for their own political direction, and when the whole community is engaged within political discussions. *How* community empowerment is supported is its own distinguishing feature and is what connects community empowerment to Inuit governance. Empowerment from an Inuit cultural perspective is more than a process or definition - it is a total context, a fusion of individual and collective responsibility that is practiced individually, within the family and in the broader community.<sup>71</sup> Communities must recognize consultation as an exercise that supports knowledge building and sharing, and not as an exercise in information gathering.

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<sup>71</sup> The GN has its own understanding of community empowerment. The Department of Community Government and Services (CGS) is responsible for supporting community empowerment in Nunavut. In its 2003-2004 Business Plan, the department expresses its understanding of community empowerment: "CG&T is committed to community empowerment. The Department provides training and development, program delivery, and funding to enhance each community's capacity to effectively deliver municipal services. CG&T is also responsible for community recreation programs, territorial sport activities and consumer affairs services" (<http://www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/English/budget/2003/bp/cgt.pdf>).

Communities must also take responsibility for initiating and supporting action from knowledge gathered and gained. Making these shifts begins the process of re-establishing Inuit governance within Inuit communities.

### **Arviat Vision 2002**

In late 1996, work began on a needs assessment project in Arviat, Nunavut. What was being assessed was the community's perception of community wellness. This process was initiated along with the "Arviat Business Partnership", which focussed "on specific ventures to promote employment in Arviat" (Community Planning Report to Council, August 16, 1997). These two processes were supported mutually, as explained to me by Shirley Tagalik of Arviat: "[A]s a community, the community said we have to plan holistically, we couldn't separate out economic impacts from wellness issues from long term strategic planning"<sup>72</sup> (Tagalik interview). Although both these processes were directed and initiated by the Hamlet Council, the actual implementation and ongoing support for these processes was not supported by the hamlet, but through community partnerships.

The first deliverable of this process was the "Arviat Community Wellness Needs Assessment Draft Report", completed in early 1997. This report was informed through discussions with the community through one-on-one interviews and group focus meetings by a consultant hired by the community. Community members were asked to share their understanding of community wellness and what they believed were the limitations and potentials of the community to achieve wellness.<sup>73</sup> The information provided in this draft

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<sup>72</sup> Although this process did have two goals for community wellness and economic development, in this thesis I will only focus on the community wellness aspect.

<sup>73</sup> The questions asked in the one-on-one interviews provide a good range of topics raised. They included: "What are your concerns about our community? What is your most important concern? What does

report is extensive. In its discussions with community's businesses, youth, elders and social assistance recipients, strong perspectives were represented and a lot of information and suggestions came forward on how to improve the community's well being. Out of these discussions, three main themes emerged as needing attention: unemployment, youth and social problems.

This draft needs assessment report was the focus of a community roundtable, a broad community meeting that was open to the public and key community organizations - public, private or volunteering. This round table meeting resulted in the creation of a community partnership made up of the organizations in attendance. The name of this process and partnership was "Arviat Vision 2002". A draft terms of reference (ToR) was created, and its goal was "...constant action to achieve wellness in Arviat by pursuing the community-generated visions as revised from time to time by the community."<sup>74</sup> The ToR reaffirmed the importance of all community groups working together under the "umbrella" of Arviat Vision 2002, to ensure "the highest level of communication possible between its activities and the broader community." (Community Planning Report, 8) All community groups were welcomed into this partnership, a reflection of its "open membership" intent, and its commitment to high levels of engagement.

Once this partnership was formalized, and interested community groups expressed their commitment to working towards its vision, *Arviat Vision 2002* began working on its own one-on-one interviews, a process referred to as kitchen table meeting.<sup>75</sup>

Representatives of the *Arviat Vision 2002* group set out on behalf of the community

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community wellness mean to you? What things make it difficult to achieve wellness in our community? How should we deal with these problems? What approach might work best in our community? What approaches have been used in the past? What do you see as our major community resources for reaching community wellness? What resources can you (or your organization) bring to our project?

<sup>74</sup> The ToR was formalized in April 1997.

<sup>75</sup> This process was later followed by another community round table and focus group meetings.

partnership to visit a majority of homes in the community to discuss community wellness. The kitchen table meetings began in mid-August, 1997 and their goals were to establish a common vision and goal for the community (Report to Council August 16, 1997).

Overall, 130 homes were visited:

There were four of us doing individual home visits, and I think that between the four of us it took about a month or two. It was only in the afternoons or the early evenings, because that's when the people preferred to be visited. I think they [community members] felt comfortable because we know them. I'm from here, [and the others] are all from this community" (Anonymous Interview).

The questions asked at the kitchen table meetings were more focused and direct than the questions asked for the draft community wellness needs assessment, and were: what do you see as some solutions to community problems? What do you see as the community's needs or what needs do you have in your household? What can you do to help make the community stronger? (Revised Report, 1). The findings from these meetings were similar to those that came from the needs assessment study. The main themes were: unemployment and a lack of jobs; family values breaking down; and drugs and alcohol are a problem (Ibid., 2). Yet, this revised report went another step by further breaking down these themes and exploring their main issues (i.e. need for education/training, alcohol control, improved health supports) and main projects to be supported in the community (i.e., expand the youth drop in centre, create a community arts and crafts centre, include outpost camps within the community justice system).

The partnership also initiated group meetings,<sup>76</sup> and the discussions held in these meetings supported the findings of the Kitchen Table meetings. Yet, the group meeting discussions were more focussed on solution building. After this process was supported,

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<sup>76</sup> The groups interviewed included elders, youth, Employment Insurance (EI) recipients and social assistant recipients.

another community roundtable was held, and community representatives added further to this discussion by brainstorming on the strengths and weakness of the community, what opportunities exist and what threats need to be managed.

The community roundtable established a renewed commitment to supporting a strong communication link in and amongst the community, the hamlet council and community groups. From this meeting, it was then the responsibility of the community groups to begin initiating their own action, based on their sphere of responsibility, as directed by the views of the community.<sup>77</sup> In early 1998, another community roundtable was held, and from it a solid implementation plan was created. Outlined in this plan were manageable, yet broad actions that were important in working towards the community's vision, but are developmental in nature. The goals, when met, worked to create a foundation that the community could grow from, but real success could only be supported if all community groups fulfilled their own goals.<sup>78</sup> One year later, in a document dated March 31, 1999, the goals outlined in early 1998 were graded to determine the level of support each goal was given by the community. Although a majority of goals received high grades, some projects were identified as needing more work.<sup>79</sup> After this date though, there is very little documentation for this project and community partnership on the whole.

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<sup>77</sup> At this same time, there was also community planning meetings to establish business support within the community. This was supported by community business committees. The goals of these committees were to create more employment opportunities within the community. Strategies were being designed and implemented, which required community partnership and involvement.

<sup>78</sup> For example, in an attempt to support tourism in the community, which comes with employment and economic development plans for the community, one goal was to "develop a plan to tap university markets for tourism by September 1998" (Arviat Vision 2002 Report Card). The work group responsibilities that were identified and carried out under this specific goal included a Mayor's roundtable on Tourism, as well as increased "communication between local tourism operators" and the support of community "web-site and leaflets".

<sup>79</sup> The final document I have is dated June 1999. It outlined additional projects that required additional support, as graded in March 31, 1999.

Although 2002 has since come and passed with little discussion or evaluation, the political momentum built and sustained in Arviat from 1997 to 1999 cannot be denied. Yet, in recognizing this momentum, one cannot help but wonder why things stopped. In an interview with one of the individuals who was involved with the Arviat Vision 2002 process, although community support was high, the departure of a key coordinator had halted the process: “There were quite a few coordinators and facilitators working with us. But shortly after that, Jason left. So it was lack of coordination” (Anonymous interview). Jason was the community-planning advisor, a position that was responsible for the majority of the coordination between the Arviat Vision 2002 group, the hamlet and the community, was also involved with the business initiatives side of this experience. When this position became vacant, the community partnership slowed down and the community’s communication had ceased to grow. Although this happened, the role of the community-planning advisor should not be looked at as the glue that held things together. A single employed position did not determine the success of the community partnership, as this partnership required the support of the entire community. Instead, the lapse in coordination should be understood another way. While the community’s effort, commitment and ability to actively engage in an interactive, community based partnership were strong, its potential for growth reached its maximum level, and the partnership’s start up formula got the community as far as it could go. Instead of changing form in order to carry the community’s potential to a different level, the partnership continue as it had, then stopped altogether. In order for a partnership like this to grow, its responsibilities needed to be spread out amongst the community to prevent dependence on a single force in the community. This argument is not meant to discredit the work and leadership taken up by the community planner, nor the work of the hamlet council to

support this as their leadership was necessary for starting this process. In fact, the community accomplished a lot in this time period, a point that was explained to me in my discussion with Shirley:

I think when we did Arviat 2002, even though that sort of lapsed for the last five years, if I pull that plan out now, it is sufficiently there, it was sufficiently developed. The legacy of that plan is still evident in the community. You would not have to go back to square one, you could, even after a lapse of five years, you could go to the various players or the players who have succeeded the players, and refocus. It's still a significant building block. Any kind of community development is a significant building block if it takes your community to a higher level so that they are more ready, and more capable to go on to the next. I think this only happens when the community has really owned the community development. Someone who has come and done it for you and then goes away, if it all falls through and nothing happens for five years, the community will expect someone to come and do it to them again. That's why it has to be community owned. Otherwise I wouldn't even consider it community development (Tagalik interview).

*Arviat Vision 2002* was more than a group that created some recommendations, it was a system to support and facilitate community involvement and rebuild relationships amongst community groups while being committed to supporting political action. Roundtable meetings supported the growth and evolution of groups involved in this process. Although this work was separate from the Hamlet Council, there was consistent communication between the partnership and the local government authority, and through committee updates the partnership at this level was able to interact and be validated. Yet, even though the active partnership is no longer supported, it would be incorrect to assume that the community has not benefited from this experience. Later in my discussion with Shirley, she told me about the community's work and focus in preparing for a consultation tour on housing:

We did our own research, we came up with a set of recommendations, we came up with some proposals in terms of what we as a community could initially do to try and address some of the problems around the chronic shortage of housing. So when we take our information to a community consultation with Nunavut Housing

Corporation, I would hope that they will look at what we are saying, because we are saying it as a collective, as a whole community, based on work we have already done to address our own concerns around the issues (Tagalik Interview).

This experience proves the potential of communities to continually support community based processes. It highlights the quality of work, commitment and partnership that can be supported by a community involved in determining, affirming and supporting its own vision.

The Arviat experience took big steps away from the conventional practice of consultation. The large public meetings were not the main means for soliciting information from the community. Instead information was shared amongst community members through community round tables or group meetings. When specific information was required from the community it was gathered through one-on-one meetings with knowledgeable people in their homes. The *Arviat Vision 2002* confirmed the validity of community ownership in consultation, and represented the potential community discussions have in addressing community issues. In recognizing this, I argue that what needs to be determined are strategies that can support broad community discussions. As expressed by two members of the *Arviat Vision 2002* interviewing team, this is not a difficult project: “We never had any training. They just told us to go, ila, we met as a group before we went home visiting, and we decided which questions, as a group, to ask. And we decided as a group what we wanted to find out” (Anonymous interview). As expressed by Annie Ollie: “now a days, anyone can be a facilitator” (Ollie Interview).

I agree.

### **Conclusion:**

The Arviat Vision 2002 experience is one example of the drive, determination and potential that exists in Inuit communities in supporting political discussions. For other

Inuit communities to follow this example, strong community relationships must be supported in order for collective confidence to grow. This growth is necessary as it creates intellectual space. Gathering is a necessary means of creating intellectual space. Gathering also guides individuals in how to use and support the intellectual space. In creating this collective space, the broader community supports individual growth by allowing individuals to experience and reflect on situations, as well as reflect on individual accomplishments or mistakes. Collective intellectual space also supports individuals by providing a common expectation of behaviour and action. This is how Inuit governance supports Inuit. In creating the confidence of Inuit collectively, individuals will be strengthened and confidence will be built. In having this confidence, Inuit communities can become proactive and productive in their own affairs. Inuit communities can begin to do things differently.

Nunavut's current government system has not yet determined how to support and benefit from the potential of Inuit communities. The GN is continually privileged within Nunavut's political space. Therefore, for Inuit communities to realize and benefit from their own potential and abilities, Inuit communities must create their own spaces within Nunavut's political system. Inuit communities must organize themselves in order to support active and meaningful political engagement in Inuit communities. To do this, Inuit and their community systems need to be rejuvenated politically and must remember what it means to be people together within *Nunavut*. How this was once done is not too far in the past. Inuit communities still hold vivid memories of consistently practicing food sharing and gathering in good times, and the ability to gather to address hardship. Although this memory still exists, this practice has not continued today.

I believe consultation, in the future, must fulfill three goals in Nunavut. It must become a forum for educating and learning, it must be able to be supported constantly, and its practices must not be vulnerable to the fluctuation of territorial, and even federal, politics. To achieve these goals, consultation must come back to the community, involve people, and must take its direction from community experience and perspective.

Communities need to be provided with support in time, space and resources. I believe traditional Inuit governance can support these goals. To support this, what is needed is some form of public infrastructure that frames this responsibility for communities, but also provides communities with the space and freedom to determine their own style for using this space. Although this political infrastructure could take many forms, I bring forward one suggestion, something I call the Kitchen Consultation Model.

### **Chapter Three: The Kitchen Consultation Model**

The Kitchen Consultation Model (KCM) is an organizational model I have designed for communities interested in directing their own consultation processes. This model recognizes that Inuit communities have the ability and the responsibility to construct, facilitate, and support processes for meaningful dialogue amongst community members. It also recognizes that communities understand their needs, and can create sustainable community-based solutions. The model's practices are guided by Inuit governance principles. Speaking from a principle-based perspective provides the community with structure, while at the same time acknowledges the reality of diversity in practice and experience. This is necessary, as each community in Nunavut is different, and within each community there exists different realities. I argue the KCM provides a culturally rooted alternative to GN-led public debates, and provides the necessary structure to support communities in directing their own political futures.

This chapter will outline the technical aspects of the KCM and will highlight the responsibilities and steps needed to take in order to support this model. I believe these steps are realistic, as proven by the Arviat Vision 2002 experience. The consultation methodology used in Arviat is similar to the technicalities of the KCM, and its practices have informed my understanding of the KCM. The KCM highlights the necessity of consistent community engagement throughout the entire consultation process – from the outline of the consultation topic to the action stemming from the consultation. Consistent community involvement provides community members the opportunity to become political active in their community, and to become engaged and interactive personally.

### **KCM: The need**

While speaking with a group of students in Iqaluit about Inuit systems for travelling and surviving on the land,<sup>80</sup> Cornelius Nutaraq said:

You are young people now and you are going to learn about these things. I am much older than you but I am still learning new things all the time. Some people and things will cause you to wonder. Other things you just accept. We have to protect our own person, our own self, all the time (Oosten & Laugrand 2001, 166).

This quote highlights that learning is constantly possible, and that it cannot happen without time. Using age as an expression of time, I believe Nutaraq is stating that with time comes an opportunity for situations or topics to become more understandable, and a better understanding is helpful to individuals. With a better understanding, an individual can deduct whether a situation or topic will be supportive or harmful, and determine whether a reaction is necessary or not. Whatever the outcome, there is always a lesson to be learnt. This connection between time and learning is respected in the KCM. Under this model, community will be given more time to consider a topic, to learn about it, discuss it and to determine an appropriate reaction.

I do not believe this understanding of time is respected in current consultation practices. Typically, political organizations spend approximately two to three days in the communities they are consulting with. This provides communities with a limited opportunity to engage in discussions. This timeframe requires strict management of the interaction, a responsibility that falls to those initiating the consultation - the outside political organizations. This strict management of time can be understood in a broad sense. Since political organizations initiate the consultation and determine how many communities will be visited, and since they are also responsible for compiling the

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<sup>80</sup> The book *Travelling and Surviving on Our Land* comes from the book series "Inuit Perspectives on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century".

information, analyzing it and setting a plan for its implementation, the strict management of timelines is inevitable. Since community interaction is only one part of the entire consultation process, communities must fit themselves into the process, and at a time determined before a single community visit occurs. This situation means renegotiating time for community learning is unlikely.

There have been attempts to better support this system. For example and as highlighted earlier, the GN *Wildlife Act* consultation tour interacted with all Nunavut communities through hard work and dedication. It is a well-respected tour, and wildlife is an important issue for communities. This act and the discussion which surrounded it did engage the community, including various discussions on Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit, and Inuit cultural experience - discussions that communities recognized as reflecting their perspective. Yet, with this being said, I still believe Inuit communities had to rely on their first reaction to represent their collective experience and perspective. This is not meant to discredit the dialogue that is already supported in communities. I acknowledge and respect communities for their ability to continually show leadership in formulating their own perspective. What I am saying is that communities will benefit from an organizational model that ensures their perspectives are developed to their fullest potential, and that the community itself has the opportunity to determine when its own collective experience has been adequately represented on a particular topic. This experience also ensures that the outside political organization is getting the best information the community has to offer. Supporting this will take time, but as a community gains more experience, they will become more efficient in this practice. Imagine instead, if the community was given the four months, or even six months, to organize and support meaningful dialogue on the topic, and imagine if the community

itself was responsible for compiling the information and presenting its recommendations to the GN in its work surrounding wildlife management. In this single four to six month period, the GN would have the opportunity to work with many communities that are certain of their community's needs, and could supplement this understanding through its interaction with the community groups. Some political organizations may already have a pretty strong idea of what the community's views are, and may not find the KCM a necessary process to go through. If this is the case, then the political organization will be responsible for defending its own decision without falling back on the politically popular phrase, "we have consulted the community on this matter." This sort of arrangement could substantially supplement the GN's own consultation tours, and in the future, replace them.

With time, communities can once again determine their own decision-making process. Space is also needed to do this. Space is needed for communities to own their own experience, to make their own mistakes and to determine appropriate remedies for challenges. It is for this reason that I believe the logistical responsibilities of the KCM must remain within the community and outside the government framework. Communities must work amongst themselves and not rely on outside sources, such as the GN, to get them through difficult situations or take credit for the community's hard work. Instead organizations like the GN should be recognized as having their own separate perspective that reflects their experience, history and vision for the future. By placing the responsibility on the community, and by looking at the GN as a specific perspective, the community frees itself to be responsible to itself before others. Communities can always seek lessons from the GN, but they will have the freedom to represent these lessons in their own way.

Communities cannot accomplish these goals entirely on their own. To do this, governments must give up some of their space and responsibility and return it to communities, and must distance themselves from their need to be involved in all aspects of community debate. This will be difficult for governments to do, as their systems of support, i.e., bureaucratic processes and law, require a lot of conceptual space. This is true because legal and government processes require constant definition, and the GN has become accustomed to communities following their lead.<sup>81</sup> For example, Article 35 of the NLCA is “Enrolment”. This article determines who will be recognized as a beneficiary under the NLCA. Although this article does acknowledge the responsibility of Inuit in determining their own membership, it states that its goal is to “establish a process that is just and equitable for determining who is an Inuk for the purposes of this Agreement.” The influence of this is certain, public discourse understands beneficiary status as Inuit status, and communities are legally bounded to these processes - regardless of their own understanding of their responsibility. The overarching authority and influence cannot be denied. This is a reality also plays out in current consultation processes.

In consultation, the GN has a monopoly of conceptual space. The GN directs the dialogue, owns the dialogue once it is completed, determines what information will be used for what solution, and implements solutions. This authority influences Inuit in their understanding of how things should be done. The more this interaction is supported, the more it cements the idea that doing things the government way is the best way to get things done. This thinking creates no opportunity to recognize the times when the government way is fundamentally different from Inuit cultural ways. The implications of

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<sup>81</sup> Interview, Joe Karetak, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

this are huge, particularly for Inuit who do not fit within the government structure.<sup>82</sup> If communities continue to depend on a system that they do not fit within, the inevitable reaction is inactivity and apathy. This is a dangerous reality, as all political decisions in Nunavut are made by government structures. Having a large segment of the population uninterested and inactive in these decisions challenges the community's well being and challenges the community's ability to change this reality.

The KCM provides communities with an infrastructure to support responsible community consultation. In supporting and directing the logistics of consultation, the community retains its authority over the information shared and compiled. This means communities retain authority over their own experience and perspective. The communities can then determine how their knowledge will be used, and by whom - different government departments, other political organizations, and even other communities. This is different from the current reality, where communities often wait to hear the results of their own consultation participation. Also, the KCM will provide a forum where different aspects and perspectives will be respected, and these different aspects will also have space and an eventual place for community use.<sup>83</sup> With the KCM, communities have a model to tap into their strongest resource - themselves.

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<sup>82</sup> We know there are a lot of Inuit who do not fit within the GN structure. One way to gauge this is Inuit employment in GN. As written in Article 23 "Inuit employment in Government" of the NLCA, the GN must have a representative number of Inuit in its workforce. This means that 85% of the GN must be Inuit. The Inuit Employment Program (IEP) has run under the responsibility of the Department of Human Resources and has created many reports and interdepartmental working groups attempting to create department lead strategies to supporting this goal. This article means that the number of Inuit in the GN is being monitored. The most recent projection of IEP is 47%, as announced in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly (Nunatisaq News, December 2, 2005).

<sup>83</sup> It is important that the community does not reproduce the practice of only focussing on one aspect on each subject. For example, "wildlife" encompasses a range of other issues beyond hunting and hunters, including on-the land programs, hunting rights, firearms registry, weather systems, harvesting, and the economy. The same can be said about the topic of maternity care. Maternity care includes more than a discussion of prenatal care and childbirth. Since most women in Nunavut must travel away from their community to deliver their babies, the scope of discussion must include issues surrounding medical escorts

The following summary is a broad overview of the KCM. There are many topics that can be discussed in more detail.<sup>84</sup> For this thesis, I will explore two topics: the role of the community organization in this model, and the three streams of interaction used to generate and support community dialogue. The KCM intends to support community empowerment, an important goal for Nunavut. Yet, in the eight years since Nunavut's creation, the community empowerment discourse has not moved beyond discussion on community infrastructure and economic development.<sup>85</sup> I believe there is more to community empowerment – the people in the community must be empowered. I believe the community can best support their own empowerment, and I believe a strong community organization will begin this process. A strong community organization can lead the community through three streams of interaction: public meetings, group meetings and kitchen table meetings. These streams represent the necessity of supporting in-depth and constant re-strategizing needed to bring together the different perspectives of the community in order to create a broad community vision.

### **KCM: Overview**

The practicalities of the KCM are straightforward. Communities interested in supporting consultation in their community will have a core community group to represent the community and be the main contact for “outside political organizations”

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or medical travel. Also there are issues of traditional knowledge surrounding midwifery and prenatal care, and how can this be supported, taught and recognized within the legal realm of medical treatment. A single consultation topic encompasses a wide range of other topics beyond the scope of the initial consultation question. There are a lot of different sides to any issue. In current consultation tours, these additional discussions occur, but they are not passed on to other interested departments/organizations/communities.

<sup>84</sup> For example, an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the logistical support within the KCM can be found in the yet-to be published article “Women’s Participation in Decision Making: Human Security in the Canadian Arctic”. This article is written in conjunction with Stephanie Irlbacher Fox & Elana T. Wilson.

<sup>85</sup> For a key example of this practice, see the Nunavut Association of Municipalities (NAM) website: <http://www.nunavutcommunities.ca/publications.html>. This organization represents all communities in Nunavut and its main strategic is advocacy on behalf of the communities.

interested in initiating the consultation process.<sup>86</sup> Contacting the core community group will be the first step in this process, and the interaction between the outside political organization and the community group will be constant throughout the process. This group will be responsible for providing leadership to the community in its consultation, yet, how this leadership is practiced will depend on the style and politics of the individual community.

Once the community group has agreed to consult on a particular topic, the core community group will work with other community groups and members to support the three streams of interaction. Each community will likely use different modes of communication, including the local radio stations, cb (short wave) radio and where possible, the local community television channel, to support these interactions. All logistical and staff support, such as facilitators, translators, interpreters, and transcribers, will be community based. The outside political organization will have limited responsibility or participation in the logistics of the community interactions.

The three streams of interaction will occur at different times throughout the consultation process and generally they will stand on their own, though each process does support the other. Each stream can be used more than once and some streams may be implemented at the same time as others. Once interactions with community members have begun, facilitators in these meetings will be responsible for compiling the different perspectives in partnership with the core community group. This process will allow the community to retain the raw information shared amongst community members both in

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<sup>86</sup> Outside political organizations include political organizations such as the GN, designated Inuit Organizations, and the Federal government. Because this thesis is focusing on political consultation, the focus is on how various systems of government interact with Inuit communities, encompassing all departmental responsibilities of such bureaucratic structures. It is my opinion that this model has the potential in further supporting community relationships with research, as well as with non-governmental organizations.

content and in process. By examining what issues come up, and how they come up, communities begin to create their own knowledge methodology - their own way of understanding themselves. In doing so, the communities will have direct access to their own information and needs. As well, since the information collected by the community will be kept in the community, it will allow the community to continually analyse its own knowledge, creating a knowledge base that grows each time the community initiates and participates in consultation tours. These actions will support community history, while at the same time building a collective community vision for the future. Speaking with this logic, a community knowledgeable in its own history and vision for the future has the greater potential of creating active solutions. This is more effective than leaving this responsibility with a single territorial political organization responsible and accountable to all communities in Nunavut.<sup>87</sup>

### **KCM: Core Community Group**

The KCM is territorial in its focus, but its practice is community-based. This is a matter of practicalities. Standard territory-wide solutions have proven to be impractical in Nunavut. Perhaps Nunavut's best example of this is the unified time zone policy.<sup>88</sup> Nunavut spans three time zones: mountain, central and eastern, and it was believed that a single time zone in Nunavut would unify the territory and make the territory more efficient<sup>89</sup>. Nunavut's unified time zone policy was implemented on October 31, 1999

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<sup>87</sup> It is important to acknowledge that territorial political organizations will also benefit from this experience. This model will provide time, space and resources to Nunavut political organizations by providing them with better direction in their delivery of services and programs.

<sup>88</sup> Nunavut's *Interpretation Act* required amendment to change the time zones in Nunavut. The first amendment was assented on November 3, 1999. This amendment was repelled in March 29, 2001. See the Nunavut Gazette (November 1999 & March 2001).

<sup>89</sup> Nunavut's three time zones created logistical challenges for government, particularly when different all three regions needed to interact together. Because of the three different time zones, 3.5 hours of a 7.5 working day was when all regions were available to work with each other at the same time. It would be

and faced resistance the moment it took effect.<sup>90</sup> In October 31, 2000, a handful of communities in Nunavut reverted back to their original time zones, and on April 1, 2001 Nunavut once again spanned three different time zones.<sup>91</sup> The GN has committed to not discussing this topic further.<sup>92</sup>

Many communities have various organizations that have the potential of becoming the core community consultation group. Examples include youth committees, elders committees, health or justice committees, daycare societies and community radio societies. In some communities, there exists an organizational network connecting the various community groups with other local groups, as expressed in the Arviat Vision 2002 experience, which included community businesses, community government (municipal government or hunter and trappers associations), church groups, and local government service providers (nurses, RCMP, income support, social services). Whether an individual group or a network of groups, many community organizations have proven their ability to support the well being of their community through their work. The benefit of an already existing community group is its organizational infrastructure. They already have board members and a volunteer base experience in interacting with the community, and experience in fulfilling financial obligations. These are necessary functions that any community organization must consistently support, and already having this experience is

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incorrect to assume that all departments in all regions required the presence of another region in order to do all of their work.

<sup>90</sup> For various stories about Nunavut's time zones, see *Nunatsiaq News*, September 24 1999, CBC archives, March 31, 2001. Also see Commissioner Masagak's opening address on Wednesday, May 12, 1999.

<sup>91</sup> October 30, 2000, an amendment to the *Interpretation Act* regulations was passed, returning Cambridge Bay and Kugluktuk to their original Mountain Time.

<sup>92</sup> NTI, the organization representing Nunavut Beneficiaries in the implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement recently advocated for the re-creation of a single Nunavut Time Zone. The November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005 edition of the *Nunatsiaq News* reported that Premier Paul Okalik, who led the time zone experiment from 199-2001, would not participate in reopening this debate again. (*Nunatsiaq News*, November 25, 2005). This matter has not been further pursued publicly by NTI.

an important way to gauge an organization's potential. This does not mean a newly created community group will not be successful. For some communities, starting afresh with a new organization may provide the necessary drive and momentum to support this project. What is necessary is that the community group fulfills its own obligation, while also maintaining community support.

I believe each community in Nunavut has the potential of supporting this model. Some communities, more than others, may be more prepared to succeed under this model. The KCM respects this, and does not require all communities to take on consultation responsibility at the same time – there is no set date for this model's application. Each community is ultimately responsible for their own success. It is expected that each community group will have various obstacles to overcome including lack of interest, community hostility, budget constraints and skill development. These obstacles will need to be worked through by the community itself, and not by an outside sources or process. This model does not come with pre-determined mediation processes, or an arbitration board.<sup>93</sup> Communities - as their experience grows - will get better at working through challenges, and will likely share their best practices with other communities. However, since this model is rooted in a respect for diversity of experience and practice, no one solution is better than another. Some communities will be able to support themselves, other communities may need additional time and support to become self-sufficient and even then, some communities may have difficulties in fully assuming their

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<sup>93</sup> Within a negotiating relationship, pre-determined mediation process, arbitration boards, or appeals panels work to the advantage of those who hold the power, usually those who required a negotiating relationship be entered into. In terms of government-Inuit relationships, with which the NLCA represents its negotiated relationship, government processes take precedent. To return again to Article 35 of NLCA, there exists a mediation board to assist in dealing with individuals who feel they should be enrolled in the land claims. Although community's members are responsible for the enrolment committees, appeals are heard by representatives appointed by various political organizations, and the process of how the appeal will occur is written out in the article.

responsibilities. Strength, commitment and determination are the best supports for the KCM, and this must be found within the community collectively.

One action that can mark a community's potential for supporting consultation is the collection of community oral histories. For the purpose of this exercise I am referring to mapping of the community's kinship relationships, the collection of traditional place names within the community's vicinity, as well as a broad collection of knowledge and experience in a range of topics. For the KCM, the collection of community kinship and traditional place names is the first necessary task for community groups serious about supporting consultation in their community. This is an exercise that many communities will likely support. Since each community has its own experience, therefore, how communities support these exercises will be different. For some communities, there exists no collection, so the community group will have to begin by interviewing local people. Other communities may supplement or substitute this strategy by collecting already completed oral histories done in their community by different organizations, universities, institutions or individuals. Finally, there are communities in Nunavut that have already accomplished this goal. A well known example in Nunavut is the Iglulik Oral Histories project. This project is well-known territory wide, and the community of Iglulik is recognized as having a strong cultural foundation. For a community like Iglulik, there already exists the potential to take on consultation responsibilities. Being involved with political consultation may support the community's learning by providing a forum where the community experience is continually and actively used to support political dialogue.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> I visited the Iglulik Research Institute in 2001 and learnt that the oral histories project, which is housed at the Iglulik Research Institute, consistently receives inquiries and visits from researching individuals or institutions. Speaking from the KCM vision, the next step that the community of Iglulik would have to work through is how to use this information to support "modern day" problems.

The collection of these oral histories will provide the community group with a solid and common foundation to grow from in the community. It will allow the community organization to recognize its own ability to interact and share knowledge with their community, and will give the community the opportunity to understand how this group functions. Once this task has been supported, the community may then chose to facilitate community dialogue on current issues, identify community goals for the future, and the supports it would like to recreate and strengthen itself through action based solutions. This will provide the community with a better understanding of its present reality. This is necessary for communities interested in providing guidance for the future. Once again, the role of the community group will vary from community to community. In some instances the community group will be central to the functioning of the consultation process, in others it may only provide logistical support and leadership. What is necessary is that the community group acts as a middle ground where outside political organizations (those who initiate consultation) can meet the community. This link is necessary for communities to regain decision-making responsibilities.

As stated earlier, an outside political organization connecting with the community group is the first step in initiating the KCM. This step is different from the usual practice of consultation today, as it is the outside political organizations that determine which communities will be visited and when. The process of asking for participation is not meant to be ceremonial, it is meant to ensure that interaction and information sharing between the community and political organization are supported from the beginning. When soliciting community participation in consultation, the initiating political organization will be responsible to support this request with background information on the topic to explain why community involvement is necessary. For example, if the GN

was interested in consulting communities on draft legislation, it would be the responsibility of the GN to provide the community organizations with: an overview of the legislation (including its goals and history), the legislation's connection to other political authorities, how the proposed legislation will directly effect communities and individuals, success/best practices of the legislation, limitations as experienced by other jurisdictions and how Nunavut will deal with these possible limitations. The GN would also be responsible to explain the role of legislation within the government structure, provide an overview of the various stages in legislation creation, the function of the legislative assembly in the legislative process, what happens when legislation is adopted, what comes after (such as regulations or policy), and how these other issues will be directed by the legislation.<sup>95</sup>

The goal of this exercise is to provide community members with information on the topic and its surrounding issues - issues that may only get shared in pieces throughout the consultation process, or not explained at all. This work must be done before the whole community is invited to share their thoughts. This is creating capacity in the community on governmental issues. By being engaged on these issues, communities will begin to create a knowledge base that eliminates some dependency on the government. In understanding government functions, the functions become demystified, and the communities can see their role in shaping their direction. This step also creates an open forum where both sides can meet on equal ground and increases the likelihood that communication can be sustained throughout the consultation process. At this time,

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<sup>95</sup> Although Nunavut communities have interacted with government for approximately 45 years, I would argue that government processes are still foreign to most communities. Providing this education to communities will allow communities to have a better understanding of the process that directly affects their community. In learning these processes, communities are then able to articulate their views on the process, and compare them to their own understanding on how decisions are made, supported and enforced.

communities can voice their concerns and have these concerns dealt with respectfully and in due time.

To do this, outside political organizations will have to determine what topics and issues need to be discussed with the community, and how the community input will direct these issues. This will provide some structure to the discussion, thereby allowing it to be more efficient. This is not meant to structure the dialogue to the point of inactivity, but rather, it allows the community and the GN to be fully aware of what is happening and to determine the limits to be worked within. This means the outside political organization will have to initiate consultation differently, and will have to be open and share its own vision. In following these procedures, the community is given the opportunity to determine whether the political organization is meeting the community with respect, and if not, the community can reject an invitation to be consulted. If the community decides to participate in the consultation topic, the community group will be responsible to oversee the implementation of different streams of interaction.

### **KCM: Public Meetings, Group Meetings, & Kitchen Table Meetings**

The three streams of interaction are designed with the intention to support the other, and each individual stream has its own limitations. Yet, in working together, these streams provide a strong presence that respects the different strengths of the community.

When compared to current consultation practices, the KCM's use of public meetings will change substantially. In current consultation tours, the goal of public meetings is to gather substantial amounts of information from the community. Public meetings are initiated by a public invitation for discussion, and community members must share their perspective by speaking publicly in front of everyone attending the meeting. Current public meetings also support a majority rules mentality. The meeting's

attendance determines how important the topic is for the territory, and also determines what issues are discussed. If attendance is low, the meet time may be cut shorter, and the assumption will be that there is a low interest on the topic throughout the territory.

The strength of public meetings in general is that they bring together a large group of people who are ready to receive information, and this is how they will be utilized under the KCM. Under this model, public meetings will become the forum for community learning. Ideally, under the KCM, each consultation tour will begin with a public meeting. The first public meeting would allow the community group to introduce the topic to the community, highlight the implications of the topic, and address why community support is necessary. Largely, the community group would share with the community what it had learnt from the outside political organizations. These meetings would no longer be used to gather substantial information, and community support will not be based solely on its attendance. In order to support in-depth, insightful and interactive dialogue later in the process, people must first be given the opportunity to receive information, have plenty of time and opportunity to ask initial questions, and then think it over to formulate their own thoughts on the issue.

Public meetings are an effective mode for broad community interaction, and maybe initiated throughout the consultation process in order to update the community on the results of group meetings, to introduce additional issues as the community's level of understanding and involvement grows, or highlight the final recommendations once the community group is nearing the end of the consultation process. Ending a community consultation tour with a community meeting can bring closure to the issue, allowing the community to understand where it ended in its discussion.

All local means of interaction in the community will likely be useful when implementing all streams of interaction and this is true for public meetings. Public meetings will continue to be supported by large public meetings at the community halls, through call-in shows on the community radio, through discussions on the cb radio, or where applicable, on community television. Once the opportunity to create a broad collective understanding has occurred, then there will be space to seek various different experiences.

Within any given population, on any given topic, there exist similar collective experiences amongst smaller groups of people. The variety of these experiences represents the different angles of an issue, and to better understand an issue, these angles should be recognized, respected and supported. Group meetings are an organizational solution to accomplish this. Breaking into various groups, such as childcare workers, women and elders groups, hunters and prospectors, private businesses, and even faith groups, allows the community to seek many different perspectives in a more manageable forum – supporting this kind of interaction within a public meeting would require hours upon hours. Group meetings provide community members with the time and space to really interact with a topic by relating the consultation topic to a familiar aspect of the groups' experience (i.e., this is how the new legislation will directly affect or support your profession, livelihood, family, community group). Understanding how a topic impacts a group increases an individual's opportunity to express their reaction and explore their role in directing its future. Supporting different group meetings ensures that a specific group experience does not overshadow or alienate another group's perspective. Communities will have to learn how to balance the weight of different group experiences. It is understood that not every community group necessarily needs to be consulted on

each topic, but the strength of the group meeting exercise exists in its potential to meet with as many groups as required. Each community and each community group will determine how these meetings will run, but they will likely mimic the strategies used in public meetings.

Group meetings not only seek specific experience (i.e., how does a transfer of responsibility amongst government departments impact your relationship with other funding sources?), they also provide a greater opportunity for community members to teach and learn from each other. In these spaces, group members have the potential of reminding others about experiences they may have forgotten to discuss, or forgotten they even had. For example, in an active discussion on reintegrating wrong-doers into the community amongst eight Inuit elders, I noticed that poignant dialogue patterns were reoccurring. In responding to a specific question, Marino Aupilaarjuk shared his thoughts on the topic. Aupilaarjuk's contribution was followed by Jose Angutinngurniq, who started his contribution with, "Aupilaarjuk has said...", which was then followed with his own experience and family teachings. Felix Pisuk then contributed to this discussion, and began with, "I agree with those who have said...they are telling the truth." Ollie Itinnuaq expressed his intention of introducing another perspective when he said, "I would like to make a comment", which was immediately followed by Aupilaarjuk who said, "Itinnuaq has just reminded me of something else." Angutinngurniq again followed Aupilaarjuk's comments by stating: "I had forgotten to include that" (Oosten & Laugrand, 90-93). Although this is a single experience taken from a single conversation, it represents a common occurrence when groups gather.<sup>96</sup> Other people's experiences remind people of

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<sup>96</sup> This particular example came from a meeting of Inuit elders. Amongst younger people, I feel this experience also occurs, represented by expressions such as: "I know", "me too" or "I was just going to say

their own experiences. The potential of this intellectual reciprocity is continuous and consistent – if supported in an open environment. In following this thinking, the more interaction there is, the greater the opportunity that people will share their experiences. Communities must learn to support the power of such interaction by supporting an environment where this group engagement is normalized.

Through its use of public and group meetings, the KCM provides communities with the opportunity to educate their members on a variety of issues, while also providing the means to collect and record community dialogue. This will allow the community to begin mapping out community dialogue, increasing the opportunity for communities to recognize and identify patterns of perspective, argument and experience with better organization. The term organization should not be read in the past tense, where experience is only categorized or achieved, it is meant in the present tense. These two streams of interaction, if consistently supported, will remind the community of its experience and will reaffirm decisions that have been made, but also challenge perceived and often unquestioned community norms. In doing all this, the community can begin to piece together a collective community perspective with many different angles rooted in its own reality. Establishing a collective perspective will provide the community with the resources it needs to look to the future with confidence in its understanding of community needs and goals. This is how community empowerment is supported.

It is important to acknowledge that it is not the model itself that supports community empowerment. The KCM provides communities with the opportunity to take part in the decision-making and solutions-finding process, but it is up to community

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that.” I believe with experience, people learn how to be patient, and more thankful in having this supportive group of reminders.

members to actively participate. The KCM invites community members to voice their concerns and create spaces where the community and the outside political organization can address political issues together. This potential exists in Nunavut communities. For example, in March 1999, Annie Ollie of Arviat, Nunavut started up a dance group for the youth in her community, a group that still meets today.<sup>97</sup> When I talked with Annie and asked her what inspired her to start this group, she said:

I started a dance group here in Arviat, because there are a lot of young people who were raised by single parents, or their parents were on welfare, or either divorced parents or old age pensioners. My focus was these young people, to let them know to believe in themselves, to know the importance of life, to learn to be dependable, and to let them learn they are decision makers. I wanted them to know that they are loved, no matter who they are, and no matter what their background is (Ollie interview).

In hearing Annie talk about her dance group, she reaffirmed my understanding that community initiative, dedication and drive, can strongly benefit the community. Community members have an intimate understanding of their community, and can identify which groups are not having their needs met by government programming or by the larger community. The longevity of the dance group existence reaffirms that Annie's identification of a need was correct, and continues - her group still has an important role in the community and the community recognizes this. As Annie and I continued our discussion, Annie told me: "When my dance group was about a year or two old, we had practically all the parents coming to say, "I've seen a change in my child, and I would like to thank you. Come over for dinner, and have coffee, stuff like that" (ibid).

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<sup>97</sup> Along with its longevity in the community, this group also spearheaded and supported an independent fundraising campaign in the community to fund the group to travel down to Calgary to give a cultural performance. "There was no government funding" Annie told me. Community groups receive most of its funding from the Government - whether territorial or federal, so to hear the Arviat group did this on their own was memorable.

For some communities it will take more time to build a strong community base and it is certain that all communities will experience challenges, such as conflict or apathy. Both experiences can be worked through with time and commitment. Once communities learn to work through their challenges, and when community members feel that they are being respected and their voices heeded, greater participation will follow.

As the KCM is respectful of diversity in practice, it is important to acknowledge that some communities, in their attempt to better build their experiences, may choose to defer some of their responsibility to outside political organizations. For example, in an attempt to better support group meetings, a core community group may decide the responsibility for public meetings should remain with the outside political organization. The reason for this decision will be personal to the community, but may include the perceived freeing of time and resources, or perhaps it is an attempt by the community to better connect the political organization with community realities. Whatever the community decides, I believe experience, and the example set by other communities, will provide individual communities with the confidence to see the benefits and necessity of owning all the responsibilities of the KCM. With this being said, the one stream that cannot be negotiated is the kitchen table meeting. This responsibility must solely and unquestionably rest within the community.

The potential of the KCM to support meaningful change within communities' lies in the support given to kitchen table meetings. These meetings bring the consultation discussion into people's homes, into their living rooms or around the kitchen tables, and it makes space in the wider political discourse for individual community members. As I continued to talk with Annie Ollie, who was also one of the four people who conducted the kitchen table meetings under the *Arviat Vision 2002* plan, I learnt about the other

impact these meetings had on the community. When I asked Annie if people were happy to talk with her in their homes, she responded with, “Yes they were [happy], and on top of that they would chat a little bit about their personal life, and what they were struggling with” (ibid). As our discussion continued, Annie also pointed out that this kind of relationship is best represented through personal contact: “[We] really get to know people. Not just a survey/questionnaire, talking to people one on one” (ibid).

Under the KCM, kitchen table meetings will be initiated and supported by representatives of the community group and involve as many people found in a home at any given time. Although the majority of these meetings will happen in person, they may also be supplemented through other means, such as a radio phone-in show, or discussions through cb radio.<sup>98</sup> There are technical details that will contribute to the success of these meetings, for example, who will go into homes, and how many will be required to do so, but more importantly, when and how often will these meetings be held? These questions must be answered strategically. Because of the intimate nature of these meetings, and the time and commitment necessary to support this dialogue, I believe these meetings should occur after the introductory public meeting has happened and once a round of group meetings has been completed. This increases the likelihood that community members have heard about the topic, and learnt enough of its details to determine whether or not

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<sup>98</sup> In an interview with another interviewer who was involved in the kitchen table meetings in Arviat, the use of community radio and cb radio was highlighted: “We know the people, so we just inform them by radio that we were going to do this study, and somebody will be coming into your house and if you need further information, call us at this number. That sort of idea. Because everyone knows us, we just made the announcements prior to our visits ...Lots of people have CB’s, so we just made the announcement “please expect me, I’ll be visiting you, we’re doing this survey, and we would like you to cooperate with us. If you don’t want to be interviewed, just let us know, and then we won’t bother coming to your home” (Anonymous interview).

they wish to discuss this topic in their home. It also provides an opportunity for community members to add more to a topic in subsequent group or public meetings.

The party responsible for initiating these meetings on behalf of the community group will be knowledgeable on the consultation topic, but more importantly, they will have the ability to listen and interact with the ideas, advice and discussions supported in these home visits. The focus of these discussions will depend on the personalities within the home, but will likely range from broad-themed discussion to detail-specific questions and answers sessions. This range will provide the consultation process with real meaning, as the context and the technicalities of the topic can be addressed simultaneously - likely in a manner that will be both practical and creative. As well, because families will be given the opportunity to discuss the topic in and amongst their everyday lives, the context of the consultation topic also gets placed into everyday life. Since the location and style of these meetings will change from home to home, families are the constant variable in this process: families have the opportunity to lead the discussion. This, and the freedom to speak in their home, will likely create an environment where individuals can speak their own truth in a manner that they may choose not to amongst other community members.

Kitchen table meetings will also play an important evaluation role for the core community group. The discussions supported in the kitchen table meetings, and the feedback received from these meetings, will allow the core community group to assess whether or not their ability to inform the community is effective and useful. Since the representatives of the community groups will enter people's homes, community members will have the freedom to tell the community group what they think of their job to date. This strengthens the role and responsibility of the community group to be approachable

and accessible to the community. This interaction is real, and was also remembered by Annie: “they [kitchen table meetings] also give the opportunity for people to exchange things like, “I always meant to tell you this or praise you. You do a really good job, but I didn’t have time to tell you” (Ollie Interview). This is also a time when community members can suggest other broader topics that should be discussed. Once community members are treated as active members, then they will understand for themselves the application of the consultation topic. This relationship will support the sharing of important insights and will inspire creative solutions, increase the likelihood that the community will support the action that will follow the discussion.

Although each community in Nunavut has the potential and capability to support each stream of interaction, how the community will respond to supporting all streams in practice cannot be predetermined. Only experience and reflection will determine what the best course of action is for communities. Based on experience, I do believe there are Nunavut communities that can support and grow with these responsibilities. The Arviat Vision 2002 represents this, as does the oral histories project in Iglulik, Nunavut. In Iglulik the community has a solid collection of local oral histories that span 30 years. This collection contains information-based histories, as well as elder’s reflections on present realities. Both examples represent the power and potential of the KCM, and represent how close some Nunavut communities are already in directing their own political process.

### **Conclusion**

*But drawing on the old spirit, we need to create something new for ourselves and think through the reality of the present to design an appropriate strategy, use fresh tactics, and acquire new skills (Alfred, 29).*

This chapter focussed on the technicalities of the Kitchen Consultation Model. This model was designed with the vision of supporting political consultation in a different way within Inuit communities. This vision comes with the full recognition that initiating steps towards making this vision a reality may be difficult. Many communities will need to work consistently through their unwillingness to speak out, a reality I argue is the result of anger and fear due to recent colonialism. Inuit communities have not yet accustomed themselves to collectively speaking publicly and honestly about their challenges. Yet, this reality is changing. Communities are coming forward with experiences from recent historical experience, and have started to honestly assess the state of their community and the relationships held within their communities. I argue that the identification of these realities is a necessary first step, but communities must also find some way to channel this potential to turn it into a means of fostering trust within the community. This will further support the process of decolonizing.

I argue that the Kitchen Consultation model has the potential of supporting decolonization in *Nunavut* at the individual and collective level. I argue that supporting this model will require communities to remember the importance of collective strength, and individuality. This memory will be supported by the revitalization of two principles rooted in Inuit governance – the role of experience as a site of knowledge and the necessity of modesty. Through remembering these principles, I argue Inuit communities will begin rebuilding trust within themselves. The final chapter will argue that Inuit communities may also look to the broader Indigenous community for support and for learning.

## Chapter Four: Inuit Methodologies as an Indigenous Experience

*I remember always asking my parents and grandparents, “What was it like going hungry?” Sometimes I really wish we could go back to how people used to live. There would be no TV, no cigarettes. I just wanted to know what the feeling would be like not to be dependent on Qallunaat (non-Inuit) things. I always tell elders that they are lucky that they grew up that way, in kamiks and skins and stuff like that. They always say negative things about back then. They talk about having lice in their hair, or they say it was too cold or that they didn’t have enough wood. They are always saying negative things about the way things were. I’ve always wanted to tell them that I wish I were given the chance to live that way.*

- Sandra Omik (Wachowich, 224)

Conceptual gaps are often tricky to spot, especially in an environment where interaction occurs often and within close proximity. Take for example the conceptual gap that exists between Inuit governance and the GN. This gap often goes unnoticed as GN practices like political consultation, or strategies like decentralization, portray the GN as a system that is close and interactive with Inuit communities. Add the constant use of phrases used to describe the GN and NLCA, phrases like self-determination, self-government and self-governance, and this gap disappears further, replaced with the belief that these two systems mutually exist. Yet, as this thesis has argued, Inuit governance and the GN are fundamentally different systems, and the consistent privileging of government structures over Inuit governance challenges the foundational support of Inuit governance. Privileging institutional authority over community relationships means communities continually look to government structures and authority first. This dependency runs deep in communities, and is represented in the belief that Inuit governance and the GN have similar potential. For example, in the first report of the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Task Force, the question that was raised was “should Inuit culture fit within the Government of Nunavut, or should the Government of Nunavut fit itself within Inuit culture.” This question centralizes these two systems in a conceptual knot, where a

tug on either system inexplicitly results in the tugging of the other system in the same way. Although the taskforce does recognize the existence of two separate systems, it does not recognize their fundamental differences, nor does it support a vision where each system could exist autonomously, with interaction between the two systems occurring respectfully and on equal ground.

Conceptual gaps are also difficult to understand as they are the result of accumulated change over an extended period of time. Take for example the quote that begins this chapter. In Nunavut, there are conceptual divides within Inuit families along generational lines, a result of colonial forces on Inuit life. Inuit elders, who lived significant portions of their life on the land, have experiences and memories of a lifestyle that is different. Iglulik elder Victor Tungilik states simply: “back then we had to work hard to survive” (Oosten & Laugrand 1999, 57).

Life on the land required focus, determination, cooperation and discipline. Life within an established community is substantially different. Life within an established community is a life within the functions of government, where individual freedom is set within structures and processes not directly related to the rhythms of the land.<sup>99</sup> Although there are benefits to this new lifestyle, it has resulted in the common reality of dependency, on government structures, on other people, and on everyday conveniences. This dependency is intensified when considering that the transition into communities did not occur on Inuit terms. Therefore, although Inuit are still in close proximity to each

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<sup>99</sup> The rhythms of life in established larger communities are different than what was experienced on the land, as shared by Rachel Uyarasuk: “We lived in a community that was small and had few people. We never lived in one place. I never knew of anyone dying among the people we lived with. It was only after the ice froze up and people started travelling by dog team, that we would hear news about people who had died.” (Oosten & Laugrand 1999, 21)

other, and continue to interact, the intensity of this dependency reflects the fact that Inuit are not interacting in a way that reproduced Inuit principles.

The continued presence of conceptual gaps and the continuing inactivity to address this gap has resulted in the shrinking of conceptual space in Nunavut. This has resulted in the collective forgetting of the rules and responsibilities of Inuit governance, particularly the importance of relationships at the community level. To begin expanding the conceptual space within Inuit communities, Inuit must again remember the principles and practices of Inuit governance. As it is often difficult to remember what has been lost, I argue that Inuit will gain what they have lost by exploring the experience of other Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. This will not be an easy task as the conceptual divide between Inuit and “First Nations” is strong. It is a divide that is popular politically in Nunavut, supported by territorial and national political organizations.<sup>100</sup> In recognition of this divide, I believe Inuit must be determined to look beyond government structures and functions, and explore at the people level. In taking this exploration to the personal level, I am confident that collectively, Inuit will learn, remember and rediscover important lessons about our Inuit governance.

### **Lessons learned and remembered**

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<sup>100</sup> The two issues central to this divide are money and federal recognition, and both issues go hand in hand. Inuit organizations, particularly the Government of Nunavut and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, lead this campaign at the national level. Often this rhetoric is directed to the Canadian Federal Government in an attempt to get the same guaranteed access to federal program dollars for all things, including housing, health, education and income tax.

The little pups were gradually getting bigger and because the poor things often go hungry their mother prepared to send them off. Dividing them into three groups of three, she told them about their destinations, and she impressed on them what they would have to do.

She told the first group she sent away to head down towards the south. They had only bows and arrows, and these became Indians. She made a boat out of an old boot-sole for the next ones she sent away, telling them, “You will come back by ship.” These ones became *qallunaat* (white people). The last ones were not told to go away; however, she told them simply that they should be unseen by people. These became *ijirait* (the unseen people who show up as caribou).

Excerpt taken from story “uinigumasuittuq.” (She who never wants to get married.)  
 Story told and translated by Alexina Kublu as told to her by her father, Michel Kupaaq Piugattuk  
 E5 456<sup>101</sup> (Oosten & Laugrand 1999, 156).

Collectively, Indigenous peoples have stories that tell how the world was created and populated. The existences of these stories today prove that knowing these stories are important for Indigenous communities. Vine Deloria classifies these stories as “traditional technology” because they establish “relationships with the larger cosmic rhythms,” guiding peoples in how they conduct their lives (Deloria & Wildcat, 58). The quote above comes from a story which explains how the world was populated with peoples, told from an Inuit perspective. I read this story for the first time about three years ago, and I was drawn to it because it was the first time I heard how Inuit believed the world was populated. Before that, I did not know.

I started the Indigenous Governance Program (IGOV) about three and a half years ago. I joined the program because I was looking for supports to help me understand Inuit culture and philosophies. This was an important goal for me, as I am Inuk and from Nunavut. Prior to joining IGOV, I knew that Inuit had a history and vision for the future, both which support a collective Inuit cultural perspective. The thing was I did not know

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<sup>101</sup> This story is also shared by Marino Aupilaarjuk, in “Shamanism and Reintegrating Wrongdoers into the Community” (Oosten & Laugrand, 70), George Agiaq in “Travelling and Surviving on our land” (Oosten & Laugrand, 79) and by Lucassie Nutaraaluk in “Traditional Law” (Oosten, Laugrand & Rasing, 189).

how to represent this perspective individually. This was difficult for me, as I was actively raised with the culture and it surrounded me throughout my life. I was frustrated because I did not understand why I was struggling to represent such a natural part of my life. This frustration was compounded by a sense of urgency, as Nunavut was still new, and was in the grasp of its celebrity status as a positive experiment in Canadian government. The expectation for the GN was it could and would create for the Inuit of Nunavut a renewed sense of pride. It was thought that the GN would inspire active solutions in policy and programming, which in turn would support positive changes for the Inuit. Many Inuit in Nunavut thought this as well. Marino Aupilaarjuk, an elder well recognized and respected across Nunavut summarized the importance of the Nunavut experience for Inuit by stating, “Once we get the Nunavut government, you young people are going to have a lot of work to do. You will have to think about how we Inuit can start getting our knowledge back” (Oosten, Frederic & Rasing, 21).

I also felt this responsibility, so I actively sought work experience with the GN. I started out in policy. As my work experience grew, I worked hard to remember that my responsibility was to support Inuit perspectives. This responsibility inspired my particular interest in GN strategies for Inuit and Inuit culture, such as Inuit employment in government, or the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit task force. Yet, amongst these strategies, I sensed something was not right.

Although I did not recognize this at the time, I now understand that these GN strategies put government first in Nunavut, and Inuit are responsible for providing unconditional support. The GN supports this expectation by shifting some of its own conceptual space to make room for Inuit perspectives, but this is not an active space because it is set within government processes and mechanics. My frustration mounted, so

I shifted from policy to programming. I anticipated that programs would give me the opportunity to interact and learn from communities and “real people”. And it did, kind of. In programming, I learnt there existed a tension between community vision and government vision, yet it is the government that has the infrastructure and supports to implement their vision, while the community looks to the government to provide the resources to meet their vision. To get out of this cycle, conceptually and personally, I decided it was time to get beyond the conceptual circle and start actively seeking solutions. I left the GN and started learning again.

I went to Victoria, more specifically, I went to IGOV. At IGOV I was taught about Indigenous philosophies and I became grounded in its timelessness. I was taught that traditional philosophies could be supported in a “modern world,” and I was reminded that communities had the potential to accomplish this. This inspired me, and I started to seek Inuit stories and beliefs to learn about the Inuit collective perspective. This is when I came across the Inuit creation and population story. These stories represented the existence of a whole other knowledge system within Inuit communities, and reminded me that it was the community that supported these stories and knowledge systems.

This realization was followed by an epiphany of sorts. I realized that all those years that I was feeling frustrated about how to represent myself individually, I was not actually frustrated with myself - I was frustrated with the environments I placed myself within. I knew “my culture,” but I was placing myself in a space that needed me to define it. I realized that since the GN is an environment that runs on defined processes, processes guided by a very particular rationale which requires a strict and static definition of Inuit culture in order to work with it. I also understood that government requires a lot

of time, energy and focus in order to change, which meant that Inuit and Inuit culture could not grow within that environment.

I had to leave Nunavut to learn these lessons. IGOV provided me with the space I needed to sustain and strengthen my critical perspective, and challenged me to be active in representing it. Although this space does exist in Nunavut, it does not sufficiently support all types of people, or all types of communities. IGOV also provided me with the peer support to continue. I learnt so much from my classmates, many of whom came from strong Indigenous communities south of the tree line and who were also looking to restore their community's strength. My classmates were experiencing what I was, but in different ways. This realization was an important one for me, because most Inuit see themselves as separate from other Indigenous people on Turtle Island.

There are many versions of the population story. The section I used at the beginning of the chapter came from the first story I read. The story is told broadly, which fitted my learning at the time. I have read other versions of this story with less detail. It was a little over two years ago that I came across another version of this story, which provided me with new detail and new insight. Andy Mamgark's version of the story included the following passage: "The other group were also put in an old boot sole and sent off towards the south of Koovik. She said to them, 'Be our protectors.' They became the Indians and that is why Indians tend to battle with people. That is how I heard it told" (Bennett & Rowley, 288).

Be our protectors. Although Inuit have always loved their land and have the will to defend it, Inuit colonial existence has not included the need to fight to protect the land. I believe this is the case because Nunavut's colonial experience is different. Our colonial timeline is shorter and our land is different, but when colonizers did settle in the north, it

occurred quickly. I believe it is because of this swiftness, and the use of different tactics, that Inuit did not react collectively through land defence. I believe Inuit have not yet understood the need to employ the tactics of land protection in our current reality.

Colonial systems have forcefully established space on Inuit lands, and because of this, Inuit need to learn about defence, both in tactics and as a necessity. To learn these lessons, we need to learn from those who have experienced colonialism longer, and with more force. The impact of colonialism can never be overestimated, and I believe Taiaiake Alfred's book *Wasase* represents this. In this book, Taiaiake considers the toll five hundred years of fighting has taken on Indigenous nations in their struggle to protect the land. This book speaks to the continual creation of deep-rooted fear that exists in Indigenous communities, as a result of this constant fight. This fear works to the advantage of the colonial systems that generate this fear, as they medicate this fear in Indigenous communities through strategies that further empower them. For example, the Canadian federal government constantly interacts with Indigenous communities within forums where economic and land claim agreements and additional government structures are understood as means to re-establish Indigenous control within Indigenous communities. These initiatives shift the perception of resistance from a fighting role to a negotiation role. To this, Taiaiake rightly asks, "Who is left to defend the land?" (Alfred, 42). Taiaiake understands that the colonial toll has taken many of its fighters, and therefore argues that this fighting spirit is in need of regeneration. In regeneration, there is a great opportunity for reflection.

I believe Inuit in Nunavut are also at this point in our own history, yet, how we got here is different. Inuit have not experienced the high level of direct violence as First Nations have, but we are firmly situated in the realm of government negotiation. We

know this, as the centre piece of Nunavut and Inuit's political history is the signing of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.<sup>102</sup> The result of this reality is "textbook." Inuit constantly attempt to create a separate identity from other Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island in order to gain political recognition and financial gain. As well, Inuit pride themselves publicly as not being fighting peoples. This is best expressed in the first speech by the first Premier of Nunavut on the day Nunavut came to be:

I am overwhelmed with pride. Today, the people of Nunavut formally join Canada. We are proud of this achievement, for we in Canada have demonstrated to the world what can be accomplished through dedication, hard work and patience. We have established a public government that will represent all the people of Nunavut, equally and democratically. This was achieved through peaceful negotiations, without civil disobedience, without litigation. It truly is a day for all Canadians to celebrate (Okalik Speech).

I believe Inuit in Nunavut must honestly assess the benefits of our political strategy to date, and look towards the future. Traditional Inuit culture has principles and rules surrounding the governance of our communities that include lessons of defence and defiance. I believe this truth must be included in our politics today and I argue this must be remembered by Inuit. In remembering these lessons, Inuit need to remember that Inuit governance is not necessarily about content, but style. Inuit governance has a particular style. It is indirect. This style is not about being indirect all the time, but it is about being strategic in one's indirectness. I believe remembering this style will bridge the gap between Inuit and other Indigenous Peoples.

This will not be an easy task. The truth is that the indirect style is often understood in opposition to the direct style, a style of which our protectors may be more

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<sup>102</sup> This truth can be applied to all Inuit groups. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the National Inuit Organization, represents the four Inuit populations in Canada, situated in Nunavut, Nunavik (northern Quebec), Labrador, and the NWT (Inuvialuit). ITK prides itself in supporting the settlement of major land claims agreements in all four Inuit regions.

accustomed to working with. My time at IGOV has taught me this lesson. I have learnt that when it comes to defending the land, you have to be direct about it, because in today's context of government and business, these forces will literally take the land from under you. Communities always have to be ready to defend. This is an invaluable lesson taught to me by my classmates. I will admit though, I almost threatened the strength of this lesson by applying it to all aspects of my life. This has taught me the importance of strategy.

It has been my experience that the direct approach requires a particular kind of energy, and because of this, it often commands attention. There is a power that comes from being direct, and it does inspire. When directness comes from a good place, it is hard not to be around it and not get caught up in its confidence. To support its strength though, directness has to respect its own parameters. Sometimes situations require an indirect strategy. The ability to use a style depending on need, and to transfer styles depending on the situation, is a hard task, much harder than many are willing to admit. In my own experience, I was taught how to be "more" direct, but I had to learn on my own, through stress and reflection, when it was best for me to be direct. I continue to learn, and I now see the strengths of being direct and I believe it complements my indirect style. I understand the principles that guide the indirect style contain much personal strength, a truth that is respected by many other Indigenous peoples. Tanadodaho Chief Leon Shenandoah represented this when he stated, "If you are asking about strength, then I can say that the greatest strength is gentleness" (Wall, 30). I believe in the style of the indirect, gentleness is necessary when interacting with people and communities.

Indigenous nations have learnt, through constant engagement with colonial systems, that colonial systems require constant reaction in order to maximize any

conceivable gain. I believe the word reaction is an important one, and represents the lead colonial systems take in Indigenous political realities. Colonial systems take this lead in order to secure control over Indigenous lands. Violence has always been the means to attain the land, and this violence continues today, though its strategy has changed.

Colonial systems began their conquest for Indigenous land with direct violence, but today the strategy has changed to include pleas for friendship through land claims. It is important to acknowledge that land claims have not brought anything new to Indigenous communities. Indigenous communities continue to experience direct challenges to their practice of cultural traditions.

Nations, and individual communities, have reacted to colonial methods by using the same methods in retaliation. Violence was met with violence, and negotiation was met with negotiation. I believe this polarization of methods has created a conceptual and political divide between Inuit and our protectors. This divide is straightforward and has become eternalized within the myths of the Canadian Aboriginals. Hugh Brody represented reality when he wrote: “The “Eskimo” smiles from the sidelines: the “Indian” is cunning, warlike and stands in our way. This distinction between the two peoples is a geographical and anthropological myth, but the double northern stereotype has nonetheless persisted” (Brody, 19). The dangers and misrepresentation of these myths are great, but for this thesis, it is important to acknowledge that the actions that inspired these myths have come with particular victories that reflect the political realities of their time. However, as Indigenous communities have maximized the potential colonial systems have to offer, colonial systems no longer have anything to offer Indigenous communities. Therefore, for Indigenous communities to move forward, we need to learn from each other.

I believe achieving the balance between indirect and direct styles of interaction is central to the regeneration of Indigenous nations. To regenerate as nations, Indigenous communities must re-connect, and individuals must learn to live amongst each other and alongside each other in a strong cultural way. We must shift our focus from the colonial system and its effects to refocus on how we interact within our communities and amidst ourselves. This will be a difficult task. There is a long history of pain and sadness that needs to be worked through in order for individuals to see the strength and potential of communities. We need to accept the intensity of the colonial influence, but we must not let it take up all of our energy. What needs to be remembered are the rules, processes and formalities that come with being a nation. In order to do this, individuals must learn to understand their own behaviour, and understand how people interact. We have to be protective of our cultural understanding, but we must be proactive in how it will be represented into our future. The future requires a strategy that involves people, in order to overcome the authority of colonial systems. This need is great, and is articulated in *Wasase*:

Arms are certainly necessary, only because we must protect ourselves from violent attack and survive in a physical sense, but we should have faith in the power of our ideas and in our abilities to communicate our ideas without resorting to the brute force of violence to bring our message to people. We should seek to contend, to inform our agitating direct actions with ideas, and to use the effects of this contention to defeat colonialism by convincing people of the need to abandon the cycle of subjugation and conflict and join us in a relationship of respect and sharing (Alfred, 77).

Our protectors have fought for the land out of love and necessity, as they have experienced colonialism in an extreme way. Their extremity is represented by their experience, and their experience reaffirms their role and strength in fighting for its protection. For Inuit, our weather, our land and our living conditions are extreme, all of

which are understood with great love and pride. Although this extremity has also proven to be difficult, and required a lot of focus and determination, these realities are remembered fondly through interactions with the land. This is expressed well by Katso Evic of Pagnirtung:

The water of Nattilik Lake is very good. It is excellent drinking water. There is no water around here to compare to that of Nattilik Lake. Everyday I long to drink it. I yearn for its landscape, as my father used to take me up there by boat (Bennett & Rowley, 119).

As Indigenous peoples recognize their relationship with the land guides their relationship with each other, I feel the extreme experience of Inuit in *Nunavut* reaffirms our strength in understanding the dynamics amongst individuals, communities, the land and the animals. Inuit must reflect on our extreme experience and formulate lessons gained by this reality; in doing this Inuit will be able to actively engage in the decolonising process on Turtle Island. To accomplish this, Inuit need to focus on working together and to be open to learning other lessons in order to support the strength and confidence necessary to understand the role of new lessons. Inuit can engage in this process by reflecting on Inuit experience. I believe the Kitchen Consultation Model is one attempt to support the reestablishment and redefinition of Inuit relationships. It begins re-establishing the interaction lines, and provides an opportunity for Inuit to learn from the accumulated experiences of Inuit, and be humbled by it.

### **Old Ideas, New Tactics**

Gathering is a central practice in traditional Inuit governance because of its ability to support all levels of interaction. Gathering is a site for celebration, food sharing and for dealing with conflict. Although Nunavut communities continue to support gatherings, evident by the popularity of community feast, games, and dances, I argue the role of

gathering needs to be expanded and taken to a new level of importance and responsibility. I believe the KCM will support this by requiring communities to explore their own relationship with political organizations through political consultation. In having communities responsible for their own political consultation, communities will create new conceptual spaces to interact within, allowing communities to also discover their own mechanisms for gathering. To accomplish this, communities will need to create and support an environment that provides community members with the time and space to determine for themselves the usefulness and strength of sharing experiences and perspectives. Doing this will allow communities to understand the level of community support available, expressed by community participation, while also determining their collective scope of knowledge and recognize and celebrate individual accomplishment and skill. Communities will also have the means to determine the level of interest held by community members on political issues.<sup>103</sup> In allowing communities to formulate a broader picture of their skills and challenges through interaction and the exchange of stories and experiences, community members will be given the opportunity to see patterns of experience that inevitably exist, as expressed by Rhoda Kaujak Katsak:

These stories are about me and my life, but they aren't just my stories. I mean, they are mine, they have to do with my life, but they are the same stories a whole bunch of people my age have. It is the same with my mother's stories and the same with Sandra's. We are the same as a lot of people our ages. I don't think we are any special type of family. The details of our stories may be different, but a

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<sup>103</sup> Nunavut's participation and interest in elections is dropping, evident by a recent public relations campaign by Nunavut's main Inuit organization, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI). To increase participation rates in NTI's election, the organization created the "I am Inuk Initiative". Each Inuk who cast a ballot in the 2006 Vice President election received a bracelet. The bracelet was plastic with the phrase "Inuuvunga I am Inuk" written on it. Since NTI represents beneficiaries of the NLCA, only beneficiaries were able to cast a ballot, and receive a bracelet. There was very little public media attention on this initiative, but when it was raised in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly Hansard, a question was raised by regular Member Peter Kilabuk, (Oral question 229-2(3): Volunteerism promotes healthy living [http://www.assembly.nu.ca/english/debates/blues3/060307\\_Blues.pdf](http://www.assembly.nu.ca/english/debates/blues3/060307_Blues.pdf). Also see the May 17th, 2006 Nunatsiaq news story "Voting is civic duty, that's all" [www.nunatsiaq.com/news/nunavut/legislative.html](http://www.nunatsiaq.com/news/nunavut/legislative.html).

lot of the experiences are the same. My mother talks about how it was for people on the land. I talk more about the people who are the adults in the community right now, my generation, the Baby Boomers, the people who are making the community decisions, the politicians (Wachowich, 194).

The Kitchen Consultation Model privileges community history, experience, and perspective. In privileging the community, community members have the opportunity to identify their own strength and potential and strengthen community relationships. In creating and maintaining this base of knowledge, communities can then transition from discussion to action, with communities taking the lead in determining their own support mechanisms. The assumption that meaningful interaction and dialogue will transition into action is based on Inuit governance principles. For example, in his article “Prometheosis,” Jaypeetee Arnakak explores the family dynamic model within Inuit society and argues that the family structure supported change and transition within Inuit collective being. As Jaypeetee argues, change is the result of knowledge creation and transition:

Most, if not all, dynamic systems have notions of movement and evolution that form and perpetuate that system. All human families and societies are dynamic systems, and what forms and fuels them is information. Here, what I mean with I say *information* is knowledge, skills and culture (or the metaphysical aspects of the individual, family and society) that are held in the collective consciousness, and that which provides internal logic, consistency and rationale governing behaviours and morals (n.p.).

Inuit communities must once again use the strength of gathering and interacting to support much needed change in Inuit communities today. Amongst various changes, communities must change the conceptual relationship between principles and practice. Principle and practice must once again be understood as the same thing. To support this, leadership from outside government structures will be needed. The KCM was designed to create space and need for various leadership roles, practiced at various levels ranging

from the community designated community group, various community groups, individuals with expertise in particular field, as well as leaders within families.

Recognizing the need for various leaderships will support the community in having the potential to support and initiate public engagement almost instantly, while also reminding community members of their potential and responsibility in supporting the community.

Strong leadership, determination and focus are needed to address the confusion, fear and uncertainty that exists in Inuit communities today. Inuit must expand their minds beyond the present state of confusion and think towards times of certainty and confidence. This will happen once communities and individuals understand the experiences that lead them to their present reality. In doing this, change can begin as energy, time and focus can be redirected elsewhere, including Inuit governance. Inuit need to restore the intellectual framework from which all experiences and knowledge are understood. In having this framework, visions of an ideal can be created. In having this vision, individuals can then interact and engage with their personal realities, regardless of how far away it is from the ideal. This can happen because this is the role of knowledge systems. Knowledge systems provide collective support individually. Respecting this support will prove itself useful, particularly in situations where addressing conceptual gaps and physical hardship must occur. This is well articulated by Taiiaki Alfred:

Reconstructure of Onkwehonwe knowledge systems and the ethics that emerged from them is the first step in reorienting ourselves to being Onkwehonwe in the practice of our lives. ... Education and transformation through the acquisition of knowledge, power, and vision is a dynamic process of learning and teaching, combined with a core desire to respect the completeness of the circle of transformation: to observe, to experience, to practise, and then to pass on the knowledge by mentoring and teaching the next generation. (149)

**Conclusion: Lessons rediscovered**

In his book *Wasase*, Taiiaki Alfred interviews Audra Simpson, a Kanien'kehaka anthropologist. In this interview Taiiaki asks "can you think of a time in our history when peace has been achieved by our people" (Alfred, 161). To this question, Audra responds:

.... Personally, I can't think of a time in my life when my mind has been unencumbered by the grief and stresses and worries of the present situation we live. I don't know peace in my life, and I don't think any of us do. We hold it up as an ideal and we strive for it in our lives and in our work. And I know many other people are driven by this principle and are driven to achieve it too. I think that's why our people are so difficult: because we are frustrated that we can't get to this point of peace (ibid, 161).

I vividly remember reading this passage, and even though I did not dwell on the words for long, I remember being impacted by the statement. These words came back into my memory when I was conducting my own interviews in Arviat, Nunavut. I was interviewing Joe Kareak, and we were discussing the role of Inuit traditional principles in Inuit society today. In the middle of our conversation Joe stated: "We have the greatest opportunity in the world, because we have a lot of peaceful time behind our time" (Kareak Interview).

I really began thinking about Audra's and Joe's statements, and I was amazed that my own conceptual space included these two extremes. This fuelled my interest and determination to further explore these extreme realities. I had just begun thinking I should do this when Shirley Tagalik, a dear friend who I also interviewed in Arviat, handed me a paper written by Joe titled "The Inuit version of where our thoughts are believed to be generated." In this paper, Joe reflects on discussions he had with Inuit elders. One of the elders he talked with was Marino Aupilaarjuk, an elder that I highly respect and regard. In fact, it was a quote from Aupilaarjuk that first caught my attention:

You see, Inuit from way back believe that thought is generated from the main part of your body, where the lungs and heart area are. When an Inuk person says they are troubled or having difficulty understanding things, it will be understood by others, the weight of the situation is being felt on their chest. If I am unhappy, that is where I feel it, and that is due to the kind of thoughts I will be generating. If I am happy, that is where I feel it, and so I have happy thoughts (Karetak, 1).

From this quote, Joe unravels the relationship between the mind and emotions. Joe writes that the “brain works like a memory bank, which gets developed by the information that is provided by the world, but even given this, the brain can still choose to develop any way it can or wishes to” (ibid). Joe argues that emotions and feelings come from the soul, and the soul is the “energy-producing thing, which makes life better.” Having both the mind and emotions in check makes life better.

In reading this article and in reflecting on the statements made by Joe and Audra, the importance and necessity of *isuma* became clear to me. A strong mind is what allows Inuit to directly experience challenges, hardship and joy while also being guided by family and community relationships and lessons. Disciplined emotions reinforce the importance of supporting logical and helpful thinking. *Isuma* allows Inuit to experience things and to reflect on experiences, which creates knowledge. The argument Joe was making became so clear to me. In having a clear mind, and being open to experiences, one gains experience in which one reflects on later, thereby creating more knowledge. In being more knowledgeable, it increases the potential and likelihood that more experience will be gained either directly or indirectly, as individuals are more willing to interact with individuals with more knowledge and experience. In building knowledge and experience, this leads to the creation of an individual’s own internal logic which determines personal conduct.

The importance of *isuma* is as necessary to Inuit in Nunavut as it is for all Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. Colonialism is the result of continuous and horrific challenges to Indigenous people's being, both physical and spiritual. Colonialism attacked Indigenous spirit, and the resulting negative emotions are still present. Such emotion does not go away unless they are worked through. Therefore, to begin the decolonizing process, Indigenous peoples must begin to work through the negative emotions to once again strengthen our spirit. To do this, strong minds are needed. For Inuit to begin this process Inuit must recognize how tangled up they are conceptually with government systems. The strength of Inuit governance and Inuit experience must be remembered, and this can only happen once Inuit are confident collectively.

What needs to be remembered is that collectively and individually, our capacity for strength is boundless. Inuit once lived in direct contact with the weather, the animals and this was challenging in the extreme way. Today Inuit physical substance is pretty much guaranteed. The strength, determination and discipline once needed to secure survival has been let free. Inuit must redirect that strength into supporting life within established communities. This will not be easy task, but it is not impossible. Memories of such an existence continue to exist in Nunavut today, as expressed by a then 18 year old Sandra Omik, in her own reflection:

Today there's so much of the old ways in us. Even though today we live in a settlement, I was born, I realize, just a breath away from the old life. I always thought my grandparents lived in camps a long, long time ago. I always thought we had all been living in a modernized world for some time, my family, I mean. Now I realize that it hasn't been that long for them at all. They moved (off the land) in 1968. When I ask my grandparents about why they don't want to go back to the old ways, they say they don't want to go back because it was too hard. I'd like to tell them, "It is just as hard for us now!" The modern world is just as hard today. There are high prices for food, clothing, gas, snowmobiles, hunting gear. Now we young people must work, work, work, work, if we are going to get anywhere (Wachowich, 253).

Inuit must constantly remember that Inuit governance is the system of politics created by Inuit experience and perspective. The GN and the NLCA are systems that function in ways fundamentally different from Inuit governance. Inuit must also remember that a strong mind is necessary to secure physical survival, and by being humble and by respecting experience, there are many lessons to be learned, even from sources they thought were so different.

The lines are untangled now; we can continue to move forward.

*Tukisivalliaqtakka*

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