Qikiqtani Truth Commission

Thematic Reports and Special Studies

1950–1975

Pivalliajuliriniq: Economic Development in Qikiqtaaluk

Qikiqtani Inuit Association

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Please contact QIA for more information:
Qikiqtani Inuit Association
PO Box 1340, Iqaluit, Nunavut, X0A 0H0
Telephone: (867) 975-8400
Toll-free: 1-800-667-2742
Fax: (867) 979-3238
Email: info@qia.ca

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Qikiqtani Inuit Association

QIKIQTANI TRUTH COMMISSION

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Errata

Despite best efforts on the part of the author, mistakes happen.
The following corrections should be noted when using this report:

Administration in Qikiqtaaluk was the responsibility of one or more federal departments prior to 1967 when the Government of the Northwest Territories was became responsible for the provision of almost all direct services. The term "the government" should replace all references to NANR, AANDC, GNWT, DIAND.

Dedication

This project is dedicated to the Inuit of the Qikiqtani region. May our history never be forgotten and our voices be forever strong.

Foreword

As President of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, I am pleased to present the long awaited set of reports of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission.

The *Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Community Histories 1950–1975* and *Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Thematic Reports and Special Studies* represent the Inuit experience during this colonial period, as told by Inuit. These reports offer a deeper understanding of the motivations driving government decisions and the effects of those decisions on the lives of Inuit, effects which are still felt today.

This period of recent history is very much alive to Qikiqtaalungmiut, and through testifying at the Commission, Inuit spoke of our experience of that time. These reports and supporting documents are for us. This work builds upon the oral history and foundation Inuit come from as told by Inuit, for Inuit, to Inuit.

On a personal level this is for the grandmother I never knew, because she died in a sanatorium in Hamilton; this is for my grandchildren, so that

they can understand what our family has experienced; and it is also for the young people of Canada, so that they will also understand our story.

As it is in my family, so it is with many others in our region.

The Qikiqtani Truth Commission is a legacy project for the people of our region and QIA is proud to have been the steward of this work.

Aingai,

E7-1865
J. Okalik Eegeesiak
President
Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Iqaluit, Nunavut
2013

Pivalliajuliriniq

Economic Development in Qikiqtaaluk

BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

Beginning in the 1950s, the Canadian government increased its investment and involvement in all parts of the North, including Qikiqtaaluk. The intended beneficiaries were not only the region's Inuit inhabitants, but also Canadians in the South. In official policy statements about its new interest in the North, the government tried to show respect for the importance of hunting to Inuit life, but its actions spoke differently. Modernization was pushing forward, especially through schooling, direct investments in local infrastructure, and an emphasis on moving people into Southern-style housing. The impact of the development was immediate and deep. In the 1950s, most Inuit lived in multi-family hunting groups in about one hundred flexible ilagiit nunagivaktangit that were mobile within traditional territories of considerable size. By the 1970s, almost

all Inuit were living in twelve hamlets and a town, which is now a city. Despite this, Inuit have never abandoned hunting as a foundation for their local economy, even as technology evolves and operates in parallel to the cash economy, resource development, and access to consumer goods.

The various parties involved in development in Qikiqtaaluk have long understood that the region could not be developed as the south had been, through agriculture, forestry, and European immigration. The constraints are ecological, demographic, and cultural. The biomass is extremely low, and a very small human population is widely dispersed across a large area. The skills needed to feed people from the land are outside the market economy, and require knowledge, techniques, and work disciplines that do not fit well with southern employment routines. Differences in work patterns made it difficult to train people locally or to attract and retain qualified workers in the region. Additionally, the region is located far from centres of industrial production and potential markets for its goods. Isolation, prolonged periods of bad weather, and frozen seas make surface transport irregular and expensive. All communities rely heavily on the South for goods and services. In return, most of what Inuit produced for outside markets in the twentieth century were luxury goods—white fox furs, sealskins, and the artistic output of carvers, printmakers, and weavers, as well as memorable tourism experiences. Qikiqtaaluk also has had its own modest record of the boom-bust cycles typical of northern mining.

Broadly speaking, the publicly funded development strategy for the region has been to install infrastructure, such as schools, housing, diesel generators, landing strips, and navigation aids; to encourage local hiring for mining and other development projects where possible; and, as in the days of the fur trade, to organize production of other exports.

CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS—GOVERNMENT ASSUMPTIONS

Behind all government programs in the period from 1950 to 1975 were a set of questionable assumptions and external influences that shaped policies and the chances of any program's success. These are introduced here as background.

The first assumption was that the federal government had an unquestioned right to administer the North, without any need to consult its indigenous people. Administration was very limited and investment was all but absent before the Second World War. It was largely in the 1950s with defence-related projects, as well as the growth of Canada's universal welfare programs, that decisions were made about developing modern infrastructure in the north. Hall Beach and Qikiqtarjuaq, for example, were located at major Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line facilities, while Iqaluit was a major logistical centre for military initiatives by Americans and Canadians from 1944 onwards. The economic impact of these and other government installations was widespread and permanent.

The second assumption was that Inuit culture was of great value, but highly vulnerable. Initially, government and church observers recognized hunting as the most sustainable source of food and cultural rewards for Inuit. Yet outsiders were also naive. They considered hunting to be hard, risky work, and assumed that, if anything easier came along, Inuit would drop it and ultimately lose the necessary skills. Especially in the early 1950s, the federal government considered itself responsible for finding a path between two extremes. One extreme was excessive contact with Qallunaat, which officials imagined would lead to demoralization and dependence; the other was isolation, which officials believed would impoverish Inuit while southern Canadians took over the best in the North.

The inconsistent logic of the second assumption is well expressed in a formal statement of policy on economic and cultural change from 1956:

> Where [Inuit] in remote areas are relatively free from contact with white civilization, it is planned to leave their present economy as undisturbed as possible. In those areas where there is already permanent contact, integration with the white economy will be encouraged. Between these two extremes employment of Eskimos will be encouraged, provided it does not interfere unduly with their normal life. It is also planned to diversify the Eskimo economy and to continue to transfer families from unproductive areas to regions where game is more abundant or employment is available.

This vague and unrealistic policy was never really put into practice. With compulsory schooling and the concentration of services like health care at a handful of locations, the design of government services decisively affected the way practically all Inuit were drawn into settlements, in spite of cultural risks and lack of economic guarantees.

A third assumption was that most Inuit lacked the knowledge or skills to make informed choices in the Canadian economy. If this was true in any way, it was the result of government policy. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Inuit in many places participated in non-traditional ways in foreign-sponsored industries and trades, notably whaling and, on a small scale, mining and the sale of handicrafts. In 1924, a well-travelled government scientist remarked:

> The net result is that while [Inuit] have taken hold of a great many of the white man's ideas, they have [gotten] nowhere commercially. It is a fair statement that there is not one [Inuk] in Baffin Land who has any idea of the real value of his own products. Their position now is that they are in the best possible frame of mind to learn, and anxious to do so.

This sort of progress was thwarted for the next thirty years by the economic grip of the fur trade and the lack of an effective government presence. Defence construction projects in the mid-1950s made this sort of isolation untenable. In Iqaluit, dozens of families from surrounding regions reacted predictably, as Elder Naki Ekho told anthropologist Ann McElroy in 1999, "I came here by dog team from upland with the whole family [in 1957] . . . The reason we came here was when someone finds plentiful amounts of something, like work or food, they come to get it."

LONG-RANGE GOALS OF GOVERNMENT AND INUIT ORGANIZATIONS

Throughout the years from 1950 to 1975, the economic development goals of the federal government, and roles it assigned to Inuit, were explained to the public in official announcements, publications, and speeches. These covered the spectrum from support for dispersed hunting in the early 1950s through to strong statements boosting mining and petroleum industries in the 1970s. In 1970, the federal Cabinet approved seven vague "national objectives for the development of northern Canada." The seven objectives included constitutional evolution, sovereignty, and security, a rising standard of living in the North, and contributions to the national economy. Environmental protection was also mentioned.

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's intentions emerged two years later in a general statement included in a report published as *Canada's North, 1970–1980*, in English, French, and Inuktitut. Its central message to Indigenous people was that northerners could benefit from big changes driven from the South and that change was inevitable. The statement echoed the Department's discredited "White Paper on Indian Policy" (1969), asserting that, "An essential aim is therefore to prepare and assist [all] the native peoples to integrate into Canadian society . . . in

such a way that they can maintain their pride and cultural heritage." This pride was not for everyone; the government would continue to relocate people en masse, and would encourage the best-educated and trained Inuit to relocate within the territories or to southern Canada. Finally, the statement emphasized, "The economic future of the North lies in the ground."

Government officials were accustomed to having the first and last word on questions about the future of Qikiqtaaluk. By the 1970s, however, strong voices were being heard from Aboriginal people across the North with their own traditions and visions for the future. In 1988, the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) issued this expression of long-standing Inuit views about economic development:

> We will continue to adapt to changing circumstances, but this does not mean we are prepared to adopt all southern ways, mores, and values, and to cut ourselves off from our culture and our land. Instead, we want to design a society and economy that enables us to participate effectively in the old ways based on the land and its bounty, as well as in the new ways based on space-age technology and world-wide communication.

TFN insisted that the future could be made secure through the creation of better programs to support hunters.

> The animals we kill provide us with highly nutritious food, which is shared with other Inuit who cannot, or do not, go hunting. Inuit harvesters in Nunavut produce approximately $40 million worth of country food per year . . . If, through the land claim settlement, we can help Inuit afford to stay on the land, we will ensure that Inuit remain a land-based culture.

Preparing Individuals for Economic Development

TRAINING

As early as 1953, before the public announcement of air-defence projects in the far North, the government invited select Qallunaat across the Arctic to survey "Eskimo potential" by identifying young men and boys who could be trained for employment as "radio operators, meteorological technicians, stationary engineers, mechanics, vehicle drivers, carpenters, cooks, maintenance men, teachers, hospital orderlies, [and] office workers." Training, especially in the territories where the federal government delivered provincial-type services, would not be criticized by Qallunaat as being a handout—it was an acceptable kind of transfer to individuals that would encourage independence, not dependence.

While planning crept ahead, sudden shocks brought small groups of Inuit face to face with training opportunities. One was the widespread evacuations after 1950 of tuberculosis patients to the South, where many learned to speak and write in English. The other was the flood of men and materials north to build the DEW Line in 1955. In the process, crisis management overtook planning. None of the planning supported the desires of many individuals and families who wanted to move back and forth flexibly between the wage and hunting sectors of their economy. This lack of coordination forcibly alienated some hunters from the land and, in extreme cases, led government officials to kill off qimmiit, sending a stark message about the difficulty of dividing time between traditional and contemporary economic activities.

A departmental statement in 1955 summarized the Government's attitude towards training in the North:

> As the opportunities for employment in the industries of the north and in defence establishments become more widespread and as educated and trained young people become available, those Eskimos and Indians who wish to enter wage employment should be able to do so in skilled and semi-skilled trades.

This statement shifted from an individual approach (jobs for some) to a universal one (integration for all):

> It will not be good enough for them to remain as untrained and largely uneducated labour engaged in the more menial tasks. These native Canadians will with training be able to develop their abilities and to make their full contribution to the nation's growth and to their own welfare. Integration into the national life and activities will follow progressively.

Most government efforts directed towards individuals did nothing to support hunting or reward the skills people already possessed. In 1966, an inventory of courses offered across Canada, including centres in many provinces and a special federal school in Churchill, Manitoba, boasted of courses in "fabric painting, fur grading, sawmill operation, boat building, and guide training" as well as "carpentry, heavy equipment operation, commercial art, commercial subjects, baking, marine mechanics, plumbing, equipment mechanics, and handicraft management." Not mentioned in this official publication were the numerous courses given in communities to prepare Inuit, primarily women, to use the appliances installed in the prefabricated houses that were proliferating in even the smallest communities. Some women also received training in secretarial skills, sewing, and translation. Also available was on-the-job training, though there was no assurance that new jobs would open up when the work at hand ended.

Muckpaloo of Arctic Bay explained the importance of this type of training through the 1960s and 1970s:

> Because more and more people are working for such companies as Panarctic and the mine, they are going south to take special courses to learn their jobs. I first went south in 1962 to study welding and electrical wiring in Victoria and Chilliwack. In 1972, I went back to learn carpentry, plumbing, and the responsibilities of a fire chief.

For some Inuit, training followed health treatments in the south. Founded in 1956, the Iqaluit Rehabilitation Centre was an ambitious effort by Welfare Chief Walter Rudnicki to get Inuit out of hospitals in the South without forcing them back onto the land while they were still weak. By starting with people who were vulnerable and infirm, Rudnicki sidestepped the government's usual scruples against "handouts." Rehabilitation would help former patients learn a trade or occupation consistent with their capabilities and type of disability, "instructing them in the handling of money, home economics, sanitation, operation of businesses, and many different skills and attributes necessary to fit into a different type of life." As authors John and Irma Honigmann pointed out from their research in Iqaluit in 1963, rehabilitation was part of a general practice of "tutelage," and far from being limited to physical rehabilitation, its "ambitious aim" was "guiding Eskimos' resocialization," including help for young people in trouble.

By 1960, the Rehabilitation Centre had grown to thirty-five buildings accommodating eight staff, forty-seven residents and sixteen transients. A handicraft program was generating $40,000 a year. Although the centre at one time housed a third of the population of Apex, the Honigmanns noticed that its people were not recruited to leadership positions in the Community Association, Community Council, or the Church. In 1962, the centre organized "back on the land" activities to remind vulnerable people how hard

their life had been in the ilagiit nunagivaktangit, but some participants did quit and move back to the land. Overall, however, the centre's "graduates" were twice as likely to go into wage employment as to return to the land. In general, with its Inuktitut-speaking staff and efforts to respect Inuit work routines, the Honigmanns found "the Centre undeniably ranks highly compatible with Eskimo values and aspirations." Its reach, however, was limited to the few dozen people who passed through its long-term program, and to ex-patients in transit. Less formal rehabilitation programs served smaller populations in places like Hall Beach.

EMPLOYMENT

Before 1950, the communities always offered jobs for a few Inuit, hired for general labour, domestic service and for hunting meat for the dog teams of missionaries, RCMP, and traders. Seasonally, Inuit helped unload the annual supply ship wherever it called. The addition of teachers and civilian administrators to communities increased the need for such help. In Iqaluit, the United States Air Force (USAF) never built housing for its sizeable Inuit workforce, but in 1955, the Canadian government developed a new "civilian establishment" a few kilometres away at Apex Hill. Here it imported prefabricated housing and community buildings. Smaller versions of this kind of settlement sprang up around other communities, which gradually increased the number of local civilian jobs for Inuit.

Widespread employment was slow to get started. A 1960 estimate reported that only 6% of Inuit in all regions had ever experienced "steady wage employment." Others worked intermittently in jobs such as stevedoring, freighting supplies, and carpentering, for periods lasting from a few days to a few weeks. A list of employed Inuit prepared for the Minister in 1962 showed just over two hundred in ten Qikiqtaaluk communities, with more than half the jobs being in Iqaluit. However, growth of communities

saw some corresponding need for unskilled and semi-skilled Inuit labour. Schools and houses demanded diesel electric generators, which needed mechanics to maintain them. Vehicles were imported for water and sewage services, requiring drivers and road crews. Nursing stations and schools needed janitors and secretaries. Construction jobs continued into the autumn after each season's sealift brought new buildings, though this work was temporary. Many Inuit preferred to combine seasonal or part-time work with hunting, but the low figures overall show how slowly government progressed with its policy of preparing Inuit for wage employment.

The importance of government jobs in an individual community is indicated by a survey taken in Pond Inlet in 1966. In 1956, the total wage bill for Inuit was estimated to be $6,000. Ten years later, there were three Inuit federal employees each earning more than that amount, and six earning between $1,110 and $3,900. About forty employed men and women worked, generally part-time, as hostel parents, classroom assistants, interpreters, and casual labourers, but specialists like teachers and nurses were almost exclusively recruited from outside. These sensitive posts went to people who might take years to understand Inuit culture, while the number of jobs, even at less-skilled levels, did not meet demand for work from the increasing number of people living year-round in the communities.

While most jobs were in communities, the isolated weather stations and air defence posts played a large part in hiring Inuit. Witnesses at Sanikiluaq mentioned looking for work or being offered jobs and training at Kuujuarpik. At Kimmirut, Henry Boaz described a childhood spent at isolated weather stations on Hudson Strait. He was born at Nottingham Island, where his father, Willy Unaalik, worked for the Department of Transport weather station. He grew up on Resolution Island among a rotating staff of four or five Qallunaat and two or three Inuit families. In the following exchange with Commissioner James Igloliorte, Boaz spoke about how his father's employment ended.

> Boaz: My parents had gotten tired of working for the weather station and we [kids] were getting old enough to go out on our own and that was the main reason.
>
> Commissioner: When they asked to move what did the weather station people do about that? Did they help them move or did they say that they had to find someone else to do that?
>
> Boaz: We were basically on our own. We were given large rations by the weather station people and we were moved by the RCMP but dumped quite far from Lake Harbour [Kimmirut], out in the wilderness.

Numerous employers, including government bodies, did not carefully follow employment law and employment conditions, such as who would bear the cost of returning workers to a previous community. Some Inuit would continue to be paid to use their land skills in new ways, guiding parties outside the settlements. As Manasie Amagoalik of Pond Inlet explained to the QTC, "Sometimes [Inuit] would work for RCMP, other times they would take out other explorers, other people, [who] wanted to go [to the] High Arctic, sports hunters, geologists." However, Amagoalik also noted that payment was uncertain, and work was often "voluntary." Ham Kudloo of Pond Inlet spoke about the unpaid work he did for the medical team at each community at which the *C.D. Howe* called, on his way home from a hospital in Quebec:

> I was acting as an interpreter, I had that role as an interpreter at every port of call both for the eye doctors and other medical personnel. At that time I was thinking, "Alright, at least I'll be making some money, and I'll have some money when I get to Pond Inlet." But only afterwards I found out it was a voluntary position, and

> basically it was charitable because I was not given even one dollar. And then the *C. D. Howe* left, and the doctors, and the nurses, the eye doctor and everybody left on the *C. D. Howe* and they did not even give me a thank-you note or even a dollar for my services. That's what stood out in my recollection. And as I got older and I could start thinking more or reflecting more, I was thinking, "Boy, I must have been very patient," and I could not understand how I let these things pass when I was a young person.

Employment, as well as underemployment, affected Inuit in different ways. There were changes in the relationships between youth and Elders, between the best hunters and others, between those who spoke English and those who did not. Change also affected men and women differently. George Wenzel told the QTC that following centralization, nostalgia for life on the land was more common among men than among women. Some observers have suggested that Inuit women's traditional skills were more easily transferred to modern life than men's were. A study by Abraham Tagalik and Archie Angnakak in 2008 identified problems in men's and women's different communication styles and skills, expectations, and roles. It suggested that girls were usually put to work on household chores, and therefore developed skills in setting priorities and coping with problems, while some traditional skills that boys learned as hunters directly conflicted with how they were supposed to behave in the classroom or workplace.

Similarly, Elders pointed to differences in men's opportunities to develop interpersonal skills and relationships. For example, in discussing suicide prevention and resilience, one group of Elders noted:

> Previously men did not have to relate in larger groups as they were out hunting, and perhaps girls had learned how to live in groups better. The move to living in settlements and communities meant men were constantly exposed to more complex relationships in

> their new environment, yet they lacked previous experience in this regard. On the other hand, women had . . . coping skills and strategies that aided them in adapting to newer, more complicated, and busier circumstances.

Community-Focused Development

Economic development provided a major motive for the government to concentrate the inhabitants at a dozen communities between 1950 and 1970. In addition, the government looked for savings by deploying at only a few places the high-cost imported specialists (teachers, nurses, and administrators) who were considered necessary, and their supporting infrastructure of buildings, generators, landing strips, and other tools of centralization. The result was that Inuit were drawn or pushed into unfamiliar settings, moving in a single generation from being one of the most dispersed populations in Canada to one of the most concentrated.

Centralization was almost complete by the 1970s, but the decade opened with uncertainty about how community development would work in practice. The Government of the Northwest Territories tried to develop a policy of funnelling investment to the most promising "growth centres." "There is a natural tendency for economic activities to congregate in a major centre and for other activities and services to follow. The Government merely has to work with these natural forces in a planned way." One skeptical official wrote in the margin, "Seems like a lot of people will have to stay on the land." However, in Qikiqtaaluk, almost all families had already left the land. The same document stated, "It is mandatory that no move be made until suitable jobs were available to absorb them and that they could make

the inevitable social adjustment." Documents like this one summarized the ambitions of politicians and bureaucrats, but their doubts and warnings were rarely heeded. Government and private investors almost never found the right balance of centralization with employment.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Steadily, following the arrival of the first DEW Line materials in 1955, the external view of Qikiqtaaluk's economy shifted from the land towards government services and commodities for export. The trading economy was only connected to world markets via a minimal infrastructure of a dozen tiny settled places. Each was accessible by sea, with just enough wooden buildings to warehouse a year's trade goods and house a transient population of between five and twenty non-Inuit. The transformation that occurred in the period from 1950 to 1975 moved the region's economy from one conducted under Inuit customs primarily for local benefit towards one designed by southern planners with the interests of the South in mind and with little distinction made between the roles of Inuit and other Canadian citizens.

It is important to note how the placement of Qikiqtaaluk's communities generally follows the siting of commercial, RCMP, or military establishments at the end of the Second World War. Access to good hunting terrain was of secondary importance, though many of the early trading posts were located along coastlines where people already lived. Most of the settlements have a harbour or anchoring place that could be reached by the kinds of vessels used in the Arctic in the 1940s and 1950s. There are five exceptions. Two are in the High Arctic, where the relocations of 1953 created Resolute and Grise Fiord; two are former DEW Line sites, Hall Beach and Qikiqtarjuaq; and one is Sanikiluaq in the Belcher Islands, where there were no year-round Qallunaat establishments until 1959. At the other eight communities,

the service centres and municipal infrastructure of today are strongly influenced by the distribution of government and trading activity before 1945.

Qikiqtaaluk saw two waves of airfield construction, one driven by defence and the second by community development. Iqaluit owes its existence to the broad, level site of a Second World War airfield, which was revived as a marshalling point during work on the DEW Line. It is the least favoured of the communities in terms of access to game but it survived and grew by maintaining the original momentum from the airfield. Similarly, airports at Hall Beach and Resolute handled significant military traffic, and this affected development. Air travel came slowly to the rest of Qikiqtaaluk, beginning with occasional visits from aircraft equipped with floats or skis. By the mid-1960s, most communities had chosen a place that could be levelled for year-round scheduled flights. By 1975, all thirteen communities were linked to each other and a few to the South by air. This focus on air travel between communities resulted in the neglect of unloading facilities at the many points served by the annual "sealift." Even Iqaluit has no wharf for ocean-going vessels—cargo is winched off sealift vessels into barges and then unloaded directly onto beaches.

As communities grew, they had numerous infrastructure needs, and in the early 1960s, the northern administration began to receive the financial resources to address them. Tank farms for diesel and other fuel were set up relatively early and enlarged as time went on. Community freezers encouraged hunters to cache meat and fish for later distribution within the community. Nursing stations began to spread in the late 1950s, and local radio in the early 1970s, with a small paycheque and local celebrity status for announcers. The housing boom of the 1960s brought a rush of construction—bigger schools, community halls, municipal garages, welding shops, and sewage lagoons all provided a sharp contrast to the former trading enclaves where Inuit were not supposed to "loiter." Housing was the biggest investment and, along with schools, the driver of other changes: the introduction of a housing program for employed Inuit in communities in 1956; low-cost

houses for purchase after 1959; and the universal rental housing program of 1965–66 were other landmarks. By 1970, Inuit community leaders were generally calling for an increase in municipal infrastructure, while keeping a critical eye on the planning, quality, and operation of what was sent.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS

As the northern administration gained experience, larger budgets, and agents in the field, its priorities in communities included the development of elected civic government. The elected bodies were sometimes ineffective, but most communities saw a federal effort to develop community organizations that would help prepare Inuit to deal with bureaucratic processes related to self-government. This trend was slow to develop; while Inuit were often eager to take up new challenges and opportunities and participated eagerly when consulted, officials were afraid to give unilingual local populations political power. It was feared they would be numerically swamped, culturally corrupted, and economically exploited by wealthy incomers. By this, they did not mean government employees but newcomers, such as the hundreds of young men without wives at the DEW Line sites, or—even worse—the thousand imaginary miners who were rumoured to be on their way to the Belcher Islands in 1956. Today the solutions that administrators proposed sound extremely paternalistic, but they reflected real concerns about the lack of formally schooled leaders in communities exposed to sudden change. These disparities were regularly exaggerated, for, as M. P. Gene Rheaume observed in 1964, Inuit might not be ready to vote in territorial elections, but "they will be ready for the vote the day after they get it."

The creation of councils and co-operatives under the tutelage of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development intentionally undermined the authority of the churches, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), and the police. Through these various councils and committees, the federal

government, at a slow pace and with many doubts, set out to prepare Inuit to lead the transformation of their own society and economy. The transformation also sharpened existing divisions over spheres of influence within Inuit society. In the 1960s, Qallunaat tended to identify four different groups of Inuit. First were the "camp bosses" and other inumariit who excelled as hunters and leaders. Second were the settlement-based employees of the HBC, RCMP, and churches, as well as skilled hunters and travellers who generally spoke some English. Third were other families, the majority of the Inuit population, who did not fit into the previous categories. Fourth was a small number, mostly widows and invalids, who lived at the settlements and relied on social transfers. At first, most opportunities for leadership were offered to the second group. By 1975, bilingual young men with a high school or college education were challenging them.

At Iqaluit in the early 1960s, anthropologists John and Irma Honigmann proposed a different division of urban Inuit society into three groups: a new commercial or administrative class who wore business suits, a group of more traditional hunters, and others who lacked a distinctive identity. These alignments undermined established systems of leadership and status. In particular, the Inuit who worked for Qallunaat were acquiring prestige at the expense of the traditional hunting leaders.

The template for community development in Qikiqtaaluk was set in the 1950s at Iqaluit. The Honigmanns devoted an entire chapter to "Community Organization." This focused on a few formal institutions with elected leaders: the Community Council, Community Association, Church Council (an all-Inuit body), and the Sisi Housing Co-op. In the Honigmanns' view, the non-Inuit members were quite tolerant of increased Inuit involvement in local affairs, which was occurring with "considerable success." The success was due largely to strengths in Inuit culture:

> including their curiosity, resourcefulness, a readiness to "try it," intelligence to benefit from experience, and ... other characterological

> traits acquired in early life . . . [Inuit] are given to testing their ability to master some new experiences and in doing so may even venture beyond the bounds envisaged by Eurocanadian tutors. Change is probably aided by the fact that [Inuit] participate in many areas of town life as if they were fully entitled to those resources of the town.

Once established in Iqaluit, community organizations appeared in smaller, remoter communities. In the 1967–72 period, for example, Arctic Bay had a Housing Association, a Community Council, a Health Committee, a Recreation Committee, and—a vital institution everywhere—the Hunters' and Trappers' Association. The first chairperson of the Community Council wryly noted the acculturative influence of such bodies. "When the Community Council first started, we really didn't know exactly what to do and how to make it work. But we've kept trying and we know now." Although Qallunaat tutelage was still powerful, the communities' capacity to manage themselves grew through institutions like these.

CO-OPERATIVES

Creating openings for janitors, mechanics, and secretaries was not in itself a strategy for economic development, and only by creating skilled cohorts of administrative workers and entrepreneurs could the government expect to promote the social changes it wanted. Thus, any skills fostered through volunteer or elected office would prepare more individuals for jobs in sectors such as local retailing, trading in renewable resources (e.g., exporting Arctic char), production and sale of carvings, prints, weaving, and sewing, and tourism. Many Inuit had an aptitude for this sort of change and wanted to take part in it. The most significant way they found to encourage this was, unquestionably, the co-operative movement.

Co-operatives were eased into existence by a program called the Eskimo Loan Fund, established in 1953. This fund served Inuit in a region that lacked banks or other sources of capital for small businesses, without having to explain individual projects to Parliament. At first, a few Arctic co-operatives were set up in Quebec under provincial legislation that already existed. New legislation was created in the Northwest Territories in 1958, and five Qikiqtaaluk communities established co-operatives between 1959 and 1963, followed by four more in 1968, and another four in 1973–74.

The pioneer co-operative in Qikiqtaaluk was the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative at Cape Dorset. Here, a northern service officer had encouraged carvers during the 1950s. With government and private capital, the project continued to thrive when reorganized in 1959 as a co-operative. Two High Arctic communities quickly followed Cape Dorset's example, and the experiments became a movement after a successful multi-community meeting at Apex in 1963. Soon the combination of Inuit talent and Qallunaat marketing created a new industry, giving prominence to both individuals and their communities.

Carvings, sewn goods, and other artistic works provided an economic base for co-operatives, which later allowed them to branch into other enterprises. Co-operatives also moved into other services relevant to their members, as well as to the external economy. At various times since the 1970s, they have ranged in scope from single-purpose wholesale/retail co-ops to the fully diversified bodies whose services (including contracting to municipalities) covered wholesale/retail, operation of a hotel, fuel distribution, cable TV, hardware, arts and crafts, rental, and leasing.

The political importance of the movement was explored in a provocative study by Marybelle Mitchell (1996), who portrayed co-ops as a tool for entrenching Inuit identity, though also as a source of class distinction among Nunavummiut. She felt it important to study the transformation of practices and relationships. In her analysis, co-operatives provided "the vehicle by which the state exported capitalism to the Inuit." This was because

Canadian policy-makers in the 1950s were undecided whether to assimilate Inuit or to let them continue hunting. The co-operative was the ideal development instrument because it left both the Inuit and the state with a foot in each way of life. For Inuit in particular, co-operatives offered a way both to "modernize" but also to continue to promote egalitarianism and "the buttressing of non-capitalist practices." She added, "Skills which Inuit acquired by managing co-operatives gave strength and focus to the land claim movement and to Nunavut itself."

LUXURY PRODUCTS AND SPECIAL INVESTMENTS

Government initiative, planning, and seed money for the co-ops were not the only government contributions to economic development. Beginning in 1958, and lasting for a decade, almost every populated Arctic area was the subject of an "area economic survey." Scientists whom the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development had engaged to conduct a literature review and field surveys covering development opportunities in the regions, carried out the work. For most regions, these were the first comprehensive, published surveys of game resources and patterns of Inuit hunting.

The area surveys added little to the existing knowledge of development opportunities, and in a period when the government was losing faith in the land-based economy, the knowledge collected through these surveys was not put to great use. Instead, some well-known attributes of Qikiqtaaluk and some new ones were exploited at local levels. Art and handicrafts were the most profitable of these, but adventure travel and the beginning of community-based tourism date to this period as well. Cape Dorset had a fishing camp for visitors for a time, and at Pangnirtung there were fishing camps and, after 1972, a national park near the Penny Ice Cap, where alpinists had been scaling cliffs and walking immense glaciers since the early

1950s. Although Auyuittuq National Park, Qikiqtaaluk's first, generated fewer than a dozen jobs in Pangnirtung, it helped cement the community's longstanding reputation as a place of outstanding natural beauty. While all these activities improved southern Canadians' awareness and positive image of Qikiqtaaluk, they did relatively little to cover the increased costs and expectations that Inuit encountered with settlement life.

Mining, Oil, and Gas

Until the 1970s, discussions of economic development in the Canadian north began with a mention of agriculture and forestry, because hopes were pinned firmly on the southern Yukon and the Mackenzie District, where those activities were technically possible. Such economic forecasts lost focus but gained enthusiasm as they approached Qikiqtaaluk and its unknown, untapped mineral wealth. During the 1950s, exploration on a limited scale provided some Inuit with infrequent and widely scattered opportunities to apply their skills on the land. In this role, they helped geologists and mining developers, from the iron deposits of Sanikiluaq to the oil and gas exploration of the High Arctic. In the 1960s, more intensive projects developed, notably in north Baffin, while the 1970s saw two produtive mines north of 70, both using Inuit labour for reasons of policy and convenience.

GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR

By 1950, the Geological Survey of Canada had completed preliminary surveys of the entire Canadian Arctic and offered hope that the North might be very rich in oil and gas, and the eastern Arctic a valuable possession to Canada. Theories about Inuit as a potential workforce for mining were first

tested in Kivalliq, at the North Rankin Inlet Nickel Mines, 400 kilometres north of Churchill on Hudson Bay. A few Inuit worked underground, and on the surface, they made up roughly half the workforce and were, according to one observer, "adaptable, productive, and interested." These Inuit had no trouble learning aboveground techniques and some of the dangerous underground skills, but they disliked working on a rigid schedule that limited access to country food, something the managers only partially succeeded in addressing with flexible working arrangements. When the ore ran out in 1962 a community of just over five hundred people was suddenly out of work. Half went on social assistance, and relocation to other Canadian mining towns was tried with little success. The gradual replacement of mining with arts and crafts and a regional government service role allowed Rankin Inlet to recover.

Fortunately, a fall in the cost of air travel soon rescued Qikiqtaaluk from the "company town" model of mining. The new fly-in, fly-out practices meant that Inuit who wanted to work in mining did not have to move their entire families to a distant company town and relocate again when the boom ended. In 1977, when the Science Council of Canada had called for "an assessment of commuting from urban centres to northern mines by air" to encourage Inuit to work for wages, the idea had been "several years behind the action."

Commercial extraction of minerals was already familiar to Inuit in Qikiqtaaluk. There was exploration and small-scale exploitation around Pond Inlet, Cumberland Sound, Kimmirut, and the Belcher Islands intermittently since 1870. In the 1960s and 1970s, four prospects dominated planning: High Arctic oil and gas exploration by Panarctic, two separate lead-zinc deposits near Resolute and Arctic Bay, and the Mary River iron deposit south of Arctic Bay. The Panarctic Oil consortium did not go into production but spent at least a billion dollars on exploration, some of it employing Inuit labourers from northern Baffin Island. The Mary River deposit is likewise not yet producing, but exploration led to extensive hiring

in the sixties. The Polaris mine near Resolute operated from 1981 to 2002, while Nanisivik shipped ore from 1977 to 2002 and employed Inuit, especially from Arctic Bay, throughout the period.

These four projects had impacts far beyond the several hundred individual Inuit who worked on them. Qikiqtaaluk communities, especially Resolute, Arctic Bay, and Pond Inlet, experienced first-hand the prolonged discussions and constant economic re-evaluations that marked the behaviour of private-sector mining companies and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, which regulated land-based activities and was a potential source of subsidies. Inuit learned that these bodies would not consult either early or consistently, nor explain key points clearly or fully to Inuit.

The first of five new actors on the scene was the Government of the Northwest Territories, whose 1972 “Hire North” program encouraged companies to include local residents in their workforces—first from the communities closest to a projected mine, and later through employment meetings up to 700 kilometres away.

A second stakeholder was the newly formed Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (now Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, or ITK). Because one of ITK’s goals was Inuit control of land-use planning, the ITK used community meetings to fight for recognition at every stage of development. In 1982, the ITK’s official publication, *Inuit Today*, printed an assessment by Cape Dorset community leaders of recent projects in their area. The focus was on the dangers that prospecting activities, notably helicopter over-flights and abandonment of toxic wastes, posed to game animals and as a result to the traditional economy. They did not refer to employment opportunities, and called for settlement of their land claim, including Inuit control of land use, before development could go ahead.

Third, communities near the mines insisted on a place at the table, especially in Arctic Bay where planning for Nanisivik produced a range of controversial options. One was to be a self-contained company town at

Nanisivik, segregated from Arctic Bay just 34 kilometres away. Another scheme was to relocate the whole population of Arctic Bay to Nanisivik, even though the area had little game and no small-craft sea landings. The chosen option was to link Arctic Bay by road to the new mining town, creating a workforce of local commuters mixed with a fly-in, fly-out population of Qallunaat and non-local Inuit living in bunkhouses.

A fourth player was a new environmental bureaucracy. In the 1970s, it became clear that Polaris and Nanisivik needed a more thorough evaluation than the required quick hearing by the NWT Water Resources Board. This was also the era of Thomas Berger's Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. It raised concerns about hazards to wildlife and built a constituency in the south for treating Arctic territories as homelands needing protection, not frontiers calling for exploitation.

Finally, the potential workforce had to be consulted throughout the development, to adjust the social aspects of work routines, notably establishing a culturally appropriate balance of shift rotations. Fortunately, the fly-in, fly-out approach encouraged non-Aboriginal workers to make similar demands. All these interests came into play against a background of economic uncertainties and the new regulatory challenges of bringing proven ore bodies into production.

INUIT RESPONSES

Predictably, Inuit did not migrate en masse from one mining prospect to another. They made choices based on strategies for their extended families and their communities as well as for themselves individually. A total of twenty-four communities eventually supplied Inuit labour to the Nanisivik mine. Sociologist C. W. Hobart interviewed 31% of the people who had worked at the mine. He found that Inuit objected to working at least six weeks before being allowed to return home. The industry standard for

imported workers was twelve weeks, but Inuit disliked both the separation from family and the loss of opportunity to hunt.

Following Hobart, anthropologist George Wenzel intensively surveyed thirteen workers from Clyde River who worked in mining between 1975 and 1979. Wenzel found the men less likely to work at Nanisivik during periods of high prices for ringed seal skins and for polar bear skins, which rose as high as $1,000 a hide. As such, most of the movement occurred when sealskin prices were low, and stopped when prices rebounded in 1978. Altogether Clyde River sent three different groups to Nanisivik. The first party were men in their early twenties, the second set were older, and the third group were four married men, one of whom had worked on Western Arctic oil rigs. Most claimed that curiosity was a major reason for enlisting. All the experienced hunters would have preferred to stay in Clyde River to hunt, only to be employed when short of cash, but they needed the extra earnings from the mines.

Wenzel's informants brought about $16,400 into the hamlet over the four years and spent it in ways that reflected Inuit traditions. One man bought a new snowmobile and then gave his old one to a son for hunting. Others bought a freighter canoe, a snowmobile, and high-powered rifles. Another helped his father and brothers buy an outboard motor, which all shared, and another gave two rifles as gifts to a brother-in-law. As Wenzel noted, these examples "demonstrate the adaptability of the Inuit resource-sharing system itself. Over time, this system has expanded to include access to the actual materials of the hunt, as well as the product of the hunting effort." Looking at a larger population, Hobart was puzzled by the findings. "There is a striking conflict in the findings of this study, between the general excellence of work performance of the Inuit workers, and their need for wage employment on the one hand, and their disinterest in working at the Nanisivik mine on the other." Wenzel explained this by understanding that the main motive for working at the mines was to acquire and share equipment for hunting.

Conclusion

The current state of economic development in Nunavut results from a distinctive geography, an old and resilient culture, and six decades of public policy, which tried, with uneven intentions and results, to find a balance between the traditional use of renewable resources and the pursuit of cash incomes. Carving, sewing, and printmaking, for example, provide a source of earnings that merges the advantages of the traditional and market sectors. Many Inuit find that cash earnings do make it easier to bring a steady supply of country food into the settlements. Employment in tourism as outfitters and guides also gives hunters and their family members valuable time on the land. Those who do not wish to hunt but are committed to staying in Qikiqtaaluk can work for the administrative bodies created in the recent past at the municipal, territorial, and federal levels. They also benefit from opportunities in offices, boards, and NGOs created under the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement. Negotiation of this agreement was a major goal of Inuit organizations in 1994, and it has helped to shape Inuit involvement in directing economic choices.

Through settlement of their land claim, Inuit acquired access to revenues, as well as jobs, in a sector of the economy whose profitability (minerals, oil, and gas) and environmental safety had been debated for much of the period since 1950. To many Canadians, extractive industries seem to offer the best opportunity to create jobs in the international economy, jobs which can be rewarding in themselves and may help sustain harvesting activities into the future. This tentatively better view of the future came at the cost of much political struggle. The view endorsed in recent documents such as the Nunavut Economic Strategy is that a relationship with the land is essential and that other economic development will help sustain it. This approach reverses a long-standing government perspective, and is faithful to views that Inuit have expressed all along.

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For many years, Inuit Elders in the Qikiqtani (Baffin) region have been haunted by a deep sense of loss as they remember how their lives changed in the decades after 1950.

The thematic reports and special studies in this collection explore themes that emerged during the work of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission. What started as an inquiry into the slaughter of sled dogs quickly grew to include other experiences of profound colonial change.

Commissioned by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, this book and the companion volume of community histories weave together testimonies and documents collected during the Qikiqtani Truth Commission in the hopes of achieving Saimaqatagiiniq, peace between past opponents.